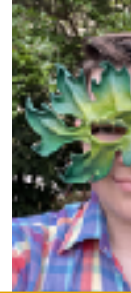




Shakespeare at Colerain presents

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Cast

(in order of appearance)

Beatrice	Mary Rose Valentine
Antonio	Spencer Cohen
Leonato	Moth Rodriguez
Hero	Megan Irwin
Ursula	Ellen Poplavska
Messenger	Ruby Grace Kellman
Don Pedro	Dorian O'Dell
Benedick	M. M. Lehmkuhler
Don John	Leonard Balsera
Claudio	Kade Leous
Conrad	Adam Wisenbaugh
Margaret	Ruby Grace Kellman
Borachio	Felix Bartuska
Boy	Adam Wisenbaugh
Dogberry	Ellen Poplavska
Verges	Spencer Cohen
First Watch	Ruby Grace Kellman
Second Watch	Samphire Savage
Friar Francis	Lev Goldberg
Sexton	Cynthia Mazzant
Messenger	Adam Wisenbaugh

Understudies: Samphire Savage (Ursula), Leonard Balsera (Dogberry), Ellen Poplavska (Second Watch)

Director: Topher Zane

Stage Manager: Sam Birkenthal

Producer, Dramaturg, & Choreographer:

Mary Rose Valentine

Music: Spencer Cohen and Mary Rose Valentine

Residency Support: Leonard Balsera, Felix Bartuska, Moth Rodriguez, Samphire Savage, Amanda Valentine, Clark Valentine

Colerain Director of Artist Residencies:

Amanda Valentine

Colerain Director of Theatre: Mary Rose Valentine

SPECIAL THANKS

The Colerain Center for Education, Preservation,
and the Arts Board of Trustees
Señor Pushy Paws and Cricket
Grandma Nikki Blake and her cookies
Chris Rosenblum
Cynthia Mazzant and Tempest Productions
Toya Wigfield

Main Plot Points

THE HOUSEHOLD OF LEONATO

Leonato is **Hero's** father. **Beatrice** is his niece. **Antonio** is Leonato's brother, though not Beatrice's father. **Ursula** and **Margaret** are Hero's waiting gentlewomen.

THE PARTY OF DON PEDRO

Don Pedro, commonly referred to as the Prince, is friends with Leonato and arranges for his group to stay at Leonato's for a month at least. Don Pedro and his brother, **Don John**, have recently resolved a quarrel, but the concessions he had to make don't sit well with Don John. **Borachio** and **Conrad** are Don John's men. **Claudio** is young, earnest, and in love with Hero. **Benedick** rounds out the group.

BENEDICK AND BEATRICE

Benedick and Beatrice have known each other for a while and, although once they were fond of each other, they have long had only insults and witty jibes for each other. They claim to hate each other, but when their friends decide to match them up, it doesn't take much to turn their feelings to love—they simply devise ways to make their friend "accidentally" overhear a conversation about how much in love the other is with them.

DON JOHN'S PLOT(S)

Determined to sow chaos, Don John plots to break up Claudio's engagement to Hero. First he convinces Claudio that Don Pedro is trying to steal Hero for himself. When that fails, Borachio comes up with a plan to make it appear that Hero is entertaining a lover, when in fact it was Margaret who had a tryst with Borachio in Hero's room. But when Don Pedro and Claudio see the scene that Don John and Borachio set for them, they believe that Hero is unfaithful and decide to shame her at the wedding the next morning.

THE CURSED WEDDING

Claudio refuses to marry Hero, calling her unfaithful before the friar, her family, and others. Although she denies it and Beatrice backs her up, Leonato joins with Don Pedro and Claudio to rail against his daughter. The friar suggests they pretend Hero is dead upon Claudio's words, making her seem more innocent. Benedick stays with Beatrice, rather than following Don Pedro's group, and the two profess their love. He says he'll do anything she asks. She replies, "Kill Claudio." He balks at this, although in the end he agrees to challenge Claudio.

TOXIC FAMILY AND GENDER DYNAMICS

The words of men are believed over those of women. A father wishes his daughter dead rather than so disgraced. A daughter allows for terrible harm if she's lying. A friend grieves in powerless anger. It ends with the hallmarks of comedy—weddings and villains getting their due. But be aware that the road there is rough.

Photo credit: Toya Wigfield



THE CONSTABULARY

Dogberry and **Verges** head up the local **watch**. They direct the watch to keep a special eye out at Leonato's house since the wedding is the next day. The watch overhears a drunk Borachio telling Conrad about the plot he helped Don John with, and they arrest Borachio and Conrad. Dogberry tries to bring them to Leonato, but only manages to annoy and confuse him. Eventually they end up before the **Sexton** who says that Hero has in fact been so disgraced, and sends them back to face Leonato.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

Hero having been proven innocent, Leonato first makes Claudio publicly mourn Hero at her ancestral tomb and declare her innocence, and then contrives another wedding to "his brother's son." It is, of course, Hero. Surprise! In front of everyone, Benedick asks Beatrice to marry him; she gets flustered and says no. They have a battle of wits, then agree that they will marry after all.

THE END!

THE "NOTHING" MUCH ADO IS ABOUT

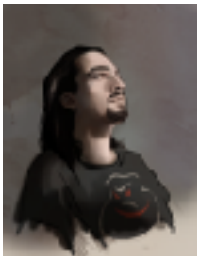
As Benedick says, "There's a double meaning in that."

The first obvious interpretation of *nothing* is that the most dramatic conflict of the play centers on a scandal that never happened. The title serves as a summary of the action.

In Shakespeare's time, "nothing" would have been pronounced more like "noting," which becomes a pun on how the characters observe each other and create situations for others to observe. It seems like someone is always lurking, eavesdropping, creating and spreading rumors. If everyone minded their own business, a lot of the trouble could have been avoided.

Much Ado About Nothing is famously about the traditional roles and expectations of men and women. In Elizabethan slang, *nothing* (or *no thing*) refers to a woman's anatomy. In case you wondered what that kerfuffle at the wedding was all about.

Bios



LEONARD BALSERA (DON JOHN, SWING): Leonard (he/him) is a free-range, 100% organic creative living at the intersection of memory and dream, though his physical form resides in Austin, Texas. He continually aspires toward mastery of several endeavors, including singing, acting, writing, improv, and game design (both digital and analog). Astonishingly, people have even paid him for doing a few of these things on occasion—just ask Google.

MUCH ADO ABOUT TEMPEST'S TWELFTH NIGHT

Want to see many of these actors in another Shakespeare play? Come see Tempest Productions' *Twelfth Night: Love Is Love Is Love* during the Central PA Theatre and Dance Fest, June 19–21. This amusing interpretation is set in Regency Era Bath, England, and features:

- ◆ Mary Rose Valentine as Viola/Cesario
- ◆ Megan Irwin as Countess Olivia
- ◆ Cynthia Mazzant as Sir Toby Belch
- ◆ Sam Birkenthal as Sebastian
- ◆ Lev Goldberg as Antonio
- ◆ Felix Bartuska as Fabian Valentine
- ◆ Amanda Valentine as Lady Bidwell (a gossip)



FELIX BARTUSKA (BORACHIO, RESIDENCY SUPPORT): Have you ever wondered what it'd be like if 3 raccoons in a trench coat were cast in a Shakespeare production? Meet Felix Bartuska (he/they), a long-time lover of theater and the groundskeeper at the beautiful Colerain Forges Mansion. He'll fight wasps, they'll whack weeds, he'll monologue like a beast, they'll even manage a bookstore/cafe/vintage shop—he does it all. Someday he'll achieve his dream of becoming a state cryptid, but in the meantime he'll knock your socks off with his performance.

SAM BIRKENTHAL (STAGE MANAGER): Sam (he/they/she) has an ever-growing list of high jinks and tomfoolery. His most recent antics include gallivanting as Sebastian in *Twelfth Night: Love is Love is Love*, lurking in the corner as stage manager of *Hoarding*, and marching & hopping about in *The Velveteen Rabbit*, all at Tempest Studios. She has had the pleasure of stage managing the past two Summer Shakespeare Residencies and they are delighted to return for another.

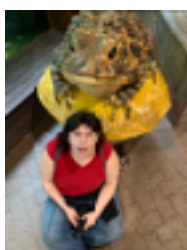


SPENCER COHEN (ANTONIO, VERGES): Spencer (they/them), who some know as Izzy, is a scenic carpenter. They are not quite sure where they are or how they got here. Spencer spends most of their time as a freelance carpenter for numerous theaters across the state of Massachusetts. They are now, notably, very far from home and very far from their tools. How exactly they managed to get to Colerain without memory of their travel is still yet to be explained. Do not be surprised if they inexplicably disappear mid sentence. Their most recent productions as a professional were *Twelfth Night*, and *Scissoring* at Smith College. Once production is done here, hopefully they will materialize back in a Western Mass theater. They hope you all enjoy the show, however confused they might be. spencergcohen.com



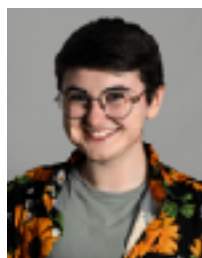
LEV GOLDBERG (FRIAR FRANCIS): Lev (he/they/she) is excited to be here! This is their second year doing theater at Colerain, and they'd like to thank their fellow cast members and friends, as well as the Colerain kitties, for their support.

MEGAN IRWIN (HERO): Megan (she/they) is a State College local and graduate of the Penn State BFA Acting program. Recent credits: *VHS Christmas Carol* (Emily Cratchit), *Inter/Rim* (Crescent), *Macbeth* (Lady Macbeth), *Everybody* (Somebody), *You On The Moors Now* (Cathy). Megan would like to thank Mars, her amazing castmates, and Colerain Forges Mansion for making this production possible, and her parents for always being her cheerleaders.



RUBY GRACE KELLMAN (MARGARET, FIRST WATCH, MESSENGER): Ruby (she/they) is thrilled to be back at Colerain for the 3rd annual Shakespeare residency this year, having participated in both *As You Like It* and *Coriolanus*. She has been doing theatre since she was a kid and is able to find that childlike joy in the community at Colerain.

M. M. LEHMKUHLER (BENEDICK): M. M. (he/they) is a writer, actor, and miscreant from Washington, D. C. who is delighted to return to Colerain following a role as Orlando in 2023's production of *As You Like It*.



KADE LEOUS (CLAUDIO): Kade (he/him) is a fourth-year BFA Acting major from State College. When he's not acting or singing silly tunes on stage, Kade loves to write science fiction media and run tabletop role-playing games for his friends. This silly goober is so excited to be spending the week performing *Much Ado* for the second time this school year. His recent credits include *Hit the Wall* (Peg), *Falsettos* (Jason U/S), *Results Will Vary* (Swing), *Bygones* (Jacob), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Messenger/Don Pedro U/S) and Penn State's "Big Ideas" commercial. He's so ecstatic to share this story and would love to thank his partner Davis, his friends, and his family for their unwavering support, as well as his fellow cast members! You can find him in Instagram @spaceloser

CYNTHIA MAZZANT (SEXTON): Cynthia (she/her) is usually found lurking in the alley behind the Fraser Street Parking Garage in State College (where you'll find a portal to a land of stories through the door to Tempest Studios). In our hour of need, she appeared like magic in the Forest of



Arden for *As You Like It* during our first season of the Shakespeare Residency at Colerain, and now it just wouldn't feel right without her.

DORIAN O'DELL (DON PEDRO): This is Dorian's first show at Colerain, and he is super excited to be a part of this year's production! Dorian (he/they) just recently graduated from Wayne State University with a BFA in Acting, and a week full of nothing but Shakespeare, nature, and a community of artists is just about the best post-grad vacation he could ask for. If you're present in the theatre scene of Detroit, Michigan, you may have seen him recently as Jimmy Harper in *Reefer Madness*, Prince Eric in *The Little Mermaid*, or "everyone else" in *The Solve it Squad: Returns*. They also love science and work as an educator at the Michigan Science Center :- dorianodell.com



ELLEN POPLAVSKA (DOGBERRY, URSULA): Originally from Pittsburgh, Ellen (she/her) is a professional organizer and KonMari Consultant based in Chicago, Illinois. In 2018 she was a founding member of the Youth Shakespeare Society of Pittsburgh. In 2020 she co-founded Statespeare, Penn State's student organization for Shakespeare performance and enthusiasm, with treasurer John Barton. Her past Shakespeare credits include Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* (Statespeare), Celia in *As You Like It* (Statespeare), and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Youth Shakespeare Society of Pittsburgh).

MOTH RODRIGUEZ (LEONATO, RESIDENCY SUPPORT): Moth (they/them) is delighted to return to Colerain's Shakespeare Festival. Based in Brooklyn, NY they are continually delighted and inspired to make and share art in collaboration with excellent people.



SAMPHIRE SAVAGE (SECOND WATCH, SWING, RESIDENCY SUPPORT LEAD): Samphire's breadth of experience cannot reasonably be contained in a bio, nor their role(s) in this residency in a single title. Samphire (none/they) cut their teeth in youth organizing and disaster response before realizing they'd rather be an artist. More recently, they've designed large installation art, published small storytelling and card games, and is discovering pleasure in singing and cooking. They thrive in intensity and their greatest joy is creating and holding containers for growth and play—somehow just now discovering how to apply that to theatre spaces.

AMANDA VALENTINE (COLERAIN DIRECTOR OF ARTIST RESIDENCIES, RESIDENCY SUPPORT): Amanda (she/her) is more of a Shakespeare academic than an actor, but she's enjoyed her roles in *As You Like It* (Audrey) and *Coriolanus* (Valeria, Citizen) with the Shakespeare Residency, and recently branched out to take the composite role of Lady Bidwell in the Regency Era set *Twelfth Night: Love Is Love Is Love* with Tempest Productions. She's excited by the variety of events the Colerain Center has been able to present over the past few years, and the variety coming in the next few months!





MARY ROSE VALENTINE (BEATRICE, PRODUCER, CHOREOGRAPHER, DRAMATURG): Mary Rose (she/her), also known as Mars, is proud to be part of Colerain's third Summer Shakespeare Residency. She has been performing in and studying Shakespeare since age 13, with local legends such as Cynthia Mazzant, Chris Hults, and Jason Zanitsch, and with the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA. She holds bachelors degrees in Theatre Studies and Comparative Literature from Penn State University. She directs, dramaturgs, performs, choreographs, and stage manages in Central PA with Tempest Productions, the Next Stage, the Colerain Center, and Sock and Buskin. Recent work includes Viola in *Twelfth Night* (Tempest), the Rabbit in *The Velveteen Rabbit* (Tempest), directing readings of *Educating Rita* and *Eleemosynary* (The Next Stage), and Laertes in *Hamlet* (Tempest). Apart from theatre, Mary Rose is a professional tabletop game designer, writer, and consultant, and a dance and theatre teacher. She thanks everyone who made this program possible, and the cast for being so wonderfully themselves. She would rather hear a dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves her. maryrosevalentine.com



ADAM WISENBAUGH (CONRAD, MESSENGER, BOY): Have you ever seen one of those really blurry pictures people claim to be cryptids? Think of that and put that vibe into a 5'4" Michigander with a history of professional clowning and classical piano training. That's Adam (they/them), who also enjoyed acting and stage-handing a number of shows during their journey to acquire a double BA in English and Classical Archaeology. Now they spend their days clawing toward their MFA program, watching heinous television programs with friends, and trying desperately to convince their cats to please stop playing WWE on their spine at 2am.



TOPHER ZANE (DIRECTOR): Topher (he/him) is thrilled to be back for a second summer doing Shakespeare at Colerain. Topher is a director, fight director, intimacy director, and actor based out of Virginia. He most recently directed Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Shakespeare in the Dark). He also recently directed productions of *Pirates of Penzance* (Sinfonicon Light Opera Company), *As You Like It*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and John Lyly's *Gallathea* (Shakespeare in the Dark). His past acting credits include Coriolanus in *Coriolanus* (Shakespeare at Colerain) and Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Shakespeare in the Dark). Topher holds certifications in Single Sword, Sword and Shield, and Theatrical Firearms through the Society of American Fight Directors. You can find him on Instagram: [@topherzane](https://www.instagram.com/topherzane)

COMING UP AT COLERAIN!

Make music with the Acoustic Nomads!

Mini-Concert, Jam Session, and Song Circle
Free, RSVPs appreciated

Tuesday, May 27, 7:30pm

The next artists in residence are coming in hot on the heels of the Shakespeare residency! Noah Harrington (bass player of many cool bands that have done residencies previously at Colerain) and three other musicians will be based here while performing locally and preparing for their new album. On May 27, they'll play some songs and then let us join in! Bring your instrument, your voice, and your enthusiasm to create music together.

Wish you got a glimpse inside the mansion?

Historical Tours \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 6–16

First Mondays, 11am, 1pm, 3pm

Dave Petit, Director of Historical Research and Programming, gives tours of the mansion and grounds on the first Monday of every month, June through October. Tours are by appointment only, so sign up with the QR code or email Dave at dave@coleraincenter.org to reserve your time.

What should you do on Friday, June 13th?

Socky Horror Picture Show!

Sock puppets + puns + mocktails + an outdoor showing of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* = *so much fun*. Join Adam Swartz Puppets for an evening of outdoor fun with their Socky Horror event, featuring a film screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* with a full puppet floor show, prop bags, themed mocktails, and popcorn!

Yes, you can paint beautifully!

Painting workshops with Lynn Margileth

Please expect to attend both sessions:

July 11, 7:00 – 9:00pm July 12, 9:00am – 4:00pm

Appropriate for beginners and experienced painters alike. Lynn offers demonstrations in drawing and painting and she works with each person individually on their drawings and paintings.

Our first workshop was an absolute delight. See the poster for more details.

I want more history!

Archaeology Field Workshops \$30, ages 12+

Second Mondays: 10:00am–3:00pm

Sign up with the QR code or email Dave at dave@coleraincenter.org.

Blacksmithing Demonstrations

\$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 6–16

Third Mondays: 10:00am–3:00pm

Visit with blacksmith Dave Petit as he transforms iron bars into useful everyday items. Walk-ins are welcome though RSVPs are appreciated.

