MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Thursday, March 3 • Friday, March 4 • Saturday, March 5, 2022
7:30 PM EST each evening

Wright Memorial Theatre • Middlebury College
Tonight’s performance running time is 2 hours 40 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission.

Please be welcome to stay in the theatre for a post-show talk-back.

This Performing Arts Series event is made possible thanks to the Departments of English and American Literatures and Theatre, and the Rothrock Residency Fund, the Committee on the Arts, with generous support from Raphael and Jane Bernstein.

Patrons are requested to turn off all electronic devices prior to the performance, and to please refrain from texting. Photography and the use of audio or video equipment are prohibited.
THE PLAYERS

**William Donaldson**  
Claudio/Borachio/Antonio/Margaret

**Chris Donnelly**  
Don Pedro/Friar Francis/Watch/Ursula/Messenger

**Katherine Newman**  
Hero/Leonato/Sexton/Watch

**Tom Richardson**  
Benedick/Dogberry/Conrade

**Annabelle Terry**  
Beatrice/Don John/Balthazar/Verges/Boy

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**THE STORY**

*Summary by Peter Holland, McMeel Family Chair in Shakespeare Studies, University of Notre Dame*

News reaches the town of Messina that Don Pedro has won a battle and is coming to stay with Messina’s governor Leonato, his daughter Hero, and his niece Beatrice. Don Pedro arrives with his bastard brother Don John, the young Count Claudio, and Benedick. Beatrice and Benedick trade mocking wit as usual. Claudio admits to Benedick that he loves Hero, but Benedick only teases him. Don Pedro, however, agrees to help Claudio’s wooing by disguising himself as Claudio and speaking to Hero. Leonato’s brother Antonio overhears the plan but mistakenly believes Don Pedro is himself in love with Hero. Leonato is delighted at the news of the prince’s interest in his daughter. Conrad, one of Don John’s servants, tells his melancholy master and Borachio of Don Pedro’s intention to woo Hero for Claudio, and Don John, hating his brother and wanting to cause trouble, sets out to foil the match.

Don Pedro’s friends arrive masked for a dance and, in the confusions of identity the masks create, Beatrice mocks Benedick, Don Pedro woos Hero for Claudio, while Don John tells Claudio, pretending to mistake him for Don Pedro, that Don Pedro woos Hero for himself, leaving Claudio depressed. But, to Claudio’s relief and general rejoicing, Don Pedro unites Hero and Claudio for marriage. Don Pedro decides on a new plot: to convince Beatrice and Benedick that each is in love with the other, even though both have vowed never to marry. Don Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio discuss Beatrice’s “love” for Benedick, knowing that Benedick is overhearing their words; Benedick takes the bait. Then Hero and her servant Ursula talk about Benedick’s “love” for Beatrice, while Beatrice listens; she too takes the bait.

Don John, still determined to prevent Claudio’s marriage, tells Don Pedro and Claudio that Hero is promiscuous and will be meeting her lover that night, the very night before her wedding. At night, Dogberry and Verges, town officials, instruct the Night Watch in their duties. In hiding, the watchmen hear Borachio tell Conrad how he wooed Margaret, Hero’s servant, at Hero’s bedroom window, thereby convincing Don Pedro and Claudio that Hero is unfaithful. The watch arrests
Borachio and Conrad but, when Dogberry and Verges try to tell Leonato the news, he, rushing to church for the wedding, shrugs them off.

At the altar Claudio rejects Hero and storms out with Don Pedro, leaving Hero collapsed from shock. Leonato believes the accusations but the Friar suggests they pretend that Hero has died, while they test the truth of the claim. Benedick and Beatrice admit their love to each other. She demands he prove his love by killing Claudio for wronging Hero. The distraught Leonato and Antonio confront Don Pedro and Claudio who ignore their complaints. Benedick arrives to leave Don Pedro’s service and challenges Claudio to a duel. News comes that Don John has fled, and Dogberry brings in Borachio who admits he has slandered Hero. Claudio is appalled at what he has done. Leonato, still pretending Hero is dead, instructs Claudio to mourn at Hero’s tomb all night and then, in recompense, to marry Hero’s “cousin” (actually, of course, Hero herself). With two impending weddings (Claudio-Hero and Benedick-Beatrice) and the news that Don John has been captured, the play can end with a dance.

THE AFTLS APPROACH

For most of his working life, William Shakespeare was a sharer in the King’s Men, London’s leading theatre company. He knew the actors he was writing for and collaborated with them on seeing the plays into performance.

All theatre is a collaboration, of course, and while actors can no longer collaborate directly with Shakespeare, the Actors From The London Stage (AFTLS) company always aims to work with him, respectfully and creatively, throughout the rehearsal process. Our company’s aim is to make his words exert their magic and their power in performance, but we do this in a vital, and perhaps unconventional, way. We have no massive sets to tower over the performers and no directorial concept to tower over the text of Shakespeare’s play. In fact, AFTLS does not have a director at all; instead, the play has been rehearsed by the actors, working together to create theatre, cooperating with each other in their imaginative engagement with the play’s words.

Now the actors ask you, the audience, to perform that same kind of imaginative engagement that Shakespeare was thinking about when, in the Prologue to Henry V, he instructed his spectators: “Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them, / Printing their proud hoofs i’ the receiving earth / For ’tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings.” Now the actors seek a new collaboration, working with you, the audience, in the way that only live theatre can. It is not a hard job for people to do, even though we are now used to having everything shown us on screen, and even though we usually no longer rely on the powers of the imagination and collaboration to bring a play’s world into being. If you share the fun of collaborating with us, then the excitement of the
performance will be richly rewarding for you and for the actors, for this special act of working together, actors and audience combined, marks the latest stage of that long journey The Tempest has made from Shakespeare’s writing the play with and for the actors he knew so well. So, tonight, watch and listen and “let us... / On your imaginary forces work.”

Peter Holland
McMeel Family Chair in Shakespeare Studies University of Notre Dame

ABOUT ACTORS FROM THE LONDON STAGE

Actors From The London Stage (consisting of five British Shakespearean artists from such companies as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain, and Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, among others) is an educational program developed in 1975 by Homer Swander at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The theatre company is now based in London and at the University of Notre Dame. The artists devote a large part of their time to lectures, workshops, seminars, and informal meetings with students. Their stay provides students and faculty with a unique opportunity both to observe extraordinary performances and to discuss literature and the art of theatre in depth with some of the most talented artists from some of the most important theatre companies in the world. Contact us at shakespeare.nd.edu/AFTLS.

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ABOUT SHAKESPEARE AT NOTRE DAME

Actors From The London Stage is a national outreach program of Shakespeare at Notre Dame. Shakespeare at Notre Dame consists of the McMeel Family Chair in Shakespeare Studies, the Shakespeare in Prisons Network, the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival, Actors From The London Stage, ancillary lectures and events, and library collections. Shakespeare at Notre Dame’s mission is to serve as a pre-eminent venue for the study and performance of the works of Shakespeare, providing Notre Dame and the wider community with an on-campus culture steeped in the works of William Shakespeare — both on the page and on the stage.

Mary Irene Ryan Family Executive Director: Scott Jackson
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Ryan Producing Artistic Director for the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival: Grant Mudge

ABOUT THE PLAYERS

WILLIAM DONALDSON  (Claudio/Borachio/Antonio/Margaret)

William trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. He currently teaches at the British American Drama Academy as an Acting Tutor (Shakespeare), and as an actor and workshop facilitator has worked with The Royal National Theatre, The Young Shakespeare Company, and The Shakespeare Schools Festival. He has run Shakespeare workshops at institutions across the US, including the University of Notre Dame, Wellesley College, Howard University, Brandeis University, and American University. He is an artistic associate of Tucked In Productions (specialists in young people’s theatre and puppetry) and Beautiful Creatures Theatre Co. (a site-specific theatre company). Career highlights include Stephano in The Tempest and Friar Lawrence in Romeo & Juliet (Actors from the London Stage, US tour); RuPaul Charles in the Edinburgh Festival Award-winning production of Prom Kween (directed by Rebecca Humphries); The Diva in the award-winning international production Testosterone (Rhum & Clay); Boris in Boris Got Bu**ered (directed by Scott Le Crass); and The Wicked Queen in Snow White (Old Vic Theatre, directed by Kirsty Patrick). Film credits include Captain Webb (Marathon Films, directed by Justin Hardy).
CHRIS DONNELLY (Don Pedro/Friar Francis/Watch/Ursula/Messenger)

Chris is delighted to be back with Actors from the London Stage for a fifth tour, having performed previously in Twelfth Night, Macbeth, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and most recently, The Taming of the Shrew. Chris has also had the honour of being part of the award-winning Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory theatre company ensemble since its inception in 2000, enjoying many roles including Launce in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Bottom in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Iago in Othello, Autolycus in The Winter’s Tale, and Pompey in Measure For Measure. He has also appeared in several leading contemporary roles in London, in repertory, and on various tours. Chris also has many TV credits including No Offence, Prime Suspect, Vital Signs, Fat Friends, Silent Witness, and the character of Damion Spinks in Eastenders. Chris has also performed in many plays for BBC Radio 4 including award-winning dramas Soldier Soldier, Call Waiting, and Gilgamesh. Chris has gained much experience workshopping extensively in schools and universities, and presently runs the Education/Outreach arm of Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory. Chris is delighted to have utilized the time afforded him by the pandemic to complete his Master’s degree in creative writing with the Open University.

KATHERINE NEWMAN (Hero/Leonato/Sexton/Watch)

Katherine is an actor, writer, theatre maker and voice over artist. She has worked extensively with new writing and devising across the UK. She is an associate artist at Applecart Arts, a creative associate with the theatre company Curious Directive, and a founding member of The Den Collective. A sample of her acting credits include Veronica in 20th Century Fox’s Bohemian Rhapsody, the voice of Professor McGonagall in the Harry Potter video game for Warner Brothers, Freija in Your Last Breath at the Southwark Playhouse, Lady Macbeth in Macbeth at the Oxford Playhouse, Laura in Obama-Ology at the Finborough Theatre, and Viola/Sebastian in Actors from the London Stage’s tour of Twelfth Night. She also wrote and performed the one-woman show Fucking Little Elf Bitch to 5-star London reviews. Katherine regularly teaches acting and audition technique at Central Saint Martins, voice work for teachers in training, communication skills for training healthcare professionals, and various workshops for storytelling, play, and characterization for both training and professional actors. She is also an experienced tutor, working with dyslexic and autistic students on creative writing and confidence building.
TOM RICHARDSON (Benedick/Dogberry/Conrade)
Tom trained at The Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. Particularly interested in Shakespeare, Tom has played a number of leading roles including Macduff and Orsino, as well as clowns such as Silvius, Antipholus of Syracuse, and Puck. So the opportunity to be part of a multi-roling Actors From The London Stage season was an exciting prospect. Recent work includes the online interactive production of Alice: A Virtual Theme Park (winner of the OnComm for Best Digital Platform Based Production) for Creation Theatre Company/Big Telly Theatre Company, which garnered acclaim for outreach across the globe at the height of the pandemic. Tom’s theatre credits include As You Like It, She Stoops to Conquer, Twelfth Night, and The Merry Wives of Windsor for Guildford Shakespeare Company; The Prince & The Pauper at the New Vic Theatre; Lady Chatterley’s Lover at Churchill Theatre Bromley (also UK tour); Julius Caesar and A Midsummer Night’s Dream at Storyhouse, Chester; Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense, Sense & Sensibility, Single Spies, and Dial ‘M’ For Murder at The Rivals Theatre by the Lake, Keswick; Elton John’s Glasses at Watford Palace Theatre; The Merry Wives of Windsor, Romeo & Juliet, The Wind in The Willows, Macbeth and The Comedy of Errors for Chester Performs; Twelfth Night: A Gender Experiment at The Rose Playhouse; The White Carnation at The Finborough/Jermyn Street Theatre; Roots at Nottingham Playhouse/Hull Truck/New Vic Theatre; The Winter’s Tale, The Rivals, The Grapes of Wrath, and Arsenic and Old Lace at The Mercury Theatre Colchester; and The Mousetrap on a Southeast Asia tour as well as in the West End. Tom also works as an acting and accent coach to young professional actors.

ANNABELLE TERRY (Beatrice/Don John/Balthazar/Verges/Boy)
Annabelle trained at The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. Annabelle’s theatre credits include Tales from Hans Christian Anderson and Macbeth for Guildford Shakespeare Company; Snow Queen, Peter Pan, Swallows and Amazons, and A Christmas Carol at Creation Theatre; Northanger Abbey for Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmunds (also UK tour); NewsRevue at Canal Cafe Theatre; All’s Well That Ends Well and She Stoops to Conquer at Changeling Theatre; and the Sam Wanamaker Festival at Shakespeare’s Globe. Digital theatre credits include Bard from the Barn for The Barn Theatre, The Tempest, Alice: A Virtual Theme Park (OnComm winner), The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Grimm Tales, The Duchess of Malfi, Romeo and Juliet, and Keeping Up With Kassandra for Creation Theatre Company. Teaching experience: Core participation team and workshop leader for Nottingham Playhouse; London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art examination teacher for Rugby School; Comedy & Drama teacher for Pauline Quirke Academy; and workshop leader for Lakeside Arts.
Many thanks to our academic and local residency partners...

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Danú
March 10  ■  7:30 PM
Mahaney Arts Center, Robison Hall
Tickets: $25/20/10/5

Anikaya Dance Theater: Conference of the Birds
March 11 and 12  ■  7:30 PM
Mahaney Arts Center, Dance Theatre
Tickets: $25/20/10/5
Our thanks to the 2021–2022 members of the Performing Arts Series Society (PASS) for their support of the series and arts at Middlebury.

Learn about PASS at go.middlebury.edu/pass.

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Learn about PASS at go.middlebury.edu/pass, the box office, or via brochures in the lobby.

ACCESS TO THE ARTS IS IMPORTANT TO US
The following are available at Performing Arts Series events. Please contact the Box Office for specific requests.

Accessible parking, seating, and restrooms are available at all venues. Family/all-gender/accessible restrooms available at the Mahaney Arts Center (3rd floor) and the Wright Theatre lobby.

Assistive listening devices are available at most events.

Large-print programs are available at many performances.

Relay calls are welcome via the Vermont Relay Service (711). See an usher, the Box Office, or visit go.middlebury.edu/artsaccess for more information on our accessibility services.

Sign language interpretation available at select shows.

Low-cost or free transportation is available through Tri-Valley Transit, 802-388-2287 or www.trivalleytransit.org/dial-a-ride.

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Land Acknowledgement
Middlebury College sits on land which has served as a site of meeting and exchange among indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The Western Abenaki are the traditional caretakers of these Vermont lands and waters, which they call Ndakinna, or “homeland.” We remember their connection to this region and the hardships they continue to endure.

We give thanks for the opportunity to share in the bounty of this place and to protect it.