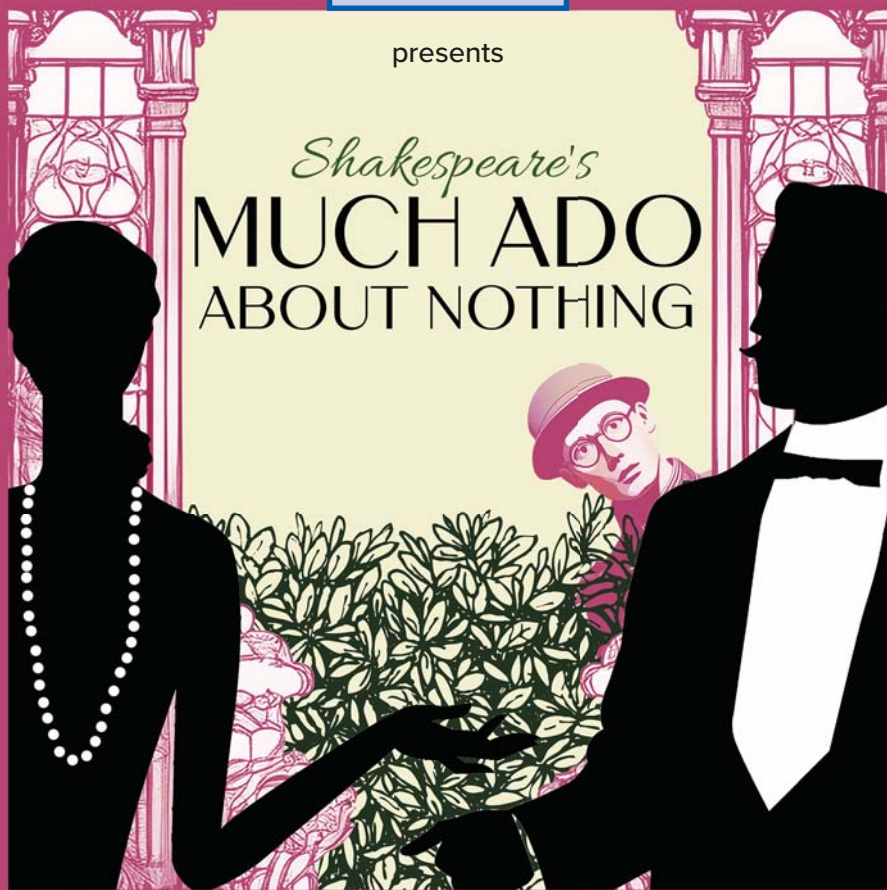


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presents

Shakespeare's
MUCH ADO
ABOUT NOTHING



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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

by William Shakespeare

Directed by

Evan M. Hernandez

Cast

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Beatrice..... | Reid Gregory |
| Benedick..... | Alex White |
| Hero | Shaelyn Taylor |
| Claudio | William Meyer* |
| Leonato | RJ Comer |
| Don Pedro | Austin Jeffrey Smith |
| Don John/Watchman..... | JR Knowles |
| Margaret/Sexton..... | Ava Sin |
| Ursula/Watchman | Melody Alvarado |
| Borachio..... | Evan Taylor Williams |
| Conrade/Messenger..... | Luke McGuire |
| Dogberry/Party Guest | Brett Lemmers |
| Friar/Party Guest..... | Jenna Goldsmith |

Production Team

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Stage Manager..... | Christian Randell ⁺ |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Caleb Finley ⁺ |
| Assistant Directors | Sarah Cooper, Maggie Hernandez |
| Dramaturg | Maggie Hernandez |
| Choreographer | Krystin Larsen |
| Intimacy Director | Jordan Tudor |
| Costume Design | Sara McCloud |
| Light Design..... | Ostin Williams |
| Sound Design..... | Patrick Adams |
| Properties Design | Sara McCloud, Krista Totten |
| Scenic Construction..... | Evan Hernandez, Zach Perkins ⁺ |
| Scenic Artist..... | Krista Totten |
| Wardrobe Manager..... | Vilah Sartwell |
| Production Coordinator | Susan Gaw |
| Technical Crew..... | Heather Barnard ⁺ , Steven Miller, Zach Perkins ⁺ , Tim Rust ⁺ , Vilah Sartwell |

⁺Member of Artist's Lab for WPT

^{*}Member of WPT Apprentice Company

There will be one 15-minute intermission between acts.

Director's Note

Much Ado About Nothing is the prototype for romantic comedies. Hallmark Christmas movies, wherein our heroine goes back to her home town and is annoyed by an old flame before eventually falling for him? *When Harry Met Sally*, where two flawed people banter and bicker before falling in love? They are, in their basic formula, *Much Ado* and the list of film and TV romances in that vein is endless because they will never stop using this 400-year-old formula.



Even more incredible and important, Shakespeare gave permission to writers to break our hearts before mending them. The comedies of ancient Greece and Rome never dealt in realistic heartbreak before getting the couples hitched. Yet Shakespeare does not flinch from real pain even in a comedy. I once had the privilege of seeing this play performed in a women's prison. These were women who knew what domestic violence is like first-hand and they were captivated by the story. The moment when Claudio rejects Hero was greeted with real emotion by an audience that would have been sure to scoff at a false moment poorly portrayed.

I believe you will be likewise captivated this night, under the stars.

— *Evan Hernandez*



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The Cast



Melody Alvarado (Ursula/Watchman) is thrilled to be performing with Watershed Public Theatre for the first time. She previously appeared in Franklin Theatrical Fellowship's production of *12 Angry Jurors* as an understudy for Jurors 2, 4, 5, and 8. In addition to acting and voice acting, Melody is a professional singer/musician/songwriter, graphic designer and visual artist. She wants to thank her husband Junior for his unwavering love, support and encouragement, and to God for His continual blessings and guidance.



RJ Comer (Leonato) Stage & screen actor RJ Comer is thrilled to be making his Watershed Public Theatre debut in *Much Ado About Nothing*. RJ's recent stage appearances have taken him all over Middle TN: from Mt. Juliet as Mr. Green in *Visiting Mr. Green*, to Robertson County as Dr. Amoss in *Smoke: The Ballad of the Night Riders*, to Franklin as Juror 9 in Franklin Theatrical Fellowships' production of *12 Angry Jurors*. Away from the lights, RJ and his wife own and operate Best Hope Farm in White Bluff, TN.



Jenna Goldsmith (Friar/Party Guest) is jumping back into the wonderful world of theater with Watershed's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* after many years away from the stage. Jenna is an elementary school music teacher here in Columbia and has two daughters with her husband Timothy. Performing has been a lifelong passion for Jenna and she's beyond excited to get to be a part of such an amazing cast!



Reid Gregory (Beatrice) is grateful and excited that you're here, and to be playing Beatrice with such a wonderful team! Reid is a recent graduate of the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts Actor Training Program, and so happy to be in a Shakespeare production. Recent credits: *Proof* (Catherine, Watershed), *Sense and Sensibility* (Margaret, Watershed), *Henry V* (Sir Thomas Grey, PCPA), *Elf: the Musical* (Ensemble, PCPA), *Bright Star* (Ensemble, PCPA). "Speak low if you speak love."



JR Knowles (Don John/Watchman) has appeared in several Watershed Public Theatre productions and currently serves as WPT's Apprentice Company Director. If you or someone you know are interested in joining the 26'-27' Watershed Public Theatre Apprentice Company, contact Education@WatershedTheatre.org. Thank you for supporting your local arts.

The Cast *(continued)*



Brett Lemmers (Dogberry) is so excited to be returning to the Watershed Public Theatre stage! You may have seen him last fall as Billy Bigelow in *Carousel* for his Watershed debut! Some other past shows include *The Sound of Music* (Max), *Hello, Dolly!* (Rudolf/ Barnaby U/s), *Radium Girls* (Arthur Roeder). Brett also hopes you brought a fan with you to fight off this brutal fall heat! Enjoy the show!



Luke McGuire (Conrade/Messenger) is excited to be returning to Watershed Public Theatre for another show. Luke is a teaching artist at Watershed Public Theatre and Nashville Children's Theatre. You might have seen him in Nashville Children's Theatre's *Three Little Kittens* (Pinwheel), Watershed Public Theatre's *Carousel* (Enoch Snow) Springhouse Theatre's *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Ms. Bumbrake) or Murfreesboro Little Theatre's *Puffs* (Wayne). Luke would like to thank the cast, crew, and his friends for this opportunity to be part of this extraordinary show. Luke would also like to thank his fiancée and family for always supporting his passions.



Will Meyer (Claudio) is a recent high school graduate who plans to attend Actor's Bridge Ensemble in Nashville in early 2026. His recent credits include Charles Granillo in Maury County Arts Guild's production of Patrick Hamilton's *Rope*, Demetrius in Watershed Public Theatre's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Algernon Moncrieff in Watershed's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Will wants to thank his friends, family, girlfriend and his psychotic pet, Australian Shepherd Daisy, for all their love and support through his acting journey. Enjoy the show!



Ava Sin (Margaret/Sexton) is super excited to be a part of her first production with Watershed Public Theatre! She recently graduated this past May with her BFA in musical theatre (and minor in environmental sustainability) from Lipscomb University. She is a Southern California native and Franklin local who loves iced lattes, yoga, reading and traveling, in addition to performing, of course! Ava thanks her mom and little sister, Nikole, for all their love and support. @avamariesin



Austin Jeffrey Smith (Don Pedro) is elated to be working with Watershed Public Theatre again! You may have seen him in the most recent production of *Sense and Sensibility* as John Willoughby/John Dashwood. He has had nothing short of a blast getting to collaborate with such a fun cast, crew, and creative team. Austin gives his thanks to everyone involved, to his family and friends for their support, and his wife Isabel for all her love and encouragement. Thanks be to God!

The Cast *(continued)*



Shaelyn Taylor (Hero) is over the moon to return to the stage after two years! She was last seen in Watershed Public Theatre's *Romeo and Juliet* (Benvolia). Some other credits include *Footloose* (Rusty) and *The Book of Will* (Rebecca Heminges). Shaelyn holds a BFA in Acting and spends her life fulfilling her creative spirit. She thanks the audience for supporting WPT and live theatre, her friends and family for supporting her absurdity, and her partner Jonathan for supporting her inner fire, tending it with unwavering care.



Alex White (Benedick) is thrilled to be back at Watershed Public Theatre for another great show. This is his third Shakespeare performance with Watershed and his first Shakespeare lead. Other WPT performances he's been a part of include *A Victorian Christmas Carol*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Alex is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University with a degree in theatre and has been a Tennessean for more than ten years.



Evan Taylor Williams (Borachio) is STOKED to make his return to the Watershed Public Theatre stage! He performed with WPT years ago in two productions of *A Victorian Christmas Carol*. A native of the Nashville area, he has performed on stage, on film and in television, ever since being indelibly bitten by "the bug" when he portrayed Iago in his high school's production of *Othello*. Favorite theatre roles include Biff Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Seymour Krelborn in *Little Shop of Horrors*. Evan would like to dedicate this performance to the lovely *Much Ado About Nothing* cast and crew, to his mother, brothers and sisters-in law and to the memory of his hero and father, the late Scott Williams. Break legs everybody!



Special thanks to the following individuals and organizations for providing in-kind donations of goods and services in support of this production:

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Marshall Carpentry
Sara McCloud
Beverly Mitchell
Alex Saylor
Julia Skinner
Sarah Tatom
Joey Thomas

The Production Team

Patrick Adams (Sound Designer/Engineer) is thrilled to be part of this production. With a passion for music and performance, Patrick has previously appeared in *The Sound of Music* as Captain Von Trapp and *The Wizard of Oz* as The Cowardly Lion. When not performing or audio engineering, he enjoys spending time with his wife and five children.

Sarah Cooper (Assistant Director) is thrilled to be returning to *Much Ado About Nothing* for the second time this year! This past spring she had the opportunity to play the Sexton in Lipscomb University's production and has loved exploring the same show again through a fresh vision and new creative team. Her recent work includes directing the winning show in Lipscomb's 2025 Singarama, where her show received awards in all five categories of the competition and the overall sweepstakes. Sarah is also working on the upcoming production of *Matilda* at Lipscomb, which will take place in November. She is currently pursuing a B.F.A double majoring in Acting and Law, Justice, and Society with a minor in Directing.

Heather Barnard (Technical Crew) is so excited and honored to be working with Watershed Public Theatre for another show. Her previous shows include *Carousel* (Ensemble), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Cobweb) and *Anastasia* (Assistant Stage Manager). She hopes you enjoy the show! All the glory to God!

Caleb Finley (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to be a part of another WPT production. Previous WPT credits include directing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, properties for *Carousel*, Assistant Stage Manager for *Sense & Sensibility*, *Carousel*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The 39 Steps*, and *Robin Hood & Friends*. On stage, they have been seen in WPT's *Anastasia* and heard voicing the Sherriff of Nottingham in *Robin Hood & Friends*.

Susan Gaw (Production Coordinator) holds a degree in theatre from Winthrop University and has been working in live entertainment for more than 30 years. Thanks to Nate, Allison, and Adam for all the stuff!

Evan M. Hernandez (Director) is a an award-winning writer and actor with credits in Nashville, Seattle and New York City. This is his first time directing for Watershed Public Theatre and he would like to thank the amazing team of actors and technicians with whom he has been so privileged to work. His debut novel, *Breaking The Skies*, is available anywhere books are sold. His wife Maggie and his four kids have been the best parts of his every endeavor, creative or otherwise.

Maggie Hernandez (Assistant Director/Dramaturg) is delighted to return to Watershed Public Theatre! You might remember her from Watershed's *Proof* (Claire) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hippolyta). A lifelong actor, Maggie has been performing in plays for as long as she can remember and has shared her passion by teaching youth theatre and Shakespeare in Florida, New York City and Tennessee. Maggie is truly living her dream collaborating with her husband, Evan M. Hernandez, on this production!

The Production Team *(continued)*

Sara McCloud (Costume Designer/Properties) is a passionate reuse textile artist with a knack for discovering unique materials in thrift stores and through creative repurposing. Hailing from Murfreesboro, TN, she honed her costume and fashion design skills at MTSU. Her career took her to New York City, where she made her mark designing for the Fringe Festival, sewing for Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, and collaborating with various costume designers while running crew for off-Broadway shows. Sara is thrilled to return to WPT following her successful designs for *Anastasia* (2023), *Carousel* (2024) and *Proof* (2025) among others. She now resides in Columbia with her two children, Arthur and Beatrice, and her fiancé, Alex Saylor.

Zach Perkins (Crew Lead) recently relocated to Columbia from Kansas. He has worked on several Watershed Public Theatre productions, including serving as Technical Director of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and as Assistant Technical Director of *Anastasia*, *Robin Hood & Friends*, and *The 39 Steps*. Local performance credits include *Romeo & Juliet* and *Those Wicked Stepsisters* with Watershed Public Theatre, as well as *Hamlet for Community Theatre*, *Inherit the Wind* and *Father of the Bride* with Maury County Arts Guild. He has enjoyed getting involved in local theatre and can't wait to do more!

Christian Randell (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be working with Watershed Public Theatre once again on this exciting summer event. With such positive feedback after last years show he is ready for people to have even more fun this year!

Krista Totten (Scenic Artist/Properties) is a scenic artist who is honored to be working with Watershed Public Theatre. She previously worked with WPT on *Sense & Sensibility*, *Proof*, *Carousel*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The 39 Steps*, *Robin Hood & Friends*, *Anastasia*, *Those Wicked Stepsisters*, *Little Women*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*. She began painting sets in 2003 in Indianapolis with Booth Tarkington Civic Theatre. She studied under Kristopher Steege of Marian College. One of her favorite sets was for a childrens production, *The Curious Quest for the Sandman's Sand*. Krista sends a heartwarming thank-you to family and friends for supporting local arts!

Jordan Tudor (Intimacy Director) is a local actress, teacher, and intimacy director. She has a BFA in Musical Theatre from the Chicago College of Performing Arts and an MFA in acting from the University of Louisville. She appeared as Countess Lily in Watershed Public Theatre's *Anastasia* and intimacy directed *The 39 Steps* and *Carousel*.



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| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
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| Julia Clair DiBenedetto | David Sharp |
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Our Mission

At Watershed Public Theatre, we believe that theatre is the ultimate collaborative art and work to bring together arts professionals, volunteers, students and patrons to share in the illumination that only live performance can provide. We maintain our focus on nurturing community and practicing social and environmental responsibility while striving for the highest quality of artistic and educational experiences.

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Evan Hernandez, director of **Watershed's** production of *Much Ado About Nothing* will be directing our **Fall 2025 Intensive!**

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