



VISUAL STORY



The Company of Much Ado About Nothing | Photo: Tim Matheson

Much Ado About Nothing Relaxed Performance

Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival
1695 Whyte Avenue
Señákw/Vanier Park, Vancouver

bardonthebeach.org | Box Office: 604-739-0559 | 12pm–6pm daily

About the Performance

What is a Visual Story?

A visual story gives you an idea of what the theatre experience will be like. This visual story will tell you what to expect during your performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

What is a Relaxed Performance?

Relaxed Performances are for everyone, but especially those who may benefit from a more casual theatre environment. During these performances, we have an open and encouraging attitude toward you moving, making noise and exiting or entering the auditorium freely.

You are welcome to use phones and electronic devices like iPads and headphones during the show. However, please do not take photos of the performers during the pre-show or the performance.

How long is the show?

The performance is approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes long and includes a 20-minute intermission or break during the show.

If you need to take a break during the show, you can leave the theatre even if it is not intermission.

Much Ado About Nothing

Play Summary



Jennifer Lines as Beatrice and Sheldon Elter as Benedick | Photo: Tim Matheson

The play begins with a prologue. Hero stands on a balcony as her cousin Beatrice wonders what a young woman might be thinking when she looks at herself in a mirror.

After the prologue, the play moves to a vineyard, where we meet Leonato. Leonato is the Governor of Messina, but he is also Hero's father and Beatrice's uncle. He learns that his friend Don Pedro will be arriving shortly with his fellow soldiers Claudio and Benedick. Don Pedro's half-brother Don John and Don John's followers, Conrad and Borachio, are with them as well.

When the soldiers arrive, Claudio immediately falls in love with Hero. However, Beatrice and Benedick, who have an ongoing rivalry, quickly start arguing with each other.

After, Claudio tells Benedick that he is in love with Hero. Benedick makes fun of Claudio for wanting to be married, but Don Pedro offers to help Claudio win Hero's heart. Borachio overhears this conversation, and Borachio, Conrad, and Don John come up with a plan to sabotage Hero and Claudio's relationship.

That night, Leonato hosts a masquerade dance to welcome his friends to Messina. Don Pedro pretends to be Claudio and woos Hero in Claudio's name. Even though Don John tries to trick Claudio into thinking that Don Pedro is actually wooing Hero for himself, Don Pedro's plan is successful, and Claudio and Hero are set to be married in a week.

To pass the time until then, Don Pedro decides to have some fun and trick Beatrice and Benedick into falling in love with each other, even though Beatrice and Benedick have both sworn to never marry anyone.

As part of this plan, Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato have Benedick listen in on a conversation where Leonato tells them that Beatrice is actually in love with Benedick. Similarly, Hero and Ursula have a conversation that makes Beatrice think that Benedick is in love with her.

However, while all this is happening, Don John is still determined to ruin Hero and Claudio's wedding. He comes up with a plan to make Claudio think that Hero is not being loyal.

With many characters being tricked and told different things, will true love win in the end, or will all the lies prove to be too much for these characters to handle?

Watch and find out!

The Characters



Sheldon Elter as Benedick and Jennifer Lines as Beatrice
Photo by Tim Matheson

Beatrice and Benedick

Benedick, who is on the left in the leather uniform and black hat, is a nobleman and soldier. Beatrice, who is on the right in the white and orange dress, is Leonato's feisty and witty niece. Both of them have sworn never to marry or fall in love.



Jennifer Tong as Hero and Angus Yam as Claudio | Photo by Tim Matheson

Hero and Claudio

Hero, who is on the left in a white dress, is Leonato's kind and gentle daughter. Claudio, who is on the right in a white shirt, is a young nobleman who fought alongside Don Pedro in the recent wars.



Matthew Ip Shaw as Don Pedro and David Marr as Leonato
Photo by Tim Matheson

Don Pedro and Leonato

Don Pedro, who is on the left wearing all red, is a nobleman that some people call "the Prince." Leonato, who is on the right in a brown vest, is the Governor of Messina and a longtime friend of Don Pedro's. He is also Hero's father and Beatrice's uncle.

The Characters



The Company of Much Ado About Nothing | Photo: Tim Matheson

Margaret, Ursula, and the Attendants

Margaret, who is in the middle of the front row, is Hero's lady in waiting, or helper. Ursula, who is in the front row on the right, is Hero's nurse and Leonato's friend. The other characters you see are attendants who work for Leonato.



Karthik Kadam as Don John | Photo: Tim Matheson

Don John

Don John is Don Pedro's half-brother. Don John recently fought against Don Pedro, but he was forgiven and is now travelling with Don Pedro. He is a sad and angry person by nature, and he comes up with a scheme to ruin other people's happiness as well.



Tanner Zerr as Borachio and Kristi Hansen as Conrad | Photo: Tim Matheson

Borachio and Conrad

Borachio is on the left in a tan shirt and Conrad is on the right in the dark shirt. They are Don John's followers, and they help him carry out his plan to break up Hero and Claudio's wedding.

The Characters



Paige Fraser as Verges and Scott Bellis as Dogberry | Photo: Tim Matheson

Dogberry and Verges

Dogberry, who is on the right in the blue vest and hat, is the leader of the Watch. Dogberry can come off as a bit confused, but he cares a lot about his job. Verges is on the left in the blue vest and shirt. Verges is Dogberry's apprentice and is very eager to learn.



The Company of Much Ado About Nothing | Photo: Tim Matheson

Members of the Watch

These are the members of the Watch. They are regular citizens of Messina who act like a neighbourhood watch, or unofficial police force. Like Dogberry, they might seem a bit in over their heads, but they do manage to get the job done!

What to Expect



Jennifer Tong as Hero | Photo: Tim Matheson

On the stage, you will see a set that looks like an Italian vineyard. The set is also open at the back and looks out onto Se'ákw/Vanier Park, so you might see sights like people walking by, dogs playing, kites flying, and boats on the water.

Characters might enter or exit from unexpected places, like the balcony on stage or through tunnels close to where you are sitting in the audience. They might also have swords or weapons that look real from the audience, but they are all stage props, so they aren't sharp enough to hurt anyone.

Sometimes, there are scenes where it looks like the characters are fighting, pushing each other, or falling down. This is part of the performance, and the actors work together to make sure that no one gets hurt. There are some scenes where characters are shouting at each other, which might be upsetting to watch. There is also some innuendo and mild language in the show.

Content Advisory

Read on for a more detailed list of moments in the play that might be scary, unexpected, or upsetting. If you would prefer to be surprised by the story, you can stop reading here and skip to the last page.

Act I:

- Around 1 minute in, Beatrice looks at some audience members in the front row as if she is speaking to them. If you are sitting in this area, this might be a bit stressful, but you don't need to say anything or respond.
- Around 7 minutes in, there is some loud shouting from the right tunnel when Don Pedro and the other soldiers enter.
- Around 12 minutes in, Claudio and Benedick play fight, and Benedick has Claudio in a headlock.
- Around 22 minutes in, there are some happy cheers and squeals as the characters dance and celebrate at the masquerade party. As the masquerade party continues, there is more playful shouting and general merriment that might be loud and overwhelming.
- Around 26 minutes in, as Beatrice is arguing with Benedick, there is a synchronized clap from all the characters on stage and a sudden lighting change that might be startling.
- Around 38 minutes in, there is loud howling from Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato, and then a quieter howl from Hero.
- Around 39 minutes in, Don John throws Borachio to the floor. This is all choreographed, and Borachio is not being hurt.
- Around 47 minutes in, Benedick hands a guitar to someone sitting in the front row. It gets taken away later in the scene by Don Pedro, so that person doesn't have to give the guitar to anyone or hold on to it for too long.

- Around 56 minutes in, Beatrice looks like she is about to slip off the ladder. This might be stressful to watch, but this is all planned and part of the scene.
- Around 1 hour and 5 minutes in, Dogberry, Verges, and the rest of the Watch enter while singing and beating a drum.

Intermission:

- During the intermission, some members of the Watch might walk around the audience and interact with audience members sitting next to the aisles or in the front rows. They may look angry or suspicious of the audience, but this is all part of the show.

Act Two:

- At the beginning of the second act, there are owl sound effects playing from different areas of the theatre, which might make it sound like there is an owl in the theatre.
- Around 3 minutes in, there is stage fighting and loud shouting as the Watch confronts Conrad and Borachio. As part of the fight, Conrad and Borachio try to run away, but they run into two pillars, hit their heads, and knock themselves out. This is all staged, and they are not actually hurt or unconscious.
- Around 12 minutes in, during the wedding, Claudio grabs Hero's arm and pushes her towards Leonato. Claudio is angry during this scene and accuses Hero of doing something she didn't. Hero is very distressed during this scene, which may be upsetting and difficult to watch.
- Around 22 minutes in, Beatrice is upset about what has happened to Hero and raises her voice at Benedick, and he grabs her arm to try and stop her from leaving.
- Around 27 minutes in, Dogberry threatens Borachio and Conrad with a fake weapon during his interrogation, but it is a comedic scene, and nobody is really in danger.

- Around 31 minutes in, Leonato raises his voice at Claudio.
- Around 33 minutes in, Ursula raises her voice at Claudio and threatens him with her cane, as if she is about to hit him with it. She doesn't use her cane, but it might be upsetting to see.
- Around 36 minutes in, Benedick confronts Claudio about what he has done to Hero, and he angrily pushes past Claudio when he leaves the stage.
- Around 38 minutes in, Don Pedro draws his sword on Borachio and points it at his chest. This is a fake weapon, and Borachio is not actually in danger.

The End!



The Company of Much Ado About Nothing, 2025 | Photo: Tim Matheson

At the end of the play, the actors will dance. Then, they will take a bow to thank you for watching the play.

The audience will clap and maybe even cheer for the performers. Sometimes, they will stand for a standing ovation.

If you want to, you can also clap and cheer for the actors.

Thank you for coming to
Much Ado About Nothing!