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Media contact: Denice Hicks, 615-255-2273
denice@nashvilleshakes.org

Nashville Shakespeare Festival presents *Much Ado About Nothing*
Production set in post-World War II America

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- The Nashville Shakespeare Festival will perform *Much Ado About Nothing*, an enduring audience favorite among the playwright's comedies, from Aug. 16 through Sept. 16 at Centennial Park.

The play, which marks the festival's 25th annual Shakespeare in the Park, will be performed Thursdays through Sundays and Labor Day Monday starting at 7:30 p.m. each evening. The pre-show entertainment begins at 6:30 p.m. with food and drink available for purchase at the park. There is no admission charge, but a \$10 donation is suggested and greatly appreciated.

Denice Hicks, the festival's artistic director, will direct this year's family-friendly production, which is dedicated to all men and women who have served in America's armed forces. Hicks has set the romantic comedy in post-World War II America.

"The end of World War II and the beginning of the baby boom is the perfect setting for this beloved story where love triumphs over adversity," Hicks said. "At the beginning of the play the boys are coming home from the war, and Beatrice (bearing some resemblance to Rosie the Riveter) sees little need for men, although Hero, her cousin, is anxious to get married. The witty banter and comical eavesdropping scenes will be played in the style of a broad, MGM Hollywood musical. Adding music to the story highlights the talents of our Nashville actors while enhancing the festive experience of Shakespeare in the Park."

Evelyn O'Neal Brush will play Beatrice and Patrick Waller has the role of Benedick. The rest of the cast is full of Nashville favorites including Jeff Boyet, Martha Wilkinson, Phil Perry and Brad Brown. Costume design is by June Kingsbury and light design is by Anne Willingham. MadeFirst will design the set, which is modeled after a 1940s supper club with live music every night. Original songs integrated into the play have been composed by Tom McBryde and Janet McMahan.

Nettie Kraft, the festival's education director, is designing an online study guide for the summer production. In addition, school and business workshops are available.

The mission of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival is to educate and to entertain the mid-South region through professional Shakespearean performance throughout the year.

For more information, visit www.nashvilleshakes.org or call 615-255-2273.