



EDUCATOR HANDBOOK

William Shakespeare's MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

August 31-September 24, 2023
The Yard at ONECITY Nashville

September 28-October 1, 2023
Academy Park Franklin



THE NASHVILLE
SHAKESPEARE
FESTIVAL

A NOTE FROM EDUCATION DIRECTOR KATIE BRUNO



I'm so glad you found your way to our Educator Guidebook for **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**. We hope this material sparks conversation and curiosity for you and your students.

It is my pleasure to create inspirational and engaging educational activities for our community. We welcome any feedback, questions, and comments to help keep Nashville Shakes accessible, innovative, and fun! Please feel free to email me at Katie@nashvilleshakes.org.

NOTES FROM DIRECTOR DENICE HICKS - FIRST REHEARSAL ADDRESS

In 2023 we are all yearning for authentic connection. Humans need that. That is what live theater is all about. Art happening in real time co-created with the audience. Shared, meaningful, experience. We all search for truth and honesty, so the concept of mistrust and misunderstanding which is so prevalent in this play is relevant to today's audience. How often do people jump to conclusions that take them down a treacherous path? What does it mean to open up to someone and be honestly vulnerable? How does that change you?



It is said that we as humans revisit our own history every 50 years. That has something to do with the generation that turns 70 revisiting what they did and thought in their 20s and hoping their grandchildren don't suffer the same mistakes.

In 1973 the country was politically divided. Although the importance of it all didn't really ring with me when I was 13, the Vice President, Spiro T Agnew resigned because he hadn't paid income tax on \$27,000 six years earlier. Gerald Ford took his place and then became president when Nixon was indicted on high crimes and misdemeanors and consequently resigned. In January of 1973, the US Supreme Court decided in Roe vs. Wade that abortion was a constitutional right and the Paris Peace Accords were signed. (cont. on next page)

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR'S FIRST REHEARSAL ADDRESS - CONTINUED

The Wounded Knee Occupation in February opened many people's eyes to the injustices continuously inflicted on Indigenous People. Black Power was standing up against police brutality and discrimination, and the message that Black is Beautiful was loud and clear. All that was happening 50 years ago, and we are still fighting.

I love the learning that happens in the play—self-learning, learning to trust, learning to be less critical and more loving, learning to change and accept change. Learning leading to action. Beatrice learns to be kinder, Benedick learns to take others' feelings seriously. Claudio learns to trust—his action is apology and commitment. Borachio learns that his actions can cause harm and he reforms. Conrade learns not to take up with the wrong people. Dogberry and Verges learn that young people can teach them new tricks.

I want this show to revive the hope that we can all still learn! Peace is possible!

Articles for further reading and research:

- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Spiro-Agnew>
- <https://www.tennessean.com/picture-gallery/news/local/2014/02/15/72-photos-nashville-then-picks-of-1973/5519781/>
- <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/roe-v-wade>
- <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/honor-paris-peace-talks-and-release-pows/>
- <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/535.html>
- <https://time.com/6276127/wounded-knee-occupation-history/>
- <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/black-power>



SYNOPSIS

As women are getting ready for a Women's Lib march, Balthasar and the house band entertain them. ("I Am Woman") They've gotten word that a local celebrity, Don Pedro, has returned from Vietnam with several other guys. Leonata, her sister Antonia, daughter Hero, and niece Beatrice, with the other women prepare to welcome them. ("Tie A Yellow Ribbon")

Upon their arrival, the young Count Claudio and Hero are smitten, but Beatrice and Benedick have an ongoing battle of wits, based on their previous relationship. ("Superstition") Leonata, Don Pedro, Claudio and Hero plot to dupe Beatrice and Benedick into each believing the other is in love with them. (cont. on next page)



SYNOPSIS CONT.

Don Pedro's brother Don John and his friend Borachio are troublemakers who trick Claudio into believing Hero is cheating, ("My Mistake") and instead of marrying her, he shames her on their wedding day. She faints and is reported to be dead. Borachio is caught bragging about the trick by the night security guards, and Benedict wins Beatrice's love by defending her cousin's honor and challenging Claudio to a fight.

The truth about the trick is revealed, and Leonata sets up Claudio to be married to her "niece" the next morning. ("Aquarius") There he is reunited with Hero, who he believed dead. Beatrice and Benedick decide to get married, too. Everybody gets on the "Love Train" and dances into the night.



MUCH ABOUT NOTHING



THE NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

* MEMBER ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

† NSF APPRENTICE COMPANY



ANDREW JOHNSON
BENEDICK



MERIT KOCH
BEATRICE



SANDRA BAXTER*
LEONATA



ETHAN JONES
DON PEDRO



LARYSA JAYE
BALTHASAR



JAKHOLBI MURRAY†
CLAUDIO



INEZ VEGA-ROMERO†
HERO



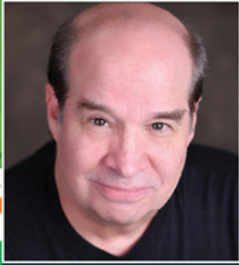
GEROLD OLIVER*
DON JOHN



WILL HENKE
BORACHIO



TEIGE BREWER†
CONRADE



ALAN LEE
DOGBERRY



BRIAN WEBB RUSSELL*
VERGES / FRIAR FRANCIS



KAY AYERS
ANTONIA



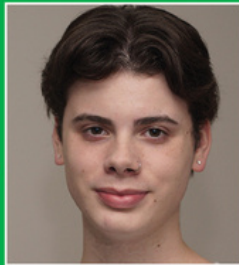
ABI WILLIAMS†
MARGARET



JASMINE TAYLOR†
URSULA



WILL KIRBY†
WATCH 1 / BOY



ALEX KEE†
WATCH 2



CHRISTALYNN HAMER†
FRANCIS SEACOLE /
COUNTY CLERK



EM MILLS†
GEORGE SEACOLE



A G WILSON†
HUGH OATCAKE



MUSIC: HOW DOES MUSIC SERVE THE PLAY?

Music has the ability to set the tone, the mood, the feeling of a specific time and place. In this show, for instance, it can transport the audience to Nashville as it was 50 years ago.

When it comes to Shakespeare's play, music can help the audience grasp the emotional changes throughout the story. Even if you don't understand every single word of the poetry, you can rely on the music to connect the dots through scene transitions. It can help you stay engaged and if there's a song you know and love, it can draw you in even more to the world of the play.

Singer songwriter Larysa Jaye will play Balthasar and will serve as the band leader and music director for the production. Larysa is stepping back onto the theater stage, something she hasn't revisited since high school, and will keep the 1970's playlist flowing as the show progresses.

MUSIC PLAYLIST FOR MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

I Am Woman by Helen Reddy

Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree by Tony Orlando and
Dawn

Dancing in the Moonlight by King Harvest

Right Place Wrong Time by Dr. John

Long Train Running by The Doobie Brothers

Superstition by Stevie Wonder

Let's Get It On by Marvin Gaye

Will It Go Round in Circles by Billy Preston

Could It Be I'm Falling in Love by the Spinners

Chain of Fools by Aretha Franklin

My Mistake by Marvin Gaye

The Odd Couple Theme by Neal Hafti and Sammy Cahn

Chapel of Love by the Dixie Cups

Hawaiian Wedding Song by Elvis Presley

Hawaii 5-0 theme song by the Ventures

Aquarius (Let the Sunshine In) by The 5th Dimension

You Make me Feel Brand New by the Stylistics

[ACCESS YOUTUBE PLAYLIST OF MUSIC HERE](#)

COSTUMES: HOW DO COSTUMES SERVE THE PLAY?

Costumes help audiences understand the time and place of the story. Clothing styles change the way an actor moves as well as how they interact with society. Do they wear a uniform? How is that perceived? Do they wear a flower crown and bell-bottoms? The way characters dress can be clues to their status, age, job, personality, etc...

The fashions of the 1970s favored polyester, flared pants, platform shoes, V-neck velour shirts, bold floral prints, side burns, afros, and mullets. Costume Designer: Alexis Grigsby



SETS: HOW DOES THE SET DESIGN SERVE THE PLAY?

The design of a set helps ground the characters in a specific environment, place, and time. In this case, set designer Shane Lowery has created the outside of Leonata's House. Cornhole boards and hula hoops are used atop the astro turf stage.

"This design went through a couple of generations starting as a historic style mansion like Oaklands or Belmont, with the large wrap-around porch, to a Mid-Century style home. This growth came through multiple discussions with director Denice Hicks and a little inspiration from The Public Theater's recent production of HAMLET. This more modern style (modern for those of us born in the 70's) allowed for a level of realism mixed with functionality, like where to place the band, while providing plenty of places for the cast to hide and eavesdrop. Structurally for outdoors, the size and weight of the porch provides support for the entire set while the open windows and upstage entrance to the house provide areas for airflow."

- Set Designer Shane Lowery

SET - MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING



LANGUAGE IN *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING uses both verse and prose, but is about 70% prose.

Verse: metered language, may or may not rhyme

Prose: conversational language without meter or rhyme

Helpful videos:

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/much-ado-about-nothing/language/key-terms>



HELPFUL VIDEOS FROM NSF EDUCATION DIRECTOR KATIE BRUNO



INTRODUCTION TO NSF'S PRODUCTION



FAMOUS QUOTES FROM *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

(RECOMMENDATION - COLLEGE LEVEL)

Relationships in Much Ado About Nothing

- Take a pairing in this play that is not Beatrice and Benedick or Benedick and Claudio. The two characters you choose can have any relationship to each other, as long as its close: friends, colleagues, master/servant, love interests, siblings, etc.
- Find a dialogue or two between them that you believe epitomizes their relationship.
- Come up with a backstory and characterization for their relationship. How did they meet? How long have they have been friends? How would you describe their relationship? How do they make each other feel? Write down this characterization to share with the class later (bullet point are fine).
- If you haven't already, briefly describe the characters themselves (again, bullet points are fine).
- After you're done writing and discussing, you will act out the dialogue you've chosen, bearing in mind your description of the characters. When you're done, we'll discuss the choices you've made, and also briefly discuss how you might film the scene you've chosen.

SHAKESPEARE'S TIMELINE

- 1558** Queen Elizabeth ascends to the throne.
- 1564** April 23, birth of William Shakespeare, in Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1572-76** Formation of theater companies in London and building of The Theatre by James Burbage, the first free-standing commercial theatre.
- 1579** Sir Thomas North's translation of PLUTARCH'S LIVES published; Shakespeare's major source for JULIUS CAESAR and other Roman plays.
- 1582** Marriage of Anne Hathaway and William Shakespeare.
- 1583** Susanna Shakespeare born.
- 1585** Twins Hamnet and Judith Shakespeare born.
- 1586-88(?)** Sometime in the late 1580s, most likely, Shakespeare leaves Stratford-upon-Avon for London, perhaps with a company of players.
- 1590** Shakespeare appears to be writing plays by this time. Early plays include THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, THE COMEDY OF ERRORS, and HENRY VI, Parts 1, 2, 3.
- 1592** Plague closes London theaters; Shakespeare turns to writing verse.
- 1595-96** Likely date of staging of A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. ROMEO AND JULIET likely written and staged about the same time.
- 1598-99** The Burbages and Shakespeare and others finance the building of the Globe Theater on the south bank of the Thames, just outside the city of London. JULIUS CAESAR, HENRY V, and AS YOU LIKE IT may have been among the plays to open the Globe Theatre.
- 1603** Queen Elizabeth dies; James the VI of Scotland ascends the throne of England and becomes James I of England. James becomes the patron of Shakespeare's theater company (now known as "The King's Men").
- 1605-06** KING LEAR likely written; first record of court performance is Christmas 1606.
- 1606** MACBETH likely written; perhaps written almost the same time as KING LEAR.
- 1612-14** Shakespeare "retires" to Stratford; however, he continues to collaborate with others writing plays.
- 1616** April 23, Shakespeare dies and is buried at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1623** First Folio—a collected "coffee table" edition of 37 plays—published by Shakespeare's fellow actors, John Hemings and William Condell.

USEFUL RESOURCES ON SHAKESPEARE'S BIOGRAPHY

Bate, Jonathan. *Soul of the Age: A Biography of the Mind of William Shakespeare*. New York: Random House, 2010.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. New York: Norton, 2004.

Schoenbaum, Samuel. *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975.

Folger Shakespeare Library: <http://www.folger.edu/shakespeares-life>

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: <http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/faqs.html>



MORE ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://www.bard.org/study-guides/much-ado-about-nothing-study-guide/>

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/much-ado-about-nothing/>

Virtual Tour of The Globe Theater

<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/about-us/virtual-tour/>

Internet Shakespeare (many of these editions have been edited, making them among the most reliable on the internet): <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/>

Folger Shakespeare Library (text plus additional resources):

<https://www.folger.edu/>

Open Source Shakespeare: <https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/>

Shakespeare Resource Center (a good, general info site for Shakespeare): <https://www.bardweb.net/index.html>

Ted-Ed YouTube Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5lsuyUNu_4

Royal Shakespeare Company: <https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/>

PBS Learning Media: <https://tn.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/shakespeare-uncovered/>

BBC Teach Videos: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0016bbx>



READING A PLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

Nashville Shakespeare Festival's Shakespeare Allowed model

Often a simple exercise of reading key scenes aloud can make Shakespeare's words meaningful. The Nashville Shakespeare Festival sponsors a Shakespeare Allowed round-table read of a play the first Saturday of each month at the main Nashville Public Library. In this format, everyone at the table (or in a desk in a classroom) reads in sequence, rather than taking roles. Everyone participates and gets to try his or her hand at reading the text. Teachers may emphasize that the effort is primary. Teachers can select a scene or short segment to read aloud as an exercise to lay the groundwork for a class discussion or another class activity.

Staged readings model

Students with limited exposure to or experience with theater can benefit from an effort to read a scene or segment of a play aloud, using basic blocking and interaction among roles. In this model, students select a scene or part of a scene (~ 50 lines makes a good length) to read in roles. Working with their classmates, they can decide upon a few simple movements to dramatize the action. The emphasis is on students' making sense of the language and beginning to envision how interactions are shown on stage. Thus, rehearsal time should be short (15-20 minutes), and the students can rehearse and stage the scenes in one class period. One effective strategy is to have two groups of students stage the same scene, and invite the class members to comment on differences.

Creating multi-vocal readings of poetry and passages

Help students develop a sense of meaning and of shifts in tone or poetic diction by having students work in groups of 3-4 to read a single passage. This project can begin with a sonnet; a typical Shakespearean sonnet divides along quatrains (4 lines, with rhyme) and ends with a couplet: 4- 4- 4- 2. Students can decide pace, inflection, emphasis, and tone. Ask students to think of themselves as a jazz group, or a quartet, or a rap group, using their voices to convey meaning.

ABOUT THE NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

The mission of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival is to educate and entertain the Mid-South community through professional theatrical experiences.

The Festival enriches and unifies our community with bold, innovative and relevant productions along with empowering, participatory educational programs, setting the community standard of excellence in educational outreach and performances of Shakespeare's plays.

The Festival hosts Summer Shakespeare outdoors annually, as well as Winter/Spring Shakespeare productions indoors with daytime student matinees. The Festival also sponsors numerous workshops, educational outreach programs, and public events.

www.nashvilleshakes.org

Facebook: The Nashville Shakespeare Festival

Instagram/Twitter: @nashvilleshakes

NSF APPRENTICE COMPANY

ApCo training is an intensive for aspiring theatre lovers age 13+ led by the Executive Artistic Director and Education Director, along with guest artists hired from the professional talent in Nashville. Apprentices receive over 70 hours of performance training in movement, voice and diction, acting, text analysis, and character work, and then perform supporting roles in the Summer Shakespeare production.





A BIG STAGE FOR BIG DREAMS

Creativity comes to life at Belmont University, with top-ranked programs in the arts, theatre, music, film and design. Now, with the opening of the extraordinary Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, there's no better time for the creative community to engage with all Belmont has to offer.

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Fisher
Center



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