

Chicago Shakespeare Theater announces cast and creative team for

Much Ado About Nothing

Just in time for the holiday season, Shakespeare's wittiest rom-com is "as merry as the day is long!"

Directed by Selina Cadell and running November 18-December 21 in the Courtyard Theater

Chicago—October 14, 2025—[Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) (CST) announces the cast and creative team for *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare's wittiest rom-com playing just in time for the holiday season, **November 18-December 21**. Beatrice is living it up as a fiercely independent woman who answers to no man. Benedick is an avowed bachelor with no plans to settle down. But when these stubborn singles finally meet their match under the sultry Sicilian sun, who can resist romance? Linguistic fireworks and a hilarious battle of wits dazzle in the original "enemies-to-lovers" rom-com. Staged by famed director **Selina Cadell**, you'll be transported on holiday to the warm embrace of the Italian countryside in CST's **Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**, considered one of the finest spaces to experience Shakespeare's stories live in performance. **Deborah Hay** and **Craig Bierko** star as Beatrice and Benedick, leading an exceptionally talented ensemble cast that also features **Debo Balogun**, **Mark Bedard**, **Joey Chelius**, **Sean Fortunato**, **Kevin Gudahl**, **Suzanne Hannau**, **Colin Huerta**, **Samuel B. Jackson**, **Mi Kang**, **Jaylon Muchison**, **Felicia Oduh**, **Yona Moises Olivares**, **Jeff Parker**, and **Tiffany Scott**.

"*Much Ado About Nothing* is a wonderfully well-rounded, mature, romantic story which embraces all the ridiculous ups and downs of our own behavior when we're in the throes of deep feeling," shared Artistic Director **Edward Hall**. "It also offers some of Shakespeare's wittiest prose and most dazzling language. A truly warm and inviting treat for audiences during the holiday season."

Director **Selina Cadell** stated, "In a turbulent world, where charm turns on a dime to hot-headed decisions and disproven assumptions, *Much Ado About Nothing* is a play for our times, reflecting the tangles of a powerful patriarchy and the wrongful accusations made when power and reputation take precedent over listening and truth. Shakespeare balances this tragic lens with comedy and compassion, as Beatrice and Benedick guide themselves and us through the obstacles that can thwart enduring love."

In the role of Beatrice, **Deborah Hay** returns to Chicago Shakespeare after appearing in *As You Like It* and *The School for Lies*. Her other credits include nine seasons at the Shaw Festival and seven seasons at the Stratford Festival. **Craig Bierko** makes his Chicago Shakespeare debut in the role of Benedick, with Broadway credits including *The Music Man* (Tony Award nomination), *Guys and Dolls*, *Matilda the Musical*, and *Girl from the North Country*. The company also includes **Debo Balogun** (*Richard III*, *Measure for Measure* at CST), **Mark Bedard** (*All's Well That Ends Well*, *Richard III* at CST), **Joey Chelius** (*Sunny Afternoon* at CST), **Sean Fortunato** (multiple CST credits, including *Sunny Afternoon*, *Henry V*, and *Richard III*), **Kevin Gudahl** (multiple CST credits, including *The Comedy of Errors*, *Measure for Measure*, and *As You Like It*), **Suzanne Hannau** (*The Lord of the Rings: A Musical Tale* at CST), **Colin Huerta** (CST debut, with credits at The Colony Theatre, Jackalope Theater, and DePaul University), **Samuel B. Jackson** (CST debut, with credits at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and Black Ensemble Theatre), **Mi Kang** (CST debut, with credits at Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, and TimeLine Theatre), **Jaylon Muchison** (*Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry V* at CST), **Felicia Oduh** (*Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet* and *Measure for Measure* at CST), **Yona Moises Olivares** (CST debut, with credits at Steppenwolf Theatre, About Face Theatre, and Remy Bumpo), **Jeff Parker** (*The Lord of the Rings: A Musical Tale*, *As You Like It*, *The King's Speech* and more at CST), and **Tiffany Scott** (*The King's Speech*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and more at CST).

Director **Selina Cadell** is an acclaimed director and actress. She directed Eddie Izzard's *Hamlet*, which saw a record-breaking run at Chicago Shakespeare last year, and also directed Izzard in *Charles Dickens' Great Expectations*. Her other directing credits include *Love for Love* (Royal Shakespeare Company), *The Life I Lead* (West End), *The Double Dealer* (Orange Tree London), *The Rivals* (Arcola London), *The Way of the World* and *The Rake's Progress* (Wilton's London). As an actor, her many credits include *Top Girls* (NYC) /Obie Award, *Stanley* (NYC), *The Madness of King George* (NYC), *Twelfth Night*, *The Cherry Orchard* (NYC), and *A Monster Calls* (London), and she has been seen on TV in *Midsomer Murders*, *Queens of Mystery*, *Poirot*, and *Doc Martin* (Mrs. Tishell). Cadell also runs an opera company with Eliza Thompson, OperaGlass Works, which released a filmed version of *La Traviata* earlier this year.

The creative team for *Much Ado About Nothing* also includes **Amber Mak** (Movement Director), **Tom Piper** (Scenic and Costume Designer), **Jason Lynch** (Lighting Designer), **Nicholas Pope** (Sound Designer), **Eliza Thompson** (Composer), **Bob Mason** (Casting), **Nathan Allen** (Associate Director), **Jinni Pike** (Production Stage Manager), **Katrina Herrmann** (Assistant Stage Manager), and **Tuesday Thacker** (Production Assistant).



PERFORMANCE LISTING

- Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. (*no matinee November 19, no evening performance November 26*)
- Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. (*no performance on Thanksgiving, November 27*)
- Fridays at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (*no matinee November 22*)
- Sundays at 2:00 p.m. (*plus 6:30 p.m. on November 30*)

More information at chicagoshakes.com/muchado or on social media at [@chicagoshakes](https://twitter.com/chicagoshakes).

Much Ado About Nothing

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Selina Cadell

Creative Team

Selina Cadell - Director
Amber Mak - Movement Director
Tom Piper - Scenic and Costume Designer
Jason Lynch - Lighting Designer
Nicholas Pope - Sound Designer
Eliza Thompson - Composer
Bob Mason - Casting
Nathan Allen - Associate Director
Jinni Pike - Production Stage Manager
Katrina Herrmann - Assistant Stage Manager
Tuesday Thacker - Production Assistant

Cast

Debo Balogun - Don Pedro
Mark Bedard - Don John
Craig Bierko - Benedick
Joey Chelius - Messenger/Second Watch
Sean Fortunato - Dogberry
Kevin Gudahl - Leonato
Suzanne Hannau - First Watch
Deborah Hay - Beatrice
Colin Huerta - Conrade
Samuel B. Jackson - Claudio
Mi Kang - Hero
Jaylon Muchison - Friar/Verges/Balthasar
Felicia Oduh - Ursula
Yona Moises Olivares - Borachio
Jeff Parker - Antonio/Sexton
Tiffany Scott - Margaret
Will Burdin - Understudy
Jonathan Gillard Daly - Understudy
Caroline Kidwell - Understudy
Josh Zambrano - Understudy

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER (CST)

CST is a leading international theater company and the nation's largest year-round theater dedicated to the works of Shakespeare. Under the visionary leadership of Artistic Director Edward Hall and Executive Director Kimberly Motes, the Regional Tony Award recipient is committed to creating vivid, entertaining theatrical experiences that invigorate and engage people of all ages and identities by illuminating the complexity, ambiguity, and wonder of our world. Each year, nearly a quarter of a million people experience CST's artistry through more than 12 productions. With Shakespeare at the heart of the artistic work, CST also produces compelling, contemporary stories from fresh voices of today. CST brings the world to Chicago and sends Chicago out into the world as Chicago's foremost presenter of international theater, and consistent producer of North American and world premieres. Serving more students and teachers than any theater in the city, CST annually welcomes more than 20,000 students to performances and programs like Chicago Shakespeare SLAM, alongside professional development opportunities for teachers. CST activates its campus with three venues: 700-seat The Yard; the 500-seat Jentes Family Courtyard Theater; and the 200-seat Carl and Marilyn Thoma Upstairs Studio. Free programs like Shakes in the City bring performances to parks and community spaces across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. Shared humanity and unforgettable stories—now THIS is Chicago Shakespeare.

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