

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
ADAPTED BY GREG PARMETER

DIRECTOR
GREG PARMETER

STAGE MANAGER
AVERY WESTON*

LIGHTING DESIGNER
AMBER MEYERS*

DRAMATURG
VAL FISH*

COSTUME & MAKEUP
DESIGNERS

ANNA WOODEN
MICHELLE COLLYAR

SOUND DESIGNER
CONNOR PANGBURN*

SCENIC DESIGNER &
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
NATE MOHLMAN

*DENOTES STUDENT DESIGNER/MANAGER

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1 & 7-8, 2025 AT 7:30 P.M.
MARCH 2 & 9, 2025 AT 2:00 P.M.
TOLAND THEATRE, LOWE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

CAST

LEONATO, THE GOVERNOR OF MESSINA.....NATHAN ZIRK
HERO, HIS DAUGHTER.....EMMA CARTWRIGHT
BEATRICE, HIS NIECE.....ALYSSA MEISSNER
ANTONIA, HIS SISTER.....KIRA HIRSCH
MARGARET, A GENTLEWOMAN.....ELLA KERNEN
URSULA, A GENTLEWOMAN.....MADELINE BORSKI
FRIAR FRANCIS, A FRANCISCAN FRIAR.....GEORGE SUBRA

DON PEDRO, PRINCE OF ARAGON.....WILL NY SSE
COUNT CLAUDIO, A YOUNG LORD.....A. MUMA
SIGNIOR BENEDICK, A GENTLEMAN.....JOSHUA KAISER
BALTHASAR, PEDRO'S AIDE-DE-CAMP & MUSICIAN.....PAIGE VERBSKY

DON JOHN, DON PEDRO'S BASTARD BROTHER.....AIDAN TUCKER
BORACHIO, ONE OF DON JOHN'S MEN.....JACK AUGUSTINE
CONRADE, DON JOHN'S GIRLFRIEND.....ALISSA JACKSON

DOGBERRY, THE CONSTABLE OF MESSINA.....VAL FISH
VERGES, HIS DEPUTY.....NICHOLAS BILYEU
GEORGE SEACOAL, A NIGHT WATCHMAN.....BRONWYN BOND
HUGH OATCAKE, A NIGHT WATCHMAN.....TRINITY ALICIA HOBOT
JACK STAGGARD, A NIGHT WATCHMAN.....MIKAYLA FISCHER
SEXTON, THE CITY MAGISTRATE.....MOLLY FREY

ENSEMBLE MUSICIAN (ACOUSTIC GUITAR).....SAM RICHARDSON
ENSEMBLE MUSICIAN (PERCUSSIONS).....MATTHEW HILLSTROM
ENSEMBLE MUSICIAN (BASS/BANJO).....SYLVIE TOWNE

BIOGRAPHIES

Jack Augustine (Borachio)--Jack is a first year Musical Theatre major and is thrilled to be performing in his second production at UWL! He was most recently seen as The Narrator in *Puffs*. He would like to thank his family for their continued support, as well as his friends at UWL for their kindness and inspiration.

Nicholas Bilyeu (Verges)--Nick is very excited to be on the Toland stage for his final show at UWL! Previously, he has most recently been seen in *Puffs* (Ernie Mac, etc.) and *Dr. Faustus* (Wagner, Pride, Frederick). He'd like to thank his family, friends, and Alé for always supporting him, and UWL's theatre faculty for the opportunities to do what he loves. Enjoy the mayhem!

Bronwyn Bond (George Seacoal)--Bronwyn is thrilled to be taking part in her first production at UWL as the character George Seacoal. She is a senior getting her degree in English Writing and Rhetoric and has had a particular interest in Shakespeare since she was young.

Madeline Borski (Ursula)--Madeline is a sophomore at UWL studying Musical Theatre and Communications. She is elated to be making her debut on the UWL stage as Ursula. Some of her favorite past performances include Beth in *Little Women* and Wednesday in *The Addams Family*. She would like to thank her close friends and family for being her cheerleaders always.

Emma Cartwright (Hero)--Emma is a second year at UW-La Crosse, and this is her third production with the Department of Theatre and Dance. She is thrilled to be working with such talented people, and she would like to thank her family, friends, peers, and educators for their love and support.

Michelle Collyar (Asst. Costume Shop Manager)--With an MFA in design, Michelle manages the costume shop and teaches costume technology. Having designed/constructed costumes and dancewear for regional and academic theatres, Michelle recently worked on two television series filmed in *Canada: Let's Get Physical* starring Jane Seymour and *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, a Canadian mock news series.

Leah Costello (Asst. Stage Manager)--Leah is a first-year student majoring in Stage Management. She's eager to be assistant stage managing for her first time at UWL! She's grateful to be learning from and working with awesome people. Enjoy the show!

BIOGRAPHIES

Jesse Curvin (Scene Shop Supervisor/Asst. Technical Director)--Dylan is excited to begin his first year with the UWL Department of Theatre and Dance. Dylan is from Piedmont, Alabama, and studied at Jacksonville State University where he obtained his B.A. in Integrated Studies with a focus on Theatre. He also has been working professionally in theatre for around 10 years with most recent credits including *Sweeney Todd and The Barber of Seville* with Des Moines Metro Opera Theatre, *The Cher Show*, *STOMP*, and *Fiddler on the Roof* Broadway tours.

Mikayla Fischer (Jack Staggard)--Mikayla is a third-year Communication Studies major with a minor in Theatre Performance. She thanks her friends and family for all their love and support, and she is excited to perform as Jack Staggard in her first UWL production. Enjoy the show!

Val Fish (Dogberry/Dramaturg)--Val is overjoyed to be appearing in her last production at UWL! Val is a senior Theatre Performance major with a Creative Writing minor and has been seen in *Puffs* (Leanne and others), *The Wolves* (#13), and *Dragons Love Tacos* (Blue Dragon). Val is also the dramaturg for this production. Special thanks to Greg, Laurie, the friends she's made in theatre, and her family for all of the support! Enjoy the show!

Molly Frey (Sexton)--Molly is so excited to be in her first Shakespearean play ever. From falling in love with *Much Ado About Nothing* when she saw it at the Globe Theatre in London to now being in it is something truly special. She started acting when she was 13 years old and has never left the stage since. She would like to thank her family and friends both near and far for their support, and she hopes you enjoy the show!

David Harlan (Sound Supervisor)--David is in his first year with UWL Department of Theatre and Dance as faculty Sound Designer and Sound/Lighting Supervisor. He has an MFA in theatre from the University of Idaho and worked for UI, Idaho Repertory Theatre and his own theatre company - Moscow Art Theatre (Too) - as an actor, director, designer and technician for the past 17 years.

Dawn Havican (Asst. Stage Manager)--Dawn is a second year Arts Administration major. When not at school, she can be found working the box office at the La Crosse Community Theater or coaching middle school drama and forensics in Holmen. Dawn would like to thank her husband Darryn for his continued support and her dogs, Finn and Riley, for the after-school puppy snuggles.

BIOGRAPHIES

Matthew Hillstrom (Musician)--Matthew Hillstrom is a junior at UWL. He is majoring in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. Besides his interest in science, Matthew has played percussion since he was in elementary school. He's continued to play, and he hasn't gone a month without touching a pair of sticks since.

Kira Hirsch (Antonia)--Kira is a junior at UW-La Crosse and this will be her fifth time hitting the stage here. She was previously in *Puffs* and *Orlando*. Kira is very excited to be a part of this production, and she hopes you enjoy the show.

Trinity Alicia Hobot (Hugh Oatecake)--Trinity Alicia is ecstatic to be performing in her first college play! She is a sophomore with a major in Musical Theatre and a double minor in Dance and Costume Design. Trinity is a member of the Night Owls A Cappella Group and Period Club at UWL. Enjoy the show.

Alissa Jackson (Conrade)--Alissa is a sophomore Musical Theatre major with a minor in Business. She is honored to bring Conrade alive on this stage! She wants to thank her parents, siblings, and friend group for believing in her. Everyone has put a lot into this show, so she hopes you enjoy yourselves!

Josh Kaiser (Signior Benedick)--Josh is so excited to be performing Shakespeare on the Toland stage! He was seen in *Puffs* last semester slinging spells and behind the scenes assistant stage managing *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*. He would like to thank his parents, friends, and teachers for always encouraging and supporting him. Enjoy the show!

Ella Kernen (Margaret)--Ella is a first year Archaeology major at UWL with minors in Theatre and German. She is so incredibly thankful to be playing Margaret in *Much Ado About Nothing*. She has been a part of theatre productions since she was 6 years old and is excited to be continuing into her college career. Most importantly, she wants to thank her friends and family for always supporting her on her theatre journey.

SPECIAL THANKS

Viterbo Department of Theatre
La Crosse Community Theatre
UWL Department of Music
Nic Barilar
Mary Trotter
Ron Stoffregen



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BIOGRAPHIES

Laurie Kineman (Production Manager)--Laurie is Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance where she teaches stage management, arts administration, dramaturgy, and serves as the Production Manager. She has worked professionally in theatre, dance, and opera. Laurie was co-author and projections designer for the department's world premiere of *Severe Clear- September 11 from Memory to History*. Other UWL credits include stage management of *26 Pebbles*, *Big Fish*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Spring Awakening*, and dramaturgy for *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Laramie Project*, and *Proof*. She is a member of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology, the Stage Managers Association, the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, and Actors' Equity Association. Laurie is the author of *The Stage Manager's Toolkit*, published by Routledge Press.

Mandy Kolbe (Props Designer)--Mandy earned their MFA in scenic and lighting design from Ohio State University. They have designed over 50 shows at UWL including *A Christmas Carol*, *Eleemosynary*, *26 Pebbles*, *Hair*, *Twelfth Night*, *Urinetown*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, and many more. They have also designed for the Ashland Theatre, Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre, The Brick, and the Hudson Guild.

Alyssa Meissner (Beatrice)--Alyssa is thrilled to be playing Beatrice in UWL's production of *Much Ado About Nothing!* She is a senior Musical Theatre major with a minor in Dance. She was most recently seen on stage at UWL in *Puffs* as Megan Jones. Alyssa would like to thank her friends and family for their support!

Amber Meyers (Lighting Designer)--Amber is a third year Design/Technical major with a Stage Management minor and is excited to be working on this production as the lighting designer. She would like to thank the people who helped get her here as she is grateful for all of the new opportunities. She is excited for you all to watch, and hopes you enjoy the show!

Nate Mohlman (Scenic Designer/Technical Director)--Nate joined the UWL Department of Theatre and Dance this year as the Scene Shop Supervisor and Assistant Technical Director. He has worked for the Utah Shakespeare Festival, the McLeod Summer Playhouse, Theatre West Summer Repertory and the Eau Claire Children's Theatre. He has received the Excellence in Technical Production Award at SIU, the Bernard C. Tushaus Award for Technical Excellence, the Alpha Psi Omega Dr. Hal Shiffler Award, and the Scarlet Mask.

BIOGRAPHIES

A. Muma (Count Claudio)--A. is a junior Performance and Biology double major, excited to take the stage for the eighth time at UWL! Most recently, they performed in *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, *Puffs*, and *Orlando*. They want to thank their family and friends for all the support, and they hope you enjoy the show!

Will Nysse (Don Pedro)--Will is very excited to be playing Don Pedro in the university's production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. This is his sixth show at UWL and his previous UWL credits include Wickham in *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* and Faustus in *Dr. Faustus*. Enjoy the show!

Connor Pangburn (Sound Designer)--Connor is a junior at UWL. He is looking forward to creating an engaging world for people to experience Shakespeare.

Greg Parmeter (Director)--Greg teaches voice, movement, and performance here at UWL. He earned his MFA in Acting from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and spent seasons with the Nebraska Rep, Virginia Shakespeare Festival, Hampstead Stage Company, and Northern Fort Repertory. Greg was the Artistic Director at La Crosse Community Theatre where he directed the regional premiers of *Les Miserables* and *Mary Poppins* as well as the national community theatre premier of *Billy Elliot the Musical*. Productions at UWL include *The Laramie Project*, *The Country Wife*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. He also directed and co-wrote UWL's award-winning original production *Severe Clear: September 11 from Memory to History*.

Sam Richardson (Musician)--Sam recently graduated from UWL with a major in Literary & Cultural Studies and a minor in Music Performance. He enjoys cooking, reading, hiking, and playing jazz with friends. This fall, Sam is looking forward to pursuing a graduate degree in American literature.

George Subra (Friar Francis)--George is a junior studying English Education at UWL. George is a Resident Assistant (RA) in Laux Hall and participates in the Screaming Eagles Marching Band. This is George's first time in a UWL theatre production.

BIOGRAPHIES

Sylvia Towne (Musician)--Sylvie was formerly a Music Performance major at UWL and has been playing bass for 14 years. She recently learned to play the banjo for La Crosse Community Theatre's production of *Bright Star* and will also be playing banjo in the upcoming production of *Cabaret* at UWL.

Aidan Tucker (Don John)--Aidan is a sophomore Marketing major, and this will be his second UWL performance, previously being in *Puffs*. Aidan is incredibly excited to get the opportunity to perform again and hopes you will enjoy the show!

Paige Verbsky (Balthasar)--Paige is a senior studying Arts Administration and Performance. Paige has loved being an active member of the Department of Theatre and Dance, with a few past roles including Orlando in *Orlando*, Mrs. Reynolds in *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, and #25 in *The Wolves*. Paige is so excited for everyone to enjoy this adaptation of *Much Ado About Nothing* and to do her final show with such a wonderful group of friends. A special thank you to her friends and family. She hopes you enjoy the world of Messina!

Avery Weston (Stage Manager)--Avery is a junior Stage Management major with minors in Arts Administration and Theater Design/Technology. She was most recently the props designer for *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* and stage manager for *Puffs* and is so excited to be working on her first Shakespeare production! They would like to thank their friends and family for their constant love and support. Enjoy the show!

Anna Wooden (Costume Designer)--Anna is excited to join the UWL Department of Theatre and Dance for her first year as faculty. She teaches Costume Design/History, Costume Crafts, Stage Makeup, and Rendering for the Designer. She received her MFA in Stage Design from Northwestern University. Anna specializes in costume design while also working in props, puppetry, sculpture, illustration, and fabrication. She is an artistic associate of Cloudgate Theatre. Favorite credits include *Get Out Alive (Haven)*, *Pinnocchio (The House)*, *Footloose (Marriott Lincolnshire)*, *Second Skin (Cloudgate)*, and *Marys Seacole (Griffin)*. Currently her work can be seen at film festivals in the short musical documentary *Happy Songs About Unhappy Things*.

Nathan Zirk (Leonato)--Nathan, a freshman, is thrilled to perform in his second UWL production. A passionate theater artist, writer, and advocate, he's previously played roles such as Bobby Strong (*Urinetown*), Davey (*Newsies*), Lion (*Hen House*), Benedick (*Much Ado About Nothing*) and Sebastian (*The Little Mermaid*), bringing energy and heart to every performance.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

How can a play about so much claim to be about nothing? So much happens in *Much Ado About Nothing* that it could be argued that it is a play about everything. There's a masquerade party, an engagement, an aborted wedding, a funeral, a trial, and yet another wedding, all in the immediate aftermath of war. So what gives, Will?

It may help to know that Shakespeare loved nothing so much as a good pun, and if said pun was also a fairly racy double entendre, all the better. The title *Much Ado About Nothing*, is both. First off, "nothing" is a pun for the word "noting," here meant "to spy, or eavesdrop." Every major complication is either caused or resolved by characters hearing and seeing things that they were either not meant to or meant to misconstrue. The double entendre here is "nothing" as in, "no thing." As in "she has nothing between her legs." So the play, rightly, could be titled Much Ado About...well, you get the idea. A play about nothing indeed.

This may be the most grounded of Shakespeare's comedies; no fairies, no supernatural occurrences, no deus ex-machina to bring about the solution. It is a play that could just as easily end in tragedy. (The similarities between this and *Othello* must be noted. See what I did there?) Clearly, this is a play about something. It is about people navigating love and life in a changing world. And love and life are never darker than when they are held to be nothing.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Asst. Stage Manager.....Leah Costello,
Dawn Havican
Intimacy Choreographer.....Mary Trotter
Choreographer.....Anna Montgomery, Kaitlyn Pyburn
Light/Sound Supervisor.....David Harlan
Scene Shop Supervisor.....Dylan Curvin
Costume Shop
Supervisor.....Michelle Collyar
Production Manager.....Laurie Kineman
Sound Board Op.....Alec Hoang
Light Board Op.....Angelina Tomko
Costume Shop Staff.....Ella Dummer,
Lillie Helseth, Miranda Logan,
Vienna Tomkalski, Elin Voegeli
Costume Shop Crew.....Ellie Brown,
Ariana D’Silva, Lauren Heckert, Gracie Lochowicz,
Jensen Popp, Reyna Rasmussen
Costume Run Crew.....Paige Buboltz,
Liana Daniels, Sophia Szymanski
Light Shop Staff.....Coleman Breedlove,
Leah Costello, Sage Goetsch, Amber Meyers
Light Crew.....Owen Corteen, Lily Engen,
Sam Oligney, Aubry Pufahl,
Carmen Rislow, Ariana Schnurr
Sound Shop Staff.....Connor Pangburn

Publicity.....Marley Hughes,
Jersey Lobner, Sophia West
Box Office.....Morgan Millard
Run Crew.....Lucas Dhein, Amelia Koch,
Avery Renslow, Nicholas Sagen
Poster Design.....Laurie Kineman
Cast Photos.....David Harlan
Lobby Display.....Emma Reinhardt
House Manager.....Ellie Hemming
Front of House.....Addison Anderson, Riley Beazley,
Morgan Jensen, Blake Matthys, Grace Peterson,
Tyler Stafford, Dylan Stone, Vilai Xiong
Scene Paint Staff.....Natalie Giddings,
Sage Goetsch, Hailey Kluck,
Magdelana Stauffer, Paige Verbsky, Avery Weston
Scene Paint Crew.....Sofie Hammen,
Apollo Kasprzyk, Olivia Roe
Scene Shop Staff.....Josh Kaiser,
Jezelyn Lorraine, Josie Lucksted,
Michael Muma, River Podjasek,
Caden Prentice, Julia Sanchez, Avery Weston
Scene Shop Crew.....Mitchelle Ballweg,
Kyle Betz, Amelia Bonnett, Karlyn Brockman,
Joseph Bruss, Veronica Eich, Mackenzie Fitzgerald,
Jacob Hachey, Matthew Hernandez, Jack Kicera,
Alyssa King, Jonah Marshall, Danica Neville,
Hannah Olson, Mckenzie Pertzborn, Roman Ranallo,
Matt Raymon, Brice Robinson, Grace Roder,
Dylan Schaefer, Aidan Solsvig, Kiara Therriault,
Michael Turner, DeLana Vanasse, James Vanderloop,
Alex Walker, Gabrielle Whitworth, Hannah Zumach

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LA CROSSE community THEATRE

KENNEDY CENTER AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATRE FESTIVAL

Started in 1969 by Roger L. Stevens, the Kennedy Center's founding chairman, the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF) is a national theater program involving 18,000 students from colleges and universities nationwide which has served as a catalyst in improving the quality of college theater in the United States. The KCACTF has grown into a network of more than 600 academic institutions throughout the country, where theater departments and student artists showcase their work and receive outside assessment by KCACTF respondents.

The goals of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival are: to encourage, recognize, and celebrate the finest and most diverse work produced in university and college theater programs; to provide opportunities for participants to develop their theater skills and insight; and achieve professionalism; to improve the quality of college and university theater in America; to encourage colleges and universities to give distinguished productions of new plays, especially those written by students; the classics, revitalized or newly conceived; and experimental works.

Through state, regional, and national festivals, KCACTF participants celebrate the creative process, see one another's work, and share experiences and insights within the community of theater artists. The KCACTF honors excellence of overall production and offers student artists individual recognition through awards and scholarships in playwriting, acting, criticism, directing, and design.

The KCACTF is a year-round program in eight geographic regions in the United States. Regional activities are coordinated through eight KCACTF regional chairs and eight KCACTF playwriting awards chairs. With funding and administrative support from the Kennedy Center, the regional chair coordinates with the Co-Managers of KCACTF all aspects of the adjudication of productions on the local and regional level and supervises regional-level KCACTF award competitions. The playwriting chair works with schools that have entered new and student-written plays by providing expertise in the development of new scripts--assessment specifically designed for a developing play--and by providing information on the numerous playwriting awards offered.

In January and February of each year, regional festivals showcase the finest of each region's entered productions and offer a variety of activities, including workshops, symposia, and regional-level award programs. Regional festival productions are judged by a panel of three judges selected by the Kennedy Center and the KCACTF national committee. These judges in consultation with the Artistic Director select four to six of the best and most diverse regional festival productions to be showcased in the spring at the annual noncompetitive national festival at the Kennedy Center, all expenses paid.

Since its inception, KCACTF has given more than 400,000 college theater students the opportunity to have their work critiqued, improve their dramatic skills and receive national recognition for excellence.

More than 16 million theatergoers have attended approximately 10,000 festival productions nationwide.

Happy Songs About Unhappy Things

Film Screening and Q & A with Creator, Nikki Lynette

Friday, March 28, 2025
5:30-6:30 p.m.

Movie Theatre, Student Union

One in 4 people in the world will be affected by mental health issues in their lifetime. In *Happy Songs About Unhappy Things*, indie artist Nikki Lynette is urging us to confront the stigma in ways we never have before.

In 2018, a black female suicide survivor learning to live with a mental illness decided to shine a light on the parts of the mental health journey that nobody talks about. The resulting docu-musical uses a unique combination of high concept, visually arresting storytelling, and an earworm-laden score, to highlight folks sharing their lived experience and two amazing mental health professionals who tell it like it is.

Happy Songs About Unhappy Things is a groundbreaking new project that aims to disrupt the harmful narratives around mental health. By blending documentary footage, statistics, digital art, and mental health expert testimonials with sensational theatrical performances, Nikki Lynette invites us into a musical playground that allows audiences to explore the deepest parts of themselves while feeling empowered along the way.



ARTS FEST