

## **AUDITION INFORMATION FOR MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**

Our concept of Much ADO will be very modern, set in Stratford-upon-Avon sometime in the near future and during the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations (SBC) weekend – Shakespeare’s words, with some amendments to relate it to the setting. And cut to keep it pacey.

Contemporising the play means that some of the characters written as male, can be female. There will be music and movement! But please don’t let that put you off auditioning if you don’t sing or dance. It simply means we will make use of those skills where actors have them.

Roles may be doubled and at this stage I am open about age and, for some roles, gender – most important is to find a company of actors who are willing to be flexible and explore the play. I have already arranged a couple of sessions with experts to guide on it, particularly speaking Shakespeare.

Central to the play are relationships, loving and not. Although a comedy there are some very dark, dramatic moments.

Below is some more information about characters and then some audition speeches. If you would like to audition for this production, please fill out the form (separate download) and return it so that the team can make a schedule. Take a read through the audition pieces.

**LEONATO**, M/F . Governor of Messina—a gracious host and loving father – or a loving mother.

**BEATRICE**, niece of Leonato—an intelligent , feisty and passionate young woman

**HERO**, daughter of Leonato—an gentle, sweet-natured girl

**DON PEDRO**, an army officer

**BENEDICK**, gentleman and soldier. Intelligent, witty, and with a soft centre.

**DON JOHN**, bastard brother of Don Pedro—melancholy, jealous and mean in spirit

**CLAUDIO**, count of Florence in the court of Don Pedro—a young man of strong feelings

**ANTONIO**, M/F or Antonia brother or sister of Leonato—genial and loyal

**CONRADE**, M/F associate of Don John—proud and clever

**BORACHIO**, M/F associate of Don John—boastful and cunning

**BALTHASAR**, M/F servant in the service of Don Pedro—musical and versatile. Singer desirable for this role. Male or Female

**MARGARET**, assistant or friend in Leonato's household—young, headstrong and somewhat foolish

**URSULA**, M/F assistant or friend in Leonato's household—an older, steadier woman with a good heart

**DOGBERRY**, M/F Local volunteer for SBC—ignorant and pretentious, probably a local councillor.

**VERGES**, M/F another local volunteers —loyal but not very bright sidekick

**THE WATCH**—M/F several volunteers - will also have some scenery moving duties (light!)

**FRIAR FRANCIS** —a local Vicar or Churchman. Intelligent and thoughtful

AUDITIONS will be on 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March and possibly (if needed) on 10<sup>th</sup> April

REHEARSALS WILL TAKE PLACE:

From Tue 24<sup>th</sup> April will be on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. From 17 June they will also take place on Sundays.

PERFORMANCE DATES; are 11 - 14 July and there will be a matinee on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July.

Auditions and Rehearsals will be at St. Peter's and Performances at The Bear Pit.

Speeches are given below for some of the principal roles. If you would like to audition for a smaller role, please pick one of these speeches to audition with. You are NOT expected to commit them to memory, but to be familiar with them.

AUDITION PIECES:

**BENEDICK**

This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

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**BEATRICE**

***Act 3 Scene 1***

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?  
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?  
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!  
No glory lives behind the back of such.  
And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee  
To bind our loves up in a holy band;  
For others say thou dost deserve, and I  
Believe it better than reportingly.

**AND**

***Act 4 Scene 1***

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that  
hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O  
that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they  
come to take hands; and then, with public  
accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour,  
—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart  
in the market-place.

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HERO

Good Margaret, run thee to the parlor;  
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice  
Proposing with the prince and Claudio:  
Whisper her ear and tell her, I and Ursula  
Walk in the orchard and our whole discourse  
Is all of her; say that thou overheard'st us;  
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,  
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,  
Forbid the sun to enter, like favourites,  
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride  
Against that power that bred it: there will she hide her,  
To listen our purpose. This is thy office;  
Bear thee well in it and leave us alone.

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CLAUDIO

Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.  
There, Leonato, take her back again:  
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;  
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.  
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!  
O, what authority and show of truth  
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!  
Comes not that blood as modest evidence

To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,  
All you that see her, that she were a maid,  
By these exterior shows? But she is none:  
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;  
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

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#### **DON JOHN**

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace,  
and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a  
carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to  
be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-  
dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with  
a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my  
mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in  
the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

#### **LEONATO**

Wherefore! Why, doth not every earthly thing  
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny  
The story that is printed in her blood?  
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:  
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,  
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,  
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,  
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?  
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?  
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?  
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?  
Why had I not with charitable hand  
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,  
Who smirch'd thus and mired with infamy,  
I might have said 'No part of it is mine;  
This shame derives itself from unknown loins'?  
But mine and mine I loved and mine I praised  
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much  
That I myself was to myself not mine,  
Valuing of her,—why, she, O, she is fallen  
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea  
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again  
And salt too little which may season give

To her foul-tainted flesh!

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

Hear me a little;

For I have only been silent so long  
And given way unto this course of fortune.

...

By noting of the lady I have mark'd A  
thousand blushing apparitions  
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames  
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;  
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,  
To burn the errors that these princes hold  
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;  
Trust not my reading nor my observations,  
Which with experimental seal doth warrant  
The tenor of my book; trust not my age,  
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,  
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here Under  
some biting error.

**DOGBERRY AND VERGES**

**LEONATO**

What would you with me, honest neighbour?

**DOGBERRY**

Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns  
you nearly.

**LEONATO**

Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

**DOGBERRY**

Marry, this it is, sir.

**VERGES**

Yes, in truth it is, sir.

**LEONATO**

What is it, my good friends?

**DOGBERRY**

Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

**VERGES**

Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.

**DOGBERRY**

Comparisons are odorous: palabras, neighbour Verges.

**LEONATO**

Neighbours, you are tedious.

**DOGBERRY**

It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

**LEONATO**

All thy tediousness on me, ah?

**DOGBERRY**

Yea, an 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

**VERGES**

And so am I.

**LEONATO**

I would fain know what you have to say.

**VERGES**

Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

**DOGBERRY**

A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out: God help us! it is a world to see. Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges: well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever

broke bread; but God is to be worshipped; all men are not alike;  
alas, good neighbour!

**LEONATO**

Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

**DOGBERRY**

Gifts that God gives.

**LEONATO**

I must leave you.

**DOGBERRY**

One word, sir: our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two aspicious  
persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your  
worship.