

chicago **youth** shakespeare

Summer Company 2017

Presents

William Shakespeare's

Much Ado

About Nothing 



The Cast

Aidra Crawley.....	Don Pedro
Antoinette Pompe Van Meerdervoort.....	Antonia
Alyssa Coughlin.....	Hero
Brandon Lozano.....	Dogberry
Erin Sullivan.....	Beatrice
Esther Segal.....	Don John
Freedom Martin.....	Benedick
Haley Seda.....	Margaret/Sexton
Julie Cozette.....	Verges/Ursula
Kevin Johnson.....	Leonato
Kieran O'Connor.....	Claudio
Levi Donnell.....	Borachio
Maiya Swedberg.....	Friar/Conrade
Nico Olszanski.....	Watchman/Balthazar

Production Staff

Co-Directors.....	Evelyn Gaynor & Evelyn Reidy
Artistic Director.....	Manon Spadaro
Assistant Director.....	Izzy Terrell
Production Manager.....	Cameron Speta
Dramaturg.....	Ryan Borgdorff
Assistant to the Artistic Director.....	Stephanie Guralnick
Marketing.....	Imani Davis
Development.....	Anna Davis & Claire Greising
Contributing Artists.....	Jeremy Ohringer & James Bell

Directors' Note

CYSE's *Much Ado About Nothing* may have two directors and a dedicated production staff, but the play you are seeing today is entirely created by the young artists of this ensemble. Our goal as directors was to present questions to the cast, spark ideas, and provide a safe space for exploration and connection to their own personal lives and experiences. What came out of our guidance is the original, exciting, and--most importantly--student-generated work you will see today.

CYS seeks to answer the question "Why do we perform Shakespeare today?" The characters and events in *Much Ado About Nothing* are truly of our time and of our cast's generations. As we discussed the play as a group, the cast began relating the miscommunication between characters, the gossip, the rumors, the relationship drama, and the swinging emotions of great passion and young love to something close to their hearts: high school. This is their everyday experience, just using words that are out of our time. Today you will see the cast take these 400-year-old words and experiences and truly make them their own.

It's not often that artists get to be a part of such an open and collaborative process: It's thrilling to see young people tackle what many adults see as some of the most challenging text ever created, with ease, and most importantly, joy. Shakespeare's language, stories, and poetry is in our 2017 heartbeats, and these young artists prove it. We hope you all will be inspired to support CYS's mission to connect students across Chicagoland with Shakespeare and with one another, and please enjoy the show!

-Evelyn Gaynor & Evelyn Reidy

Dramaturg's Note

Believe it or not, *Much Ado About Nothing* is a fairly old play.

What you're seeing now is a collection of words first put together in 1598 and 1599, and first performed at the turn of the seventeenth century. Here, 400+ years later, we--and, cooperatively, you--put the words in context, and it's a context not nearly as different as we might believe.

This text is steeped in the influence of gender roles; the assumption of a woman's primary value as marriage material and a regular deference to male authority drive the misadventures of these characters. In particular, the parallel stories this play tells of Claudio and Hero and of Beatrice and Benedick give a window into these gender roles and how they interact with one another. As much as their interactions reveal about Elizabethan English culture, though, the same words speak volumes in a modern context.

That modern context is exactly your challenge as an audience member: what do these words spoken truthfully by young adults have to tell us about the way we see gender today? How often do misunderstandings--the same misunderstandings that drive nearly all of Shakespeare's comedies--drive our actions today?

Ultimately, as in all theatre, the answer belongs to the audience. So, to whatever extent this wonderful work by these wonderful artists can help you think, or laugh, or smile, thank you for your attention and your time.

-Ryan Borgdorff

The Ensemble

The Chicago Youth Shakespeare Ensemble (CYSE) is a need-blind program open to high school students across the Chicagoland area. Representing a variety of communities, ethnicities, cultures, and life experiences, CYSE students create a unique, artistic ensemble fueled by collaboration, innovation, and a diversity of approaches and ideas.

CYSE students learn advanced acting techniques and discover how to “unpack” and personalize Shakespeare’s words to make them their own. Throughout the rehearsal process we encourage “play,” or being present and reactive in the moment, while letting the text guide us to the heart of the story. CYSE is committed to providing students of all backgrounds and income levels with a safe and supportive creative environment.

The Training

Over the summer, our ensemble trained using various acting techniques, each presenting a unique approach to character development, movement, and listening.

Laban Movement Analysis--Laban, stemming from dance, provides the Eight Efforts: styles of movement that can indicate intention and emphasize actions. Laban provides actors with a common language to approach their lines with.

Viewpoints--Viewpoints technique, adapted for theatre by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, trains actors to honor their impulses and illustrate relationships via nine core criteria.

Suzuki--Developed by Tadashi Suzuki in the '70s, the Suzuki method trains actors' awareness of themselves by emphasizing bodily control and absolute focus.

Meisner--Meisner technique rests almost entirely on the power of repetition and unfiltered observation. Actors repeat lines with a partner with the goal of exploring the motivations and impulses stored in the text.

Clown--Clowning technique emphasizes discovery, genuine reaction, and not “acting”. Rather, clowning trains an actor to use their organic reactions.

Bios

Aidra Crawley

Grade 12

Don Pedro

When they're not performing or working, Aidra can be found bingeing podcasts while eating instant ramen with chopsticks.

Alyssa Coughlin

Grade 11

Hero

Alyssa Coughlin is honored to be part of such a lovely ensemble. She didn't even have to dream herself into this company of players! [Editor's Note: In her spare time, she brightens up everyone else's world]

Anna Davis

Sophomore

Development Intern

Anna studies Theatre and English at Purdue University. All her money goes to tuition and tattoos.

Antoinette Pompe van Meerdervoort

Grade 11

Antonia

Antoinette loves to act, sing, tap dance and play the clarinet. When Antoinette is not performing, she loves to play tennis and go sailing.

Cameron Speta

Sophomore

Production Manager

Cameron Speta is an undergraduate student studying playwriting at University of Iowa. They are a three-time alum of CYS.

Carl "Levi" Donnell

Grade 11

Borachio

Huge nerd who does as many things as possible to cure his constant boredom.

Claire Greising

Junior

Development Intern

Claire is a student at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts pursuing playwrighting. She has a dog.

Erin Sullivan

Grade 12

Beatrice

Erin is ever so pleased to be a part of CYS and this production in particular. She never knew how much she didn't know until she learned what she didn't know. So, she thanks all those that taught her.

Esther Segal

Grade 10

Don John

Much Ado About nothing is her favorite play ever. She really likes puns, and she thinks they get a bad rap. She attends the School of Thought.

Evelyn Gaynor

Co-Director

EG has her MFA in Acting from Indiana Univeristy and is an actress and teaching artist. She teaches at The Chicago High School for the Arts, The Viola Project, and is a company member with Barrel of Monkeys. She loves, and I mean LOVES nature documentaries.

Evelyn Reidy

Co-Director

Evelyn Reidy is a recent Tufts graduate and Chicago teaching artist and actress. She would tell you her favorite Shakespeare play, but it's probably a ten-way tie. She enjoys coffee ice cream and directing her wonderful students.

Freedom Martin

Grade 11

Benedick

Freedom is a rising junior and banana pudding enthusiast. When he's not acting he enjoys eating banana pudding. Without the Nilla Wafers, though because Nilla Wafers are disgusting. [Editor's Note-- :(Nilla Wafers are good!]

Haley Seda

Grade 11

Margaret/Sexton

Haley Bella is a junior who is super stressed about junior year! She'll be in The House Theatre's The Nutcracker this fall/winter and she is so excited! Her dream is to be on Broadway (hopefully Phantom of the Opera if she can dream hard enough).

Imani Davis

Senior

Marketing Intern

Imani is so excited to be interning with CYS this summer! It has been wonderful seeing all of these talented students and passionate staff working together. Seeing 'Much Ado' come together will be an absolute treat for all.

Izzy Terrell

Grade 11

Assistant Director

My name is Izzy. Yeah! And that's my name. Yeah! They call me Izzy. Yeah! Cause that's my name. Shabooya sha sha shabooya roll call!

Julianne Cozette

Grade 12

Verges/Ursula

Julie is so honored to be part of this amazing foundation and thrilled to be performing in her first show with CYS. She is an avid fan of all things Harry Potter and Disney, and is a proud Pisces.

Kevin Johnson

Grade 12

Leonato

This is his second summer in CYS, after participating in Comedy of Errors last year. His favorite role so far has been Edgar in King Lear with Unrehearsed Shakespeare.

Kieran O'Connor

Freshman

Claudio

Kieran is ecstatic to be a part of his first CYS production. On his off time, he plays chess and eats a variety of intriguing foods.

Maiya Swedberg

Grade 11

Friar/Conrade

This is her first production with CYS, and it's been a wonderful learning experience. She is excited to audition for more.

Nico Olszanski

Grade 12

Watchman/Balthazar

Nico Olszanski is happy to do CYS for the first time. He likes the song "September" by Earth, Wind & Fire but he also likes cheese fries.

Ryan Borgdorff

Sophomore

Dramaturg

Triple-Major-in-training, nerd, playwright. Pontificating on that corner over there since 1998. Very glad you're here; let's watch a play together!

Stephanie Guralnick

Freshman

Assistant Artistic Director

Stephanie is pretty pumped to join the mighty herd of skunk bears up at University of Michigan this fall. She enjoys dogs, trampolines, Billy Shakes, and studying targeted memory reactivation.

Special Thanks

“We can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks; and ever thanks...”
-William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*

Mark Dodge
Francis W. Parker School

Phil Martini
Wendy Stark Prey

**Fury
Theatre**



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Up Next...

--[CYS Alumni Perform *Macbeth*](#)

--[Battle of the Bard 2017](#)

--CYSE Winter Company Auditions

For information on all CYS programs and upcoming events, visit [our website](#), and be sure to follow CYS on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)

Chicago Youth Shakespeare is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping teenagers connect with the timeless works of William Shakespeare and with each other. We absolutely love what we do, but we can't do it without your help!

If you enjoyed the show, please consider making a tax-deductible donation at [this link!](#)

Chicago Youth Shakespeare (CYS) is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Donations to CYS are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.