

much ado about nothing

MARCH 6-8 @ 7:30 PM
MARCH 9 @ 2:00 PM

by William Shakespeare

adapted and directed by
Professor Courtney Ryan



Special thanks to the Paul '88 and Karyn Staubi Endowment for Theater Arts for supporting a visiting artist affiliated with this production.

There is no eating or drinking in the theater. Please turn off all electronic devices.
Much Ado About Nothing will play with no intermission.
The run time is approximately 90 minutes.

much ado about nothing by William Shakespeare

Courtney Ryan

Director

Alex Owens

Production Manager/Technical Director

Katrina Miller

Scenic Designer/Scenic Charge

Will Morris

Costume Designer

Lily Groff '25

Lighting Designer

Calum McConnell '25

Sound Designer

Laura Coffey* '26

Hair/Makeup Lead & Choreographer

Jacqueline Holloway

Intimacy Coordinator

CAST

Hero	Sonali Shah '26	Don John / Sexton	Syd Friedman '26
Ursula / Seacoal	Nihan Cedimagar '27	Borachio / Margaret	Kylee Brotz '27
Beatrice	Benry James* '25	Conrade	Gareth Schuster '28
Leonato	Xander Walther '27	Dogberry	Joanna Howson '26
Messenger	Elliot Park '26	Verges	Alex Granville '25
Prince	Santiago Brousset '27	Watchperson	Angel Yan '28
Benedick	Ash Baeck-Hubloux '26	Friar	Liu* '25
Claudio	Delaney Piccoli '28		

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager

Kate Stadter '26

Assistant Stage Manger

Reni Mokrii '26

Assistant Scenic Designer

Aven Lancaster* '26

Assistant Costume Designer

Emma Li '27

Light Board Operator

Kairo Calcano

Sound Board Operator

James Miller '28

Wardrobe Lead

Emma Li '27

Dressers

Thania Hernandez* '25, Hannah Daskal,

Iris Pierce '28

Stage/Properties

Miles Asher Dorai-Raj '28, Andra Usis

Program Supervisor

Mary Jo Lodge

CAPA Program Assistant

Harvest Gil '25

Wardrobe Leads

Emma Li '27, Laura Coffey* '26

Program Assistant

Christine Jansen '25

SHOP CREW

Aven Lancaster, Laura Coffey, Kairo Calcano, Kylee Brotz,

James Miller, James Hixenbaugh, Alivia Smith, Calum McConnell, Sophia Gal, Lily Groff, Owen Eltz, Kate Stadter, Zoe Ohl, Lavender Layre, Jay Maresco, Select THTR 101 Students

*denotes a member of Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honor Society

The cast and crew of *Much Ado About Nothing* invites you to join us in donating to **Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center**—the Lehigh Valley's only protection between our vibrant LGBTQ+ community and the local and national attacks on our human rights. Your donation supports Queer Joy, advocacy, and support for the LGBTQ+ community of the Greater Lehigh Valley.



BRADBURY-SULLIVAN
LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

DONATE NOW

Do we really need another Shakespeare production? And can old—often problematic—stories be retold in new ways? These are the questions I've been wrestling with this year. While *Much Ado About Nothing* gives us some of Shakespeare's most memorable characters—Dogberry! Beatrice! Benedick!—it also gives us a deeply misogynistic plotline. And, as in most classical comedies, all is resolved through heteronormative marriage.

In queering *Much Ado*, I wanted to see myself and my students reflected in the play and to discover what of Shakespeare's text could be preserved, reclaimed, or ultimately discarded. Shakespeare's *Much Ado* begins with soldiers returning from war, and, in our production, they are angel defenders returning from the queer frontlines, where they have been counter-protesting anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric.

The first time LGBTQ+ counter-protestors dressed as angels was at the trial of Matthew Shepard's murderers in 1999. The Westboro Baptist Church showed up to spew anti-LGBTQ hate speech, but Matthew's friends were ready. Led by Romaine Patterson, they donned white robes and wings and blocked out the hate with their Angel Action. Since then, angel defenders have been memorialized in *The Laramie Project* and have shown up wherever they are needed from LGBTQ+ funerals to drag story hours.

Angels not only defend LGBTQ+ rights but also create spaces where queer joy and celebration are possible. Many people have worked to create such a space in this show. The talented Will Morris designed the costumes and make-up, while Katrina Miller, who joined our Theater department staff this year, brought the stage to life with her set design. Most exciting of all, student designers, under the mentorship of Assistant Professor Jake Salgado and Visiting Assistant Professor Melissa Livingston, played a crucial role in this production, with Lily Groff as the lighting designer, Calum McConnell as the sound designer, Laura Coffey as the choreographer and hair designer, Emma Li as the assistant costume designer, and Aven Lancaster as the assistant scenic designer. Of course, none of our work would be possible without our dedicated technical director/production manager Alex Owens and our stage manager Kate Stadter.

Right now, the LGBTQ+ community could use a few more angel defenders; please consider joining us and donating to the [Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center](#) in the Greater Lehigh Valley. Thank you.

-Courtney Ryan

Ash Baeck-Hubloux they/them (Benedick) is a junior from New Jersey studying biology and psychology. Recent roles include Amy Langford in *Lift Every Voice* (Lafayette College), Darlene in *The Diviners* (Dragonfly Multicultural Center) and Susan in *Wait Until Dark* (Dragonfly Multicultural Center). You can also see them in *Silent Sky* at Lafayette in May. They would like to thank the cast and crew of *Much Ado About Nothing* for making this an amazing and fun production.

Kylee Brotz she/her (Borachio/Margaret) is a sophomore theater and studio art double major with a mechanical engineering minor. This is her first time as a performer in a Lafayette Theater Department production, as in the past she has worked behind the scenes. She was part of the shop crew since November 2023, and was prop crew for *Miracle on 34th Street* and *The Book Club Play*, as well as the marketing intern for *Lift Every Voice*, and *Bright Star*.

Santiago Brousset he/him (Prince) is a sophomore at Lafayette College. He is double majoring in Anthropology and Theater. He is portraying The Prince.

Kairo Calcano (Lighting Board Operator) is a Freshman Biochemistry major. This is Kairo's first college theatrical production and he is very excited and grateful to be a part of the theater community here at Lafayette.

Nihan Cedimagar she/they (Ursula/Seacoal) is a sophomore theater and physics double major from Istanbul, Turkey. She has been involved in various productions for the Lafayette Theater Department including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Light Board operator), *Miracle on 34th Street* (Mrs. Sawyer), *The Book Club Play* (Elsa, Jen's Understudy) and *Bright Star* (Clerk, Ensemble). Nihan works at the Williams Arts Center as a technician. Prior to attending Lafayette, Nihan co-directed and acted in a senior project production of *The Real Inspector Hound*.

Hannah Daskal she/her (Dresser) is a second-year Psychology and Theater major. She previously performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Lafayette and acted in various productions in high school, including as Hannah in *Puffs*.

Miles Asher Dorai-Raj (Stage/Props) is a senior Anthropology and Sociology & Religious Studies major, originally from Campbell, CA. This is his fourth production at Lafayette. He was a member of props crew for *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and was a dresser for *The Book Club Play* and *Bright Star*. In high school, he acted in a production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and did lighting for 9 to 5. In his free time, he enjoys making and designing costumes.

Laura Coffey she/her (Hair/Makeup Lead & Choreographer) is a third-year student pursuing degrees in Film and Media Studies and Theater. Outside of her theatrical endeavors, she devotes her time to her adorable bunny, Balerion, who brings great joy and happiness. Laura also participates in aerial arts. She warmly thanks all involved in the production and wishes the audience a memorable and enjoyable experience!

Syd Friedman (Don John/Sexton) is a Mechanical Engineering Major and a Philosophy Minor. *Much Ado About Nothing* is the second show Syd has done at Lafayette College, the first being *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Fall of 2023. Syd also participated in *Shakespeare on the Quad* during the Spring of 2024 and looks forward to pursuing more acting experiences, especially those that are Shakespeare related!

Alex Granville she/they (Verges) is a senior Environmental Studies major and minoring in Studio Art. This is their first theater department performance, but they have been on crew for Marquis Players' productions and have been in shows ranging from *The Little Mermaid* to *To Kill a Mockingbird* starting at age 8. If you can't find Alex they are probably running to meetings or trying to be in three places at once!

Harvest Gil (Program Assistant) is a senior Geology major with an Anthropology minor. She is also a CaPA scholar and arts assistant/intern for the spring semester in the Theatre Department. She would like to thank her CaPA advisors and Mary Jo Lodge for this opportunity to get involved with the department and world of theater one last time!

Lily Groff (Lighting Designer) is a senior theater major, specializing in lighting design and technology. She has previously worked on many theater department shows in every aspect, (including acting, which will never happen again), and has designed for Marquis Players. This past summer she was a lighting and sound technician professionally in Colorado at Creede Repertory Theater, which really proved that this is the perfect field for her. She hopes that you enjoy the show and that it makes you think truthfully about your impact on the world. For better or for worse, your words have power, so use them wisely.

Thania Hernandez (Dresser) is a senior majoring in English and Theater. She has performed in several Theater Department productions including *The Wolves* and *Ugly Lies the Bone*. She'll also be performing in the Theater Department's production of *Silent Sky* this May.

Jacqueline Holloway she/her (Intimacy & Violence Coordinator) is an internationally recognized Stage Combat Choreographer and Instructor and is certified with the Society of American Fight Directors (Certified Teacher & Fight Director) and Fight Directors Canada. She is also an Intimacy Choreographer as well as a consent educator. More info on Jacqueline and her work can be found on her website www.arteviolenata.com.

Joanna Howson she/her (Dogberry) is a junior History and English major. This is a dream role for her! She has been in two previous Shakespeare productions, including last year's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Tom Snout/Wall. Thanks to the cast and crew for making this possible!

Benry James (Beatrice) is a senior Geology and English major, Theater minor, and member of APO (the National Theater Honor Society). When not at rehearsal, Benry can be found reading NK Jemisin, at the Marquis Lit Mag meetings, or on the TRAP floor. This performance is dedicated to the 2019 cast of *Much Ado* at School Without Walls HS.

Aven Lancaster he/she (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a junior theater major with a focus in scenic design and stage management. He is back on campus this semester after having studied abroad in London and taking the opportunity to see as much theater as possible. She was most recently Assistant Scenic Designer to Jake Salgado on *Bright Star* (Williams Center). Aven spent the past summer making theatre in the mountains as a carpenter with Creede Repertory Theatre and experience has been invaluable to her as a Production Technician at both the Weiss Theatre and the Williams Center. Aven would like to thank Lily for the journey they've gone on together and Katrina for the opportunity to learn from her.

Emma Li she/her (Assistant Costume Designer) Emma is a second year theatre major at Lafayette. She was the Costume Lead for *Bright Star* and Co-Costume Designer for *Lift Every Voice for Lafayette* Theater Department productions, and was Assistant Costume Designer for *Cabaret* for the Marquis Players. Emma is a co-manager with the Lafayette College Gov Lab research team, and she is a recipient of the Marquis Scholars and Fellows scholarship. Emma would like to thank her brother for his support.

Liu they/them (Friar) spends most of their life in drag, but onstage, they go by the moniker "Dirty Dory." Inspired by the likes of Nymphia Wind, Kim Chi, and Jinx Monsoon, Dirty Dory is no stranger to glamour and absurdism. Liu has also played a number of roles at Lafayette including Puck in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, Ricky Tang in *Lift Every Voice*, and Harold Gorrington from *Black*

Comedy. Liu would like to take this opportunity to re-iterate that they are NOT a theater kid, but hopes the gentles enjoy the show.

Calum McConnell he/they (Sound Designer) is a senior Electrical & Computer Engineering and Theater double major. Calum has been directly involved in numerous productions in the past, most recently *Silent Sky* (Scene Shop Supervisor), *Legally Blonde* (Sound Designer/Engineer), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Soundboard), *Lift Every Voice* (Sound Designer) and *Bright Star* (Sound Engineer). He also works behind the scenes for both on-campus theaters.

James Miller he/him (Sound Board Operator) is a freshman engineering major. Born and raised in Pasadena, California, James worked on several productions at Polytechnic High School, often on sound design. He is excited to be part of his second show at Lafayette College.

Reni Mokrii she/her (Assistant Stage Manager) is a junior double-majoring in Economics and Policy Studies with a passion for theater and film. This is her second production with the Lafayette Theater Department, following her role in the *Theater for Young Audiences* class production *Galoshes of Fortune* in 2023. Reni is excited for her first behind-the-scenes experience and is grateful for the opportunities that the department provides for both majors and non-majors.

Will Morris he/him (Costume Designer) is a freelance theatrical designer and director. Scenic, costume and lighting design credits include (selection): *Billy Elliot*, *The Color Purple*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Spring Awakening*, and *The Sponge-Bob Musical*. Directing credits include (selection): *The Humans*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Noises Off*, *Sister Act*, and *Spamalot*. Education: Furman University. Will is a recipient of the Emerging Artist Arts Ovation Award bestowed upon him by the Allentown Arts Commission. To learn more, visit www.willmorrisdesign.org

Katrina Miller (Scenic Designer/Scenic Charge) holds an MFA in Scenic Design from Purdue University and a BFA in theater design and production from Northern Illinois University. Previously her work has been seen at Boston Children's Theatre, Music Theatre Wichita, Orlando Shakespeare Theatre, Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, Lehigh University, Muhlenberg College, and NBC's production of *Peter Pan Live*.

Alexander Owens he/him (Technical Director/Production Manager) has collaborated on a successful grant for the creation of the Immersive Arts Lab, developed a fellowship for Engineering students interested in theater, constructed a

swimming pool onstage for *Metamorphoses*, and oversaw the move into and opening of William C Buck Hall.

Elliot Park he/him (Messenger) is a junior English major with a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies minor. Outside of school, Elliot is a published short story author and poet. He saw his first Shakespeare production at the age of one, and has regularly attended the Public Theater's *Shakespeare in the Park* ever since.

Delaney Piccoli (Claudio) is a freshman who is majoring in history. She's thrilled to be portraying Claudio in her first play with the Theater Department. Congratulations and thank you to all the cast and crew!

Iris Pierce (Dresser) is a sophomore English (literature concentration) and Psychology double major. She has previously worked on costume crew for *Bright Star* and Marquis Players' *Cabaret*.

Courtney Ryan she/they (Director) is an Assistant Professor in the Theater department. They are so proud of the stellar cast and would like to thank the designers, crew, and Theater Department for all their work. Special thanks to Emmet, Quinn, and Kieran.

Gareth Schuster he/him (Conrade) is excited to be in *Much Ado About Nothing* at Lafayette! He has been doing theater since high school and has absolutely loved being able to perform on stage. He was most recently in *Bright Star* as Daddy Cane, and he performed in *Miracle on 34th Street* last year. He has been in a number of productions before that, ranging from *Newsies* to *Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Sonali Shah she/her (Hero) is a junior English major with a concentration in writing and a minor in theater. She has previously been involved in *Bright Star* (Edna), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hermia), *Lift Every Voice* (Production Assistance), and Marquis Players *Footloose* (Ensemble). You can also see her in the Theater Department's production of *Silent Sky* this May.

Kate Stadter she/her (Stage Manager) is a junior studying History, International Politics, and Theater. This is her sixth production with Lafayette Theater and her thirteenth overall. She is very thankful for the opportunity to stage manage this production of *Much Ado* and has enjoyed the challenge of working alongside the cast, crew, designers, and director to bring this vision to life.

Andra Usis (Stage/Props) is a sophomore from Ohio majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

Xander Walther he/him (Leonato) is a sophomore psychology major at Lafayette College and is excited to be participating in his third production as a part of the Theater Department. At Lafayette, Xander previously played Fred in *Miracle on 34th Street* and Rob in *The Book Club Play*.

Jiayu "Angel" Yan (Watchperson) is a freshman majoring in theater and is considering a double major in economics. Recently, she was assistant stage manager in *Bright Star*, participated as Xiaohong and Ensemble in *Luxun* the musical produced by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and performed Sour Kangaroo in *Seussical the Musical*. Prior to attending Lafayette College, Jiayu composed and directed the original musical *Li Qingzhao*, a project she continues to develop.

COMING UP!

Performed in The Weiss Theater at Buck Hall on
the Arts Campus at Lafayette College

Silent Sky

by Lauren Gunderson

Directed by Professor Melissa Livingston

May 1-3, 2025 at 7:30p.m. and May 4, 2025 at 2:00p.m.

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY

Interested in Theater? Consider taking a class in the Theater Department in Fall 2025. Check out our course offerings:

THTR 110 World Theater I:

Antiquity to the 19th Century (GM2,GP,HAH,HUM)

MW 1:15 – 2:30p.m

248 N. 3rd Street, Studio Theater (Arts Campus)

Professor Courtney Ryan

As long as humans have existed, so too have the arts. Whether it be through dance, chants, puppets, or other forms, every culture has used theatrical elements to tell stories and perform rituals. In this course, we will go back in time and travel the globe, recreating and reimagining world theater traditions.

THTR 130 Acting I (HAA,HUM)

F 1:15-4:00p.m

248 N. 3rd Street, Studio Theater (Arts Campus)

Professor Melissa Livingston

This studio course will introduce students to various fundamental techniques of acting, with special emphasis on sensory awareness, observation, concentration, body movement and vocal development. Students will develop their imaginations and creative processes through performance situations and monologue work.

THTR 224 Digital Design for Theater (HAA,HUM,V,WRIT)

MW 11:40a.m. – 12:55p.m.

248 N. 3rd Street, Media 1 (Rm. 102 - Arts Campus)

Professor Jake Salgado

Illustration is the act of using applied skills in composition to translate concepts into aesthetic communication. Fundamental techniques in illustration, such as drawing, painting, sculpture, etc. are deeply rooted in classical artistic tradition, and have seen centuries of evolution throughout the development of their application. Today, this evolution has progressed rapidly from the physical world into the digital one. This development has generated a diverse array of platforms that provide an artist with a wealth of new tools, through which skills in composition may be applied. This course will engage with some of the most commonly used platforms in digital design and explore their applications to composition generation in theatrical settings and beyond.

THTR 232 Arts Management

MWF 9:30-10:20a.m.

Buck Hall, Media 3 (Arts Campus)

Professor Alexander Owens

Arts management exists at the intersection of business and the arts. In this course, students will examine the structure of arts organizations and the people who staff them and will explore how arts organizations fit within the broader cultural, political, and economic world. Students will learn how arts administrators create programming, engage audiences, and support artists throughout the creative process in an industry that contributes billions to the economy.

THTR 235 Musical Theater (HAH,HUM)

TR 1:15-2:30p.m.

248 N. 3rd Street, Studio Theater (Arts Campus)

Professor Mary Jo Lodge

This broad-based examination of Musical Theatre combines an exploration of the history and literature of this uniquely American art form with a practical introduction to performance techniques used in the field. Students will study the structure, terminology, practitioners, organization and history of the musical while exploring repertoire through the preparation and performance of scenes and songs from musicals. (Note that there is a non-performance track for students who do not wish to perform.)

THTR 280-01 Speaking Power (HAH,HUM,V,WRIT)

TR 2:45-4:00p.m.

248 N. 3rd Street, Studio Theater (Arts Campus)

Professor Melissa Livingston

THTR 280-02 Speaking Power (HAH,HUM,V,WRIT)

T 7:00-9:50p.m.

Pardee 120

Staff

Certain phrases continue to ring in our ears long after their speakers have passed into history. This course will focus on the arts of persuasion, teaching you effective speaking strategies for life and for professions, including: analyzing effective speeches; writing and delivering persuasive rhetoric; building authority; mastering argument techniques; assessing journalistic, political, and cultural ethics used over history by candidates, lawyers, newscasters, spin-doctors, and commentators.

THTR 335 Theater for Young Audiences (CBLR)

TR 9:30a.m.-12:15p.m.

248 N. 3rd Street, Studio Theater (Arts Campus)

Professor Mary Jo Lodge

This course, which utilizes community-based learning, combines wide ranging study of theater for young audiences' practices and theater in education methodologies with a lab in which students will prepare and perform a production for children. Also, students will develop educational materials for and implement post-show drama workshops with area young people who attend the productions. Note that the lab times allow for rehearsal and performance of a TYA production. Class projects will include rehearsals of performance projects both inside and outside of class, attendance at a variety of performances and research and analytical papers and presentations.

How can I support the Lafayette College Theater Department?

HAVE a SEAT

Theater Legacy
Endowment Fund



**You don't have to be a performer to play a starring role with
the Lafayette College Theater Department!**

Whether you were in the cast or crew of a past production, are an appreciative member of the audience, or a family member of one of our thespians looking for a memorable gift.

Our *Have a Seat* campaign offers you a chance to leave a lasting legacy and play an important role in ensuring our primary performance space remains at the edge of comfort, safety, and technology for students and community members alike.

leave a lasting legacy today!

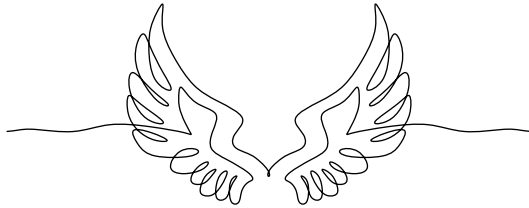


Theater Angels

Become an Angel through a donation of any amount! Your support goes towards expanding student opportunities beyond the classroom through programmings such as guest speakers /artists, professional development, workshops, student-directed and designed productions and lots more!

Theater Angels are recognized on a designated page in each of our playbill booklets in digital format.

become an angel today!



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