



Stoke-on-Trent
Repertory
Theatre

£1

William Shakespeare's

*Much Ado
About Nothing*

26th to 31st January 2009

at 7.30pm

(Saturday matinee 2.30pm)

Welcome

Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre is supported and run by volunteers who regularly give up their time and without whom we could not deliver the standard of production and customer service which our patrons have come to expect. Some of these people you will encounter tonight, others fulfil a less visible, but, no less, vital role.

Backstage Crew, Front-of-House, Bar and Coffee Bar, Members, Friends, Young Rep and all other helpers - we are deeply indebted to everyone involved - **Thank You.**

Some information which you may find helpful:

The Bar is open from 6.45 until 11.00pm on performance evenings and drinking-up time is 20 minutes afterwards.

Coffee, tea and confectionery are available in the foyer from 6.45.

All interval refreshments may be ordered before the performance to avoid queuing later.

The car park is open from 6.30. until 11.00pm on performance evenings; overspill parking is available in the Staffordshire University car park further along Leek Road.

Neither the Rep nor Staffordshire University can accept responsibility for damage to, or loss of vehicles.

Please note that smoking is not allowed in any part of the theatre building.

We hope that you enjoy your evening with us.



PLEASE ENSURE THAT MOBILE PHONES ARE SWITCHED OFF DURING THE PERFORMANCE.

Booking Information

Our box office is open from the Monday preceding each Rep production through until the last night of the show from 5.00 to 8.00pm.

Tel: 01782 209784

Book tickets during opening hours from Music Mania, 4/5/ Piccadilly Arcade, Hanley.

Tel: 01782 206000

Why not join our free MAILING LIST ?

Simply complete a mailing list form, available in the bar and leave in the box situated at the Box Office.

www.stokerep.org.uk

Find out 'What's On' and 'What's News' by visiting the Rep's website.

Information about current and forthcoming productions, shows, concerts and activities is available at the click of a mouse.

Join our emailing list by registering at **howard.goodall@stokerep.org.uk**

Thank You

As always, we are indebted to the St John Ambulance Brigade, whose members voluntarily attend all our performances.



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Spotlight

Samantha Rushton: Hello to all!

The theatre is a wonderful place where we believe in a dramatic contract that allows us to be transported to a different dimension and (hopefully) be entertained or provoke some sort of emotion. This is what fascinates me about the theatre, the ability it has to stimulate senses and reach people in a way that is so powerful and is one of the most passionate aspects of my life.

I have been involved in performing from an early age and started my path onto the theatre with Jill Clewes performing Arts school. This then was where the bug for the stage started and I participated in school productions and became involved with Young Rep 11 years ago at the age of 11. My first play here was *Wind in the Willows* and even at an early age I instinctively knew that the Rep was a fantastic place to be involved with and was amazed with the fantastic facilities, lights, productions and revolving stage that turned out to be my home for the following 11 years.

After leaving school I went to Fenton Sixth Form College where my future in theatre and education began to merge. I studied Performing Arts and Theatre studies along with PE and English Literature and in my final A-level performance received the highest mark our college had ever received and was awarded the Performing Arts Recognition prize when I left in 2005.

I have recently graduated from Edge Hill University with a 2:1 BA Hons in Drama, Dance and Physical Theatre and hope in a couple of years to move to London to carry on with my studies and take a MA in Theatre with Physical Theatre.

Since the age of 11 I have been cast in several adult and young Rep productions and made my debut performance as an adult Rep member this season in December 2008 in *Role Play*. I was thrilled to be asked to be involved in *Much Ado About Nothing* and have enjoyed every minute and have loved meeting new people.

The Rep has nurtured and guided me since an early age and I would like to thank Janet Smith, Chris Lockett and Ken Lowe for giving me the opportunity to be part of such a talented, creative and friendly community and thank all members of the Rep for making me feel so welcome.

The Cast

Don Pedro:

Prince of Arragon

Andrew Bartlam

Benedick:

of Padua, young lord, companion of Don Pedro

John Wicks

Claudio:

of Florence, young lord, companion of Don Pedro

David Weatherall

Don John:

Don Pedro's bastard brother

Simon Bland

Borachio:

follower of Don John

Oliver Davies

Conrade:

follower of Don John

Alex Brockie

Leonato:

Governor of Messina

Ian Birkin

Antonio:

Leonato's brother

Brian Rawlins

Balthasar:

a singer

James Dawe

Friar Francis:

a priest

Louis Sassi

Hero:

Leonato's daughter

Tammy Sawyer

Margaret:

attendant on Hero

Elaine Sawyer

Ursula:

attendant on Hero

Beverley Marshall

Beatrice:

an orphan, Leonato's niece

Ella Sawyer

Dogberry:

the Constable in charge of the Watch

David Bryan

Verges:

the Headborough, Dogberry's partner in authority

Steve Powell

Sexton:

David Finn

Watchmen:

**Martyn Stanley, James Keen,
Andrew Tooth, Jack Weatherall**

A Boy:

in Leonato's household

James Keen

**Ladies of Leonato's
household:**

**Christine Birks,
Samantha Rushton,
Angela McLachlan**

The play is set in Messina.



There will be a twenty minute interval.

The Crew

Director:	Ken Lowe
Co-ordinating Director:	Alan Clarke
Stage Director:	Richard Masters
Set Design:	Brian Hadley
Stage Manager:	Jamie Wood
Construction Manager:	Bill Hancock
Stage Assistants:	Mike Adams, John Beeston
	Pete Logan, Michael Vaughan, Jamie Wood
Lighting Design & Operation:	Malcolm Rushton
Sound Design & Operation:	Mike Adams
Dance arranged by:	Grace Forrester
Costumes:	Lucy Garner & John Cumberlidge
Costumes supplied by:	Birmingham Costume Hire
Set Dressing & Props:	Margo Bloor & Emma Kirk
Programme Design:	Janet Smith
Company Photographer:	Peter Croft

Thanks to St Francis' Church, Meir Heath for the loan of furniture.



16th-21st March 2009 at 7.30pm

Saturday Matinee at 2.30pm

Ariel Dorfman's

Death and the Maiden

Tickets: £8.00, Students £4.50

First night & Saturday Matinee £6.00

Available: Rep Box Office: 01782 209784

Rep Box Office open from 5.00pm-8.00pm

Monday 9th to Saturday 21st March 2009 (ex Sunday 15th March)

or **Music Mania:** 01782 206600, 4/5 Piccadilly Arcade, Hanley

(Tickets available now from Music Mania)

A Bit About the Bard

Every play by Shakespeare is unique. This is part of his greatness. A restless and indefatigable experimenter, he moved with a rare amalgamation of artistic integrity and dedicated professionalism from one kind of drama to another. Never shackled by convention, he offered his actors the alternation between serious and comic modes from play to play (and often also within the plays themselves) that the repertory system within which he worked demanded and which proved an invaluable stimulus to his imagination.

Nothing in his heredity offers clues to the origins of his genius. His upbringing in Stratford-upon-Avon where he was born in 1564, was unexceptional. His mother, Mary Arden, came from a prosperous farming family. Her father chose her as his executor over her eight sisters and his four step-children when she was only in her late teens, which suggests that she was of more than average practical ability. Her husband John, a glover, apparently unable to write, was nevertheless a capable businessman and loyal townsfellow who seems to have fallen on relatively hard times in later life. He would have been brought up as a Catholic and may have retained Catholic sympathies, but his son subscribed publicly to Anglicanism throughout his life.

The most important informative influence on Shakespeare was his school. As the son of an alderman who became bailiff (or mayor) in 1568, he had the right to attend the town's grammar school. Here he would have received an education grounded in classical rhetoric and oratory, studying authors such as Ovid, Cicero and Quintilian and would have been required to read, speak, write and even think in Latin from his early years. This classical education permeates Shakespeare's works from the beginning to the end of his career.

So far as we know, Shakespeare lived in Stratford till after his marriage to Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior, in 1582. They had three children: a daughter, Susanna, born in 1583 within six months of their marriage, and twins, Hamnet and Judith, born in 1585. The next seven years are virtually a blank. Theories that he may have been a schoolmaster, a lawyer, a soldier or a sailor lack evidence to support them. It seems likely that at some unknown point after the birth of his twins he joined a theatre company and gained experience as both actor and writer in the provinces and London. The London theatres closed because of plague in 1593 and 1594 and during these years, perhaps recognising the need for an alternative career, he wrote and published narrative poems.

The resumption of playing after the plague years saw the founding of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company to which Shakespeare was to belong for the rest of his career as actor, shareholder and playwright.

The influence of Shakespeare's works permeates the English language. Phrases from his plays and poems - 'a tower of strength', 'green-eyed jealousy', 'a foregone conclusion' - are on the lips of people who may never have read him.

He is valued for his humanity, his psychological insight, his wit and humour, his lyricism, his mastery of language, his ability to excite, surprise, move and, in the widest sense of the word, entertain audiences. He is the greatest of poets, but he is essentially a dramatic poet. Though his plays have much to offer to readers, they exist fully only in performance.

Stanley Wells

Director's Notes

by Ken Lowe

The Plot:

Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, returning from the wars with his bastard brother Don John, together with his companions Benedick and Claudio, arrives at the house of Leonato, Governor of Messina. Claudio immediately falls in love with Leonato's daughter Hero but, too withdrawn to woo her himself, Don Pedro offers to court her for him at a masked ball and succeeds in doing so. The malicious Don John, only recently reconciled with his brother, is determined to ruin the marriage and convinces Claudio that Don Pedro is seeking Hero for himself.

Thwarted in this plan, however, Don John, with the help of Borachio and Conrade - his two companions - now tries through deception to prove that Hero is unfaithful and in the church where they are to marry Claudio publicly denounces her. Later, by chance, the plot is discovered by Dogberry, the Constable, his partner Verges and his Watchmen.

Meanwhile Benedick and Beatrice, Leonato's orphaned niece, have continued a 'merry war' of wit and banter that has been going on for some years, both forcefully declaring their opposition to the opposite sex. But Don Pedro suggests to Leonato, Claudio and Hero that they contrive to make Beatrice and Benedick believe, in spite of themselves, each is in love with the other.

Complicated?

Not, we hope, while you're watching the play!

About the Play:

Though one of Shakespeare's most spirited comedies, the play has a dark side that threatens to destroy the happiness of the principal characters. For the most part written in prose, when the situation becomes tense and emotional, Shakespeare resorts to powerful and moving poetry. The play shows how easily joy can be turned into tragedy through the jealousy, malice and deception of one man and how easily people can be duped.

Beatrice and Benedick are regarded as the most witty and sophisticated of all Shakespeare's characters and have been played by the leading actors all down the ages. In more recent times Derek Jacobi won the Evening Standard Acting Award for Benedick in 1983 and on Broadway won a Tony award in the same part with Sinead Cusack winning the award for Beatrice in 1985. In 1989 Felicity Kendal won the Evening Standard Award and in 1994 Mark Rylance the Laurence Olivier Award. At the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 2006 Tamsin Greig also won the Olivier Award. Most recently Emma Thompson and Kenneth Branagh took the parts on film and on stage Zoe Wanamaker and Simon Russell Beale at the Royal National Theatre.

The Cast:

It is always difficult for an amateur company to muster enough actors to fill the parts in a Shakespeare production and we are delighted to welcome the following new members, some very well-known in local amateur theatre and some new faces: Alex Brockie; Ian Birkin; Brian Rawlins; James Dawe; Andrew Tooth; Christine Birks; Angela McLachlan; Martyn Stanley. We are also very pleased to introduce two youngsters: James Keen, son of Caroline Keen; and Jack Weatherall, son of David Weatherall.



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Sunday Lunches

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