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Cast

Benedick.....	Jaki Demarest
.....	Katie Wanschura (u/s)
Claudio.....	Elise Berg
John	Charlene V. Smith
Borachio	Amy Rauch
Conrade	Laurie Brown
Pedro	Katie Wanschura
.....	Jaki Demarest (u/s)
Leonato	Lisa Hill-Corley
Antonio	Heather Jackson
Beatrice	Branda Lock
Hero	Morrigan Condo
Margaret	Lauren Julien
Dogberry	Maureen Shanahan
Verges	Melanie Jester
First Watch	Heather Miller
Second Watch	Erin MacDonald
Friar	Rachel Duda
Dance Ensemble	Cora Dickson
.....	Constantia Rioux
The Band	Baker's Dozen
.....	Nathen Wurzel, Heather Miller, Sean Eustis, Aaron Knister

Crew

Director	Joshua Engel
Assistant Director	Erin MacDonald
Producer.....	Jaki Demarest
Stage Manager	Melanie Jester
Technical Director	Jeff Poretzky
Musical Director	Nathen Wurzel
Composer	Scott Farquhar
Dance Captain	Maureen Shanahan
Costumes	Heather Jackson
Costume crew	Elise Berg, Quinn Cassidy, Julie Nanavati
Combat	Jaki Demarest
Lighting design	Erin MacDonald
Tech operator	Shawn MacNeal

Baker's Dozen wishes to thank Dave Choat and Diane Donaldson for the use of their garage/practice space.

support these past few months.

Erin MacDonald (*Assistant Director/Watch*) will never recover from the mental scars that casting this show caused. Yet she is thrilled to be part of making this show what it is, however little contribution she actually made. She would like to thank the cast for all of the hard work that they've put into the show.

Heather Miller (*First Watch/Music-Drummer*) Coming from backstage, this is Heather's fist time performing on stage with the Rudes. Heather will not only be bringing slap stick on stage but musical talent as well. You might think your seeing double, but really it's just Heather running on and off stage. Heather would like to thank her friends and family for their support especially Shawn and Erin for pushing her to do the audition!

Amy Rauch (*Borachio*) prepared for this role by working as a male stripper at the Hanger Club.

Constantia Rioux (*Dancer*) joins the Rudes on stage for a second time as a non-speaking extra. Here's hoping she doesn't trip and fall this time!

Maureen Shanahan (*Dance Captain, Dogberry*) wohs siht fo trap a eb ot duorp si dna ti deyojne ylghuoroht sah eh. Noitcudorp Slacinahcem Edur dnoceh reh ni eb ot desaelp si.

Charlene V. Smith (*John*) is a recent

transplant to the DC area. She last performed the role of Katherine in Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's *Love's Labor's Lost*. Prior to moving, she spent a summer with *The Lost Colony* where she appeared as Tybalt and Isabella in the *Shakespeare in the Gardens* production.

www.charlenevsmith.com

Katie Wanschura (*Pedro/Benedick*) is still eerily ecstatic about appearing with the Rude Mechanicals, this time for her second show. She has previously been seen with the Rudes as half of Charmian for *Antony & Cleopatra*. You may recognize her from other local productions such as *The Actor's Nightmare* [Ellen], Laurel Mill Playhouse; *Steel Magnolias* [Annelle], St. Mark's Players; and *As You Like* [Celia], Shakespeare in the Parque. Thanks to all of you for coming to the show and reading the bios, Shannon for practicing Shakespeare with me (even without footnotes) and Josh, cast & crew for the chance.

Nathen Wurzel (*Music Director/Bass*) was under the impression that he joined the Rudes to act, not play music. Boy, was he ever wrong! S'ok. He's having a great time anyway. He'd like to thank Aaron, Sean, and Heather for sticking with the band through everything.

ironically, *Much Ado About Nothing*, where she met her now husband who was then playing – Friar Francis. Her life has come full circle.

Sean Eustis (*Guitar*) Rudes veteran since 1999, Sean thanks he Band, and more so the dancers. (Because music with dancing is like crackers with Cheez Whiz).

Scott D. Farquhar (*Composer*): This is Scott's 8th Rude Mechanicals Production. After 5 times on stage, and 2 minor production roles, he is pleased to exercise his true passion for the group. Scott earned a Bachelor of Science in Music Theory and Composition from Towson University, and is the composer and musical artistic director of Prometheus Radio Theatre. He has works published by C.L. Barnhouse, and self-published by Splunge Music (www.splungemusic.com). Scott would like to thank Josh for the commission, and Baker's Dozen for realizing and adapting the songs for the production.

Heather C. Jackson (*Antonio*) has appeared with the Rude Mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Macbeth*. Design credits with the Rudes include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King John* and *Merry Wives of Windsor*. In addition, she has designed *Desdemona*, a play about a handkerchief at the Baltimore Shakespeare Festival; *All in the Timing*, *Company* and *As You Like It* for McDonogh School; *Travesties* at Theatre Hopkins; and *You Never Know* and *Much Ado About Nothing*

at the Greenbelt Arts Center. Thank you, Julie.

Melanie Jester (*Verges/Stage manager*) This is my 5th show with the Rudes and my first as Stage Manager. Wow, 5 shows already, I guess that I'm now stuck with them for life now; that's okay, cause they're good people.

Lauren Julien (*Margaret*) is best known for her work as body double to Peter O'Toole in *My Favorite Year*.

Aaron Knister (*Piano*) is proud to report that, through the whole rehearsal process, he only forgot about rehearsal twice. He was on time twice, too.

Branda Lock (*Beatrice*) is oh so psyched to be making her first time appearance with The Rude's as Beatrice in her favorite Shakespeare comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Having just graduated from Susquehanna University with her B.A. in Theatre and B.S. in Economics, Branda has enjoyed performing academically in such shows as *Enchanted April*, *Street Scene*, *Wanda's Visit*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Hello Dolly*, *The Lark*, and *The Mikado* among many others. Recent local theatre credits include: 2nd Star Production's *The King & I*, The Reddeman Theatre Company's *The Seagull*, and Merely Player's *Meet Me In St. Louis*. She thanks the cast and crew (especially Josh & Mo) for helping "chill her out" and giving her the chance to speak the language of one of her favorites. Love to my family and friends for all of their

Plot Summary

The men and women of Messina have gathered, worried about Don Pedro and his men, who have gone off to fight in the Second World War. Triumphantly, the men return, and Leonato invites them all to a celebratory feast. But Beatrice and Benedick immediately return to sniping battles of wit. They agree on just one thing: never to marry.

Claudio admits to Benedick his love for Hero, the daughter of Leonato and Beatrice's cousin. Benedick makes some sarcastic remarks about her, but Don Pedro will help Claudio win her.

Borachio overhears this, and takes the news to Don John, Pedro's sour and bitter brother. Borachio proposes to break up the wedding, to John's delight.

After dinner there is a swing dance masquerade, in which the women have the upper hand in making clever insults about the men. Leonato announces the wedding of Hero to Claudio, which inspires Don Pedro to propose to Beatrice, but she turns him down. Pedro then resolves with Hero, Margaret (her cousin), Claudio, Leonato, and Antonio (Leonato's brother and Beatrice's father) to play matchmaker to Beatrice and Benedick.

They achieve this by not-so-subtly dropping hints to each that the other is already in love, and both are only willing to believe and requite. Benedick even goes so far as to shave and wash his face, to everybody's mocking.

Don John and Borachio put their plan into motion: John tells Pedro and Claudio that Hero is unfaithful, and presents as evidence Borachio making out with Margaret (who resembles Hero) and calling Hero's name.

(Margaret and Borachio apparently have a rather kinky relationship!)

Borachio can't resist bragging to his friend Conrade, but they're overheard by The Watch, who capture them. Dogberry and her partner Verges attempt to explain this to Leonato, but she's so scatterbrained that the message doesn't get across.

Stung, Claudio spurns Hero at the wedding. Hero faints, and Claudio and Pedro storm off, leaving a distraught Leonato to threaten his own daughter. The Friar intervenes, proposing that everybody pretend that Hero is in fact dead, to provoke Claudio to remorse.

The Friar takes notes at the deposition of Borachio and Conrade. Piecing together the entire story, he sets of to tell Leonato.

Benedick comforts the weeping Beatrice, and the two finally confess their love for each other. She persuades him to challenge Claudio over his insult.

Leonato and Antonio berate Claudio. The Watch brings Conrade and Borachio, who confess. Leonato forgives Claudio, but resolves to play one last trick on him. He tells Claudio to mourn Hero and then return to marry one of Hero's cousins. Claudio agrees.

The women enter wearing veils, and after Claudio has resolved to marry the masked Hero she reveals herself. Benedick then has one final skirmish of wit with Beatrice, each trying to get the other to admit their love publicly. The impasse is resolved by Claudio and Hero, who produce secret love poems written by each. They resolve to marry. John is captured, and the play ends with a dance.

Director's Notes

Men, Women, and Masculinity in *Much Ado About Nothing*

"Oh, that I were a man", weeps Beatrice at the heartbreaking emotional climax of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Much Ado is, on the surface, a play about love rather than about war, but in fact it's about the differences between men and women, femininity and masculinity. Much of the dialogue touches on the meaning of being a man, and one feature it finds over and over is violence.

Beatrice seeks manhood so that she can wreak her revenge on Claudio: "It is a man's office," and Antonio challenges Claudio to the "trial of a man". Benedick's feats in battle make him "a man to a man", one to be looked up to even by other men.

Men who cannot or will not be violent are mere "scrambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys", jeers Antonio. He that is "less than a man" is to be dressed gowns and treated as a woman, and an object of mockery.

In times of war, women have always stood up to do jobs traditionally assigned to men. World War II saw an unusual change to the usual pattern: they refused to give them back. The twentieth century gradually broke down barriers that women were not to cross, first with the right to vote and then increasingly with jobs and with their sexuality.

These changes echoed one that occurred not long after *Much Ado About Nothing* was originally performed. Shakespeare wrote this

play to be performed entirely by men.

When Beatrice declares, "I cannot be a man with wishing," the original actor must have been aware of the irony that he was, himself, a man, perhaps feeling blessed for that.

Women were allowed on the stage not long after Shakespeare died, and for this production we've imagined an opportunity for the women to turn the tables. War takes men away, and by 1945 some towns were almost entirely deserted of men of draft age. (Worse was the effect of World War I, which nearly wiped out an entire generation of young men in Europe.)

In the twenty-first century, even war itself is yielding to women fighting among the ranks of men, and also dying. Over two percent of the deaths in this country's ongoing war have been women.

These dark thoughts are not to take the audience's mind from what is, ultimately, Shakespeare's most successfully funny play. I've directed comedies before, but none where so much of the original dialogue is hilarious without the actors finding ways to make it funny to a modern audience.

For every show I try to introduce one or two new technical elements to the Rude Mechanicals. The Rudes have never had a live band before, nor have we had custom music written for a play. I want to thank Nathen Wurzel for assembling the band, and Scott Farquhar for writing music for this show.

Cast and Crew Bios

Elise Berg (*Claudio*) is awake at 7am, just to write this bio. This is her *mumble*mumble*th show with the Rudes. She'd like to thank Josh for his mad, wonderful idea, Heather for being the costume goddess and shiny friend she is, all the new Rudes for being so fantastic, kittens for being fluffy and adorable, Russell T. Davies for David Tennant and John Barrowman, and Jay both for his graciousness about being male, and just for being her Jay.

Laurie Brown (*Conrade*) This past fall I was part of the Maryland Renaissance Festival cast as Mistress Susan White. It was my first year on cast at MRF, and this is my first show with the Rudes.

Morrigan Condo (*Hero*) has been performing on stage since she was 8 years old and it's too late to do anything about it now. She wishes to thank the Rude Mechanicals for helping to stroke her boundless ego. She would also like to thank her parents for letting her live in the house instead of the garage like the cats do.

Joshua Engel (*Director*) usually takes a small male role in his own plays, but for this show he's over-qualified.

Lisa Hill-Corley (*Leonato*) is a third time Rude, having appeared in *King John* (Eleanor) and *Merry Wives* (Quickly). She is also an ensemble member of Landless Theatre Company, where she recently appeared in *A Christmas Story* (Miss Shields). She would like to thank Josh

for another great role, her "sister" Erin and all the ladies and "gents" of the cast and crew.

Jaki Demarest (*Benedick*) I want to thank Josh for scaring the ever-living hell out of me with this role. My initial reaction, when he first gave it to me, was gibbering panic of the "I can't do this" variety. It's far enough outside my comfort zone of tragic queens to be a distant shore, and Branagh had nailed the role before me so thoroughly that it will be a generation before anyone can really touch it again. But I started finding, as the panic floodwaters subsided, a place to be. A guy, or, rather, a woman's idea of a guy, slouchy and obnoxious, who manages to become a woman's idea of a man. An all-female cast became an interesting place to explore women's notions of men, of what it means to be one. We've had a glorious time, particularly those of us lucky enough to land trouser roles. Many thanks to Josh for making it so.

Cora Dickson (*Dancer*) has been doing vintage dance since 1992, including a year performing with the Centuries historical dance troupe in 2004-05. This is her first time joining the Rudes on stage.

Rachel Duda (*Friar Francis*) is thrilled to be in her umpteenth RM production. This is, however, the first time she has appeared on an RM stage as an actual man. A short man, granted, but a man, nevertheless. Her first show with the Rudes was,