

William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*
ACT1 Theater 2019
in Partnership with the City of Alpharetta
Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
Directed by: Jason Mitchell

First-Round Auditions: Monday February 18th OR Wednesday February 20th 7 – 10 PM

Callbacks Saturday, February 23rd 10 AM – 12 PM

To sign up for an Audition Date/Time, use this URL: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0845A4A82FA4FE3-auditions1>

What is ACT1 Theater?

ACT1 is an all-volunteer, non-Equity, no fee community theater with a focus on quality entertainment. Now in our 24th year, we're proud to bring you thought-provoking theatrical productions. You'll find us in performance in several major productions each year. Among our many full-length shows have been *Fiddler on the Roof*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Boys Next Door*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor® Dreamcoat*, *Guys and Dolls*, and many others. In 2018, ACT1 Theater formed a Partnership with the City of Alpharetta, and performed two shows of scenes, sonnets and soliloquys from the Bard. This will be ACT1's first full-length Shakespeare production. ACT1 is the proud recipient of several Metropolitan Atlanta Theater awards, and many nominations. We are a community outreach of Alpharetta Presbyterian Church, and provide entertainment to the community without religious bias.

In addition to using many experienced theater folks, one of the objectives of our work is to provide a venue for those who have never been involved with theater before. We enjoy seeing new folks discover a love of theater – whether that's performing on the stage; building sets; making costumes; or working as a stage hand, lighting technician or sound technician. As new cast and crew members "learn the ropes" and become seasoned pros, they may decide to try their hand at stage managing or directing. All of our cast, crew, and management are volunteers. But no matter what role you choose, this will be the most fun that you have had in a long time! The actors and crew always form bonds that make this more than a hobby – it's family.

Can I review the script in advance?

Shakespeare plays are in the public domain, and thus can be found online.

What will auditions be like?

You will signup online by following the link, and secure a 5-minute audition slot on either of the two first-round audition days. Upon your arrival we'll have you sign in, get an audition number, and fill out an audition form. You should save time by downloading the forms from our website and bringing them in completed. Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your appointment time if you need to fill out forms. Don't worry if you've never auditioned before – experience is not required. If you have a headshot, bring it along. If not, we'll take a picture during your sign in. Another form you must turn in is the signature page of your participation agreement; please read and save our policies/expectations and remove and turn in the completed signature page. Please note that there are required volunteer hours to assist with areas supporting the production. If you are under 18 years old, a parent must read and sign this form as well.

Once you have your forms completed, you will let the host or hostess know you are ready. You will be brought in for a brief interview and perform a one-minute monologue. **This monologue is a reading of the auditioner's choice (many are available online) and does not need to be memorized.** Auditioners should be somewhat familiar with this particular production in advance.

Among the things we'll be looking for are:

- Voice quality – Can you project, so that you'll be heard from the back of the auditorium?
- Energy – can we hear the interest and excitement in your voice?
- Facial Expression – Does it match the words you're reading?
- Character – Can you "be" the person you're reading?
- Willingness – Can you follow instructions and give it your best shot?

After the two days of initial auditions, casting calls or callback calls will be made. If you don't hear from us, thanks but we were not able to use you this time. Everyone who has been called back should plan to be there for the entire session, though the entire time may not be needed. You may be asked to read lines from various characters with other actors so we get a feel for your acting range and ability to play off of other actors.

How will you pick the cast?

Many things go into putting a cast together. Of course, your performance at the audition is important, but so are other things that are not in your control. The script dictates, to a large extent, who will be cast. As an example, characters playing members of a family should look like they could be family. Casting is a process of finding good actors of an appropriate age who fit in combination with the other actors. No parts are pre-cast, and everyone who gets a part will have auditioned at one of the two initially scheduled times, unless special arrangements are made in advance.

When will I know if I'm cast?

If we are able to cast you, we will call you no later than Monday, February 25th. If you don't hear from us, we were not able to use you this time. The number of people who audition prevents us from calling everyone. But remember, that doesn't mean you did a poor job, and please – come back to audition for another show!

What am I committing to?

By coming to auditions you're not committing to anything. Come try us out and see what you think. However, you will be asked to list any conflicts between your personal calendar and the rehearsal and performance schedule; a large number of conflicts may affect your chances of being cast. If we offer you a part, and you accept, then you are making a commitment to attend every rehearsal possible. That means you can't miss a rehearsal unless it's absolutely necessary and you've discussed your situation with the Stage Manager in advance. **No absences are allowed during the last two weeks of rehearsals or any performance.** Even if you have your part perfected and don't feel you need to be there, remember that your fellow actors are dependent on you being where you're supposed to be. If someone has a line to deliver to you and you're not there, it makes it very difficult to stay in character and keep the scene running smoothly. A major factor in a production not getting to a polished, professional level is a cast that is erratic in attendance. OK, enough preaching – just want you to understand the importance of being at rehearsals.

Tell me about this play!

Shakespeare's second-most famous "battle of the sexes" play. Will Benedick, the ever-confident bachelor, admit his love for the equally witty and equally independent Beatrice? Will the young lovers Claudio and Hero survive the devious meddling of others? What do you want to bet there will be two weddings in the end?

What are the roles available?

Beatrice - Leonato's niece and Hero's cousin. Beatrice is "a pleasant-spirited lady" with a very sharp tongue. She is generous and loving, but, like Benedick, continually mocks other people with elaborately tooled jokes and puns. She wages a war of wits against Benedick and often wins the battles. At the outset of the play, she appears content never to marry.

Benedick - An aristocratic soldier who has recently been fighting under Don Pedro, and a friend of Don Pedro and Claudio. Benedick is very witty, always making jokes and puns. He carries on a "merry war" of wits with Beatrice, but at the beginning of the play he swears he will never fall in love or marry.

Claudio - A young soldier who has won great acclaim fighting under Don Pedro during the recent wars. Claudio falls in love with Hero upon his return to Messina. His unfortunately suspicious nature makes him quick to believe evil rumors and hasty to despair and take revenge.

Hero - The beautiful young daughter of Leonato and the cousin of Beatrice. Hero is lovely, gentle, and kind. She falls in love with Claudio when he falls for her, but when Don John slanders her and Claudio rashly takes revenge, she suffers terribly.

Don Pedro - An important nobleman from Aragon, sometimes referred to as "Prince." Don Pedro is a longtime friend of Leonato, Hero's father, and is also close to the soldiers who have been fighting under him—the younger Benedick and the very young Claudio. Don Pedro is generous, courteous, intelligent, and loving to his friends, but he is also quick to believe evil of others and hasty to take revenge. He is the most politically and socially powerful character in the play.

Leonato - A respected, well-to-do, elderly noble at whose home, in Messina, Italy, the action is set. Leonato is the father of Hero and the uncle of Beatrice. As governor of Messina, he is second in social power only to Don Pedro.

Don John - The illegitimate brother of Don Pedro; sometimes called "the Bastard." Don John is melancholy and sullen by nature, and he creates a dark scheme to ruin the happiness of Hero and Claudio. He is the villain of the play; his evil actions are motivated by his envy of his brother's social authority.

Margaret - Hero's serving woman, who unwittingly helps Borachio and Don John deceive Claudio into thinking that Hero is unfaithful. Unlike Ursula, Hero's other lady-in-waiting, Margaret is lower class. Though she is honest, she does have some dealings with the villainous world of Don John: her lover is the mistrustful and easily bribed Borachio. Also unlike Ursula, Margaret loves to break decorum, especially with bawdy jokes and teases.

Borachio - An associate of Don John. Borachio is the lover of Margaret, Hero's serving woman. He conspires with Don John to trick Claudio and Don Pedro into thinking that Hero is unfaithful to Claudio. His name means "drunkard" in Italian, which might serve as a subtle direction to the actor playing him.

Conrad - One of Don John's more intimate associates, entirely devoted to Don John. Several recent productions have staged Conrad as Don John's potential male lover, possibly to intensify Don John's feelings of being a social outcast and therefore motivate his desire for revenge.

Dogberry - The constable in charge of the Watch, or chief policeman, of Messina. Dogberry is very sincere and takes his job seriously, but he has a habit of using exactly the wrong word to convey his meaning. Dogberry is one of the few "middling sort," or middle-class characters, in the play, though his desire to speak formally and elaborately like the noblemen becomes an occasion for parody.

Verges - The deputy to Dogberry, chief policeman of Messina.

Antonio - Leonato's elderly brother and Hero's uncle. He is Beatrice's father.

Balthasar - A waiting man in Leonato's household and a musician. Balthasar flirts with Margaret at the masked party and helps Leonato, Claudio, and Don Pedro trick Benedick into falling in love with Beatrice. Balthasar sings the song, "Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more" about accepting men's infidelity as natural.

Ursula - One of Hero's waiting women.

What about rehearsals?

Our schedule calls for 3 rehearsals a week, for 11 weeks, followed by 2 weekends of performances. Our first rehearsal is scheduled for Saturday, March 2nd. Rehearsals are normally on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7:00pm and Saturdays at 10 AM. We take very seriously your commitment and your time. The schedule will be laid out in advance, and only rarely deviated from. The very first rehearsal will be a "read-through" and will include the entire cast. It's just what it sounds like – we'll all sit around and read the script. It's the time to meet your fellow actors, learn about policies and procedures, hear the Director's vision for the show, get measured by the costume department, begin to assimilate your character, work on any tricky pronunciation, etc. We'll give you your copy of the script, the schedule, and any other material you'll need.

After that, the next set of rehearsals will be broken down, scene by scene, and do the “blocking”. Blocking is the term used for any stage movement – crossing from one side to the other, sitting down, standing up – all the stuff that supports your lines. Bring a pencil and make notes in your script as you work. Once we’re through these “working” rehearsals, we’re now about 4 weeks in, and we’ve worked on every scene for at least 3 rehearsals, and it’s time to combine them, and run the full act, and later the full show, fine-tuning as we go. There may be additional or extended rehearsals the week before opening, also known as “Tech Week,” if the show needs intensive work prior to opening; please leave your schedule flexible this week.

When are Performances?

Currently, there are plans for 4 performances of this show in May 2019. The shows will be performed at the Lions Pavilion at Wills Park. Here’s the performance schedule:

- May 10th – 7:30 PM
- May 11th – 7:30 PM
- May 17th – 7:30 PM
- May 18th – 7:30 PM

What about....?

For any other questions, please email Artistic Director, Marshall Lee Smith Junior, at ACT1Artistic@Gmail.Com.