

## Review: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING at DCPA is Everything You Need

[broadwayworld.com/denver/article/Review-MUCH-ADO-ABOUT-NOTHING-at-DCPA-is-Everything-You-Need-20221021](https://broadwayworld.com/denver/article/Review-MUCH-ADO-ABOUT-NOTHING-at-DCPA-is-Everything-You-Need-20221021)

by Jon Bee



### Picture It: Sicily 1930

Shakespeare is at bare minimum Theatre 101. I personally love productions that are more Shakespeare 2.0. DCPA's latest local production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, however, is nothing short of 10s across the board.

Shakespeare is playful and this production's playfulness is on full display. From cast to creative team, the commitment and uniqueness from each person involved brought the show together in a true "Shakespearean ensemble" nature - a troupe if you will.

Directed by DCPA's own [Chris Coleman](#), the creative team managed to create a set that was both simple and stunning. [Klara Zieglerova](#)'s scenic design, aided by [Paul Whitaker](#)'s lighting design, is truly elegant and captures this production's determined era - Picture It. Sicily 1930. The same is true for Kevin Copenhaver's spectacular costume design. What impressed me most were elements that are generally up to interpretation from production to production. In DCPA's telling, the use of original music by Tom Hagerman and choreography by [Nick Jones](#) contribute to this production's unique thumbprint in such memorable ways.

Shakespeare plays leave actors incredibly exposed - more than any other piece of theatre IMHO. It separates the great actors from the incredible actors. I can say without any doubt that every single person in this cast is an all-star. Truly. I could gush for days. Among the players is [Jihad Milhem](#) as Borachio, [Gavin Hoffman](#) as Don John and Sexton, and [Rob Nagle](#) as Dogberry, Messenger, and Bartender. Milhem, Hoffman, and Nagle were each at home in their roles. Nagle especially, with the responsibility of three roles, goes above and beyond at developing three distinct characters. It is among the more impressive elements of what is already a high-bar performance.

The leading players, so too, brought their own impressive elements to display. Among them is [Gerrard James](#) as Claudio. I'll admit, James - per me - seemed to have less experience with Shakespeare than the rest of the main cast, but what he brings to the stage is an authenticity that is relatable to everyone in the audience. In the role of Hero, [Jennifer Paredes](#) is, to put it simply, so lovely to watch. Paredes perfectly captures the innocence of Hero while also being true to the name by giving the character a sense of strength - a sense of heroism. [Rodney Lizcano](#) as Don Pedro and [Gareth Saxe](#) as Leonato were both at home in their roles as the two more fatherly figures in the play, whether that be by blood or by royalty. Saxe's monologue at the climax of act 2 was yet another impressive moment throughout the performance.

In grad school, we often tossed around a metaphor about how it was important who you chose to sit on the bus, i.e. who you work with and how you collaborate. Among the cast, if the rest of them are riding along, [Dana Green](#) as Beatrice and [Geoffrey Kent](#) as Benedick share the driver's seat. In so many words, they are both exemplary. Whereas others may fear the feeling of being exposed that Shakespeare provides, Green and Kent step confidently into the spotlight and deliver fearless performances. Shakespeare had a thing for "taming shrews" in his plays. Green's Beatrice is anything BUT a shrew - she is everything. She owns 51% of this company. She IS majority shareholder! Green does not allow for Beatrice to be seen as a shrew even when the writing of the play would rather portray her as such. Kent's Benedick is also strong in all the right ways without trying to be too much of a stereotypical "leading man." Out of everyone, Kent personifies Shakespearean playfulness the most.

Rounding out the cast are [Alexander Sovronsky](#) as Balthasar/Verges, Logan Ernstthal as Confrad/Friar, [Kate Gleason](#) as Ursula/Second Watch, Thomas W. Ashworth as Antonio/First Watch, and Desiree Mee Jung as Margaret. Sovronsky's musical abilities, both instrumentally and vocally, were also a wonderful addition to the show.

I have seen a lot of shows. Generally, I enjoy the majority of them. But there are some that leave me with a feeling that I carry for days, even weeks after the performance. DCPA's *Much Ado About Nothing* touched me in such a joyful, meaningful way that I will be thinking about this production for the rest of my life. I encourage you to attend so that you may too leave with wonderful memories.

*Much About About Nothing* runs at DCPA through Nov. 6, 2022 in the Kilstrom Theatre.

### **From This Author - [Jon Bee](#)**

---

Jon Bee comes to Denver by way of St. Louis, MO. A longtime musician and thespian, he has worked with the Tennessee Williams Festival St. Louis, as well as STAGES St. Louis, both in the administrat... ([read more about this author](#))