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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**San Francisco Shakespeare Festival announces  
Performance Schedule and Directors  
for 40th Anniversary season of Free Shakespeare in the Park:  
Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing***

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is pleased to announce that Shannon R. Davis will direct this summer's Free Shakespeare in the Park production of Shakespeare's popular romantic comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Shannon is currently serving as Director of Community Connections at American Conservatory Theatre and has extensive experience as a director with numerous companies around the country. She describes her directorial focus as "a classical re-envisioning through an intercultural lens to explore societal inequities and raise awareness. Then I add in satire and silliness."

Joining Shannon will be Vanessa Dalpiaz as Assistant Director. A graduate of Pomona College, she also trained in classical performance with a focus on Shakespeare at the London Dramatic Academy. As a director, Vanessa focuses on re-interpreting and adapting the classics to speak to audiences who have previously been excluded from mainstream American theatre.

This will be the company's fourth production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, having previously staged it in 1987 (directed by Albert Takazaukas), 1997 (directed by Albert Takazaukas and Hector Correa), and most recently in 2005 (directed by Kenneth Kelleher).

The play was selected by the company's [Resident Artists](#) who felt, according to Artistic Director Rebecca J. Ennals, that "after the past 2 years, we were ready for a comedy." During the season planning process, the artists noted that *Much Ado's* humor isn't purely escapist - the darker side of life is very much present, and the lovers have to be brave enough to take risks and be willing to change. "It feels like a good story for our 40th," says Ennals. "Beatrice and Benedick aren't idealized young lovers, they have a

history, and they've been burned in the past. Being brave enough to hope, to try again, to get back out there - their story feels right for this moment."

*Much Ado About Nothing* will perform in Cupertino, Redwood City, and San Francisco (covid safety protocols will be announced at a later date.) Those attending in Cupertino will note a new start time of 6:00 pm. Additionally, a close-captioned recording of the performance will be available for free online to continue serving its virtual audience and honor the Festival's commitment to making theater and Shakespeare as widely accessible as possible.

2022 marks San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 40th anniversary. Since its beginning, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival has been bringing the words and themes of William Shakespeare to audiences throughout the Bay Area and beyond, regardless of their age, ethnicity, financial status, or level of education. The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival believes that Shakespeare experienced in a communal setting -- whether it be outdoors, in a classroom, in a theater, or live online -- elates the soul, inspires the mind, and unifies those who sit beside each other.

#### **40th Anniversary production of *Much Ado About Nothing***

##### **Cupertino, Memorial Park Amphitheater, Stevens Creek Blvd and Mary Ave**

- Saturday, July 23 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, July 24 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Friday, July 29 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Saturday, July 30 at 6:00 pm (Opening)
- Sunday, July 31 at 6:00 pm
- Friday, August 5 at 6:00 pm
- Saturday, August 6 at 6:00 pm
- Sunday, August 7 at 6:00 pm

##### **Redwood City, Sequoia High School Grounds, 1201 Brewster Ave at Broadway**

- Saturday, August 13 at 4:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, August 14 at 4:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, August 20 at 4:00 pm
- Sunday, August 21 at 4:00 pm
- Saturday, August 27 at 4:00 pm
- Sunday, August 28 at 4:00 pm

##### **San Francisco, McLaren Park, Jerry Garcia Amphitheater**

- Saturday, September 3 at 2:00 pm (Preview)

- Sunday, September 4 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Monday (Labor Day), September 5 at 2:00 pm (Opening)
- Possible matinee, Friday, Sept 9 at 10:00am (TBD)
- Saturday, September 10 at 2:00 pm
- Sunday, September 11 at 2:00 pm

Admission is free. For more information call the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival at 415-558-0888 or visit [www.sfshakes.org](http://www.sfshakes.org)

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Note to Editor: To schedule an interview with artists or staff please email [sfshakes@sfshakes.org](mailto:sfshakes@sfshakes.org) or call 415-558-0888.

The mission of the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is to make the words and themes of Shakespeare accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ethnicity, financial status, or level of education.

Shannon R. Davis, Director  
Free Shakespeare in the Park's  
2022 production of  
*Much Ado About Nothing*  
([click for large image](#))

Photo: courtesy of the director

