



59 Blackstone Avenue, Pawtucket RI 02860 | (401) 484-0355 | www.burbagetheatre.org
Jeff Church, *Artistic Director* | Allison Crews, *Executive Director*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Burbage Theatre Co begins their 15th Season with
Shakespeare's *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING***

PAWTUCKET, RI August 18, 2026 —

Following their critically and popularly acclaimed 14th Season, **Burbage Theatre Co begins their 15th Season with William Shakespeare's *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* directed by Trinity Repertory Company member Stephen Thorne**, last onstage at Burbage in Season 14's *Every Brilliant Thing*, directed by Angela Brazil. Leading the ensemble of 16 are Burbage Theatre Co artist Alison Russo as Beatrice and Burbage Theatre Co founding Artistic Director Jeff Church as Benedick.

***MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* will be presented for 16 performances spanning four weeks from September 17 through October 11 at Burbage Theatre Co's Wendy Overly Studio Theatre.**

"'Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably' – what an excellent tagline and preface to this play. We've been trying to produce *Much Ado* at Burbage for some years now. We got close last year, but some shuffling put *Measure for Measure* on our stage instead. But, finally, Shakespeare's great comedy comes to the Burbage stage with one of the strongest creative teams we've ever assembled. *Much Ado About Nothing* is in the company of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* as one of Shakespeare's comedic masterworks. It brims with love, and is rife with wit – sharp, scathing, intelligent, but also preposterously silly. Frivolity and nihilism exist as two sides of the same coin that is the play's title."

"And yet, this play, unlike many of its period, prizes women's voices and their integrity. This play has – at its core – a theme of men believing, trusting, and advocating for women, while illuminating the contradictions inherent in masculine needs, whims, and expectations – the intersection of which foments a crisis of character – even a violence – that we often dismiss as "boys being boys", but that women are too often made to endure. *Much Ado* is, in this way, wildly prescient and resonates profoundly today."

"All of this to say – *Much Ado About Nothing* is everything we want in a comedy. It is funny, fun, fierce, and fleet. A perfect match for Burbage's trademarked reverent irreverence, and an ideal way to kick off our 15th Season."

"Stephen Thorne, most recently seen on our Burbage stage in Duncan MacMillan's *Every Brilliant Thing*, helms this production – and we truly couldn't be more excited. Stephen is, without question, one of the most electric theatre professionals that Rhode Island has to offer, and we can't wait to see how he brings this production to life. We are thrilled to have Alison Russo (*Measure for Measure*, *Twelfth Night*, *Thinner than Water*, *Edward II*, *Red Velvet*) back to the Burbage stage as Beatrice. And I am myself immeasurably excited to return to the Burbage stage after seven years to spar with Ali (my real-life wife) as Benedick. And we are only two of our cast of sixteen(!) exceptional artists – some Burbage veterans and a fair few new faces that we are thrilled to welcome into the fold. The production team that brought you *Clyde's* and *Measure for Measure* returns once again, and together we are transforming the Wendy Overly Theatre with a brand new audience configuration. This production promises an enjoyable jaunt to Messina and more than a few welcome laughs as summer turns to Fall and the 2026-27 theatrical season begins. Don't miss it!"

— Jeff Church, *Artistic Director, Burbage Theatre Co*

**Burbage Theatre Co's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* opens on
September 17 and closes on October 11 after 16 performances.**

*All performances will take place at Burbage Theatre Co's Wendy Overly Studio Theatre
59 Blackstone Avenue, Pawtucket, RI 02860.*

***Critics and members of the press are invited to join us on Saturday September 19 at 7:30pm or Sunday September 20 at 2:00pm.
You can reply to this email or contact boxoffice@burbagetheatre.org for more information.***

If you are a member of the press and are unable to attend our Press Performances, just let us know!

Whether you want to/have to cover the show on another evening, or if you can't cover the show but would still like to see the production – your two press tickets are still guaranteed, just let us know in an email at boxoffice@burbagetheatre.org.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

By William Shakespeare
directed by Stephen Thorne
(September 17 - October 11)

SYNOPSIS – Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing* is a sparkling comedy of love, wit, and second chances, where old rivalries, lingering misunderstandings, and carefully guarded reputations shape the lives of those caught between the past and the future. As the sharp-tongued Beatrice and Benedick spar in a battle of wits and the young lovers Hero and Claudio are tested by deception, long-held assumptions threaten to determine everyone’s fate. With humor, heart, and unexpected twists, the play reminds us that while the past may set events in motion, it does not have to dictate how the story ends.

“There’s a right way and a wrong way to do Shakespeare — and certainly a right and a wrong way to introduce modern touches without ruining the beauty of the language and action — and then there is the Burbage way, which could actually ruin audiences for any other company... such reverent irreverence.”

—Providence Journal

“This is what we go to the theatre for... Burbage Theatre Co is making Shakespeare come alive.”

—East Bay RI

“Burbage [Theatre Co]... has pinned down the perfect balance, thematically and emotionally... Go for the immersive experience and to hear Shakespeare’s words delivered with passion, clarity, and well-thought-out phrasing... If you’ve seen other productions of [Shakespeare] you won’t be disappointed seeing it again at Burbage. And if you haven’t seen the story told live, this is a great place to start.”

—The Pawtucket Times

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

by William Shakespeare

ENSEMBLE

Beatrice	Alison Russo*
Benedick	Jeff Church*
Hero	Tatiana Sullivan
Margaret	Naomi Mudge
Ursula	Nayeli Vazquez
Leonato	Fred Wambolt
Antonio	Nancy Winokoor
Don Pedro	David Sackal
Claudio	Chris DePina
Don John	Julia Curtin
Conrade	Jordan Smith
Balthasar	Tylar Jahumpa
Borachio	Omar Laguerre-Lewis
Dogberry	Andrew Stigler
Verges	Sonny Wong
Friar	Meighread Dandeneau

PRODUCTION CREW

Stephen Thorne**	Director
Anaïs Bustos*	Stage Manager
Isaiah Gamboa	Assistant Stage Manager
Trevor Elliott	Production/Set Design
Andrew Iacovelli	Technical Director/Lighting Design
Riley Nedder	Costume Design
Brittany Costello	ATD/Props

*Denotes a member of Actors’ Equity Association of America

** Denotes a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society



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***Much Ado About Nothing* CALENDAR OF PERFORMANCES**

Thursday September 17 at 7:30pm *Preview Performance*
Friday September 18 at 7:30pm *Preview Performance*
Saturday September 19 at 7:30pm *Opening Night/Pay-What-You-Will*
Sunday September 20 at 2:00pm *Press*

Thursday September 24 at 7:30pm
Friday September 25 at 7:30pm
Saturday September 26 at 7:30pm
Sunday September 27 at 2:00pm

Thursday October 1 at 7:30pm
Friday October 2 at 7:30pm
Saturday October 3 at 7:30pm
Sunday October 4 at 2:00pm

Thursday October 8 at 7:30pm
Friday October 9 at 7:30pm
Saturday October 10 at 7:30pm
Sunday October 11 at 2:00pm

TICKET POLICY —

"The best bang for your theatrical buck in the Ocean State." — Warwick Beacon

SPECIAL EVENTS PRICES –

Preview Performances — \$15

General Admission — \$35

Students — \$15

Group Discounts are available – contact boxoffice@burbagetheatre.org for more info.

Audience, Artist, and Staff Health & Wellness Policy —

Burbage has implemented an *optional masking policy* for our patrons.

While masks are no longer required, you are encouraged to mask if you like.
Burbage will continue to make masks available to our patrons.

We do ask that you remain mindful of your own health and wellness before attending the theatre.

If you begin exhibiting flu-like symptoms or fever that cannot be explained by regular seasonal allergies, we ask that you reconsider attending the theatre.

There is nothing more important to us than your health and safety.

If you must cancel or change your reservation with us, just contact the box office and we'll be happy to exchange your tickets to another performance.