



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The Montclair Foundation & Studio Players Reveal Cast for Immersive July 2026 Production of *Much Ado About Nothing***

**MONTCLAIR, NJ** — The Montclair Foundation and Studio Players announce the cast for their upcoming immersive production of William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. This talented group of performers will bring the classic comedy to life at the Van Vleck House & Gardens beginning July 10, 2026.

#### **The Cast**

The production features the following talented performers:

- **Benedick:** Michael Smith-Gallo
- **Beatrice:** Lydia DeSouza
- **Hero:** Jackie Kuczinski
- **Claudio:** Gabe Michelson
- **Leonato:** Bill Barry
- **Don Pedro:** Jeff Taylor
- **Antonio:** Chaz Turner
- **Don John:** Atilla Toy
- **Borachio:** Matt Delhauer
- **Conrade:** Laurie Delinois
- **Ursula:** Samantha Egge
- **Margaret:** Rosy Lum
- **Dogberry:** Marilyn Woodhull
- **Verges:** Ron Leir



- **Balthazar/Sexton:** Demetrius Acevedo
- **Messenger/Watchman:** Collin Wehr
- **Friar Francis:** Barry Roy

"We were overwhelmed by the fantastic turnout of outstanding talent from throughout Montclair and the surrounding communities" said **E. Dale Smith-Gallo**, Director and Studio Players Board President. "We are certain that the cast that we have put together will breathe new and exciting life into these beloved characters. I cannot wait to invite people into the Van Vleck House & Gardens to see up-close what these amazing actors bring to these roles. With a cast like this and a setting like Van Vleck, it is sure to be a production to remember!"

### **About the Production**

The cast will lead audiences through the Van Vleck residence, updating the setting to America during the Gilded Age. Originally penned in 1598-1599, *Much Ado About Nothing* is a rollicking comedy centered around two romantic couples, the naive and wistful Claudio and Hero, and the more worldly-wise Benedick and Beatrice. Situated in and around a medieval castle in Messina, Sicily, the story unfolds as members of Don Pedro's army descend on Leonato's castle for a few weeks of rest and relaxation after claiming victory in battle. What follows is a witty examination of the nature of love involving trickery, mistaken identity, vengeful propositions, an exuberant masquerade ball, and a wedding gone horribly wrong.

"With three months to go, we're very excited to announce the cast of *Much Ado About Nothing*," said **Kay Sarlin Wright**, Executive Director of The Montclair Foundation/Van Vleck House & Gardens. "Their talent and energy are the perfect match for the beauty of Van Vleck's House & Gardens."

### **Performance Schedule & Tickets**

Performances will be held **July 10–11 and July 17–18, from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.**

- **VIP Opening Night (July 10):** \$75 (Includes 5:30 PM reception)
- **General Admission:** \$50

Tickets are available [online](#) or by calling the box office at (973) 744-9752.

### **About Studio Players**



Studio Players (14 Alvin Place, Montclair, NJ) is the oldest continually-operating community theatre in Northern New Jersey—offering numerous opportunities for volunteers to participate at all levels (producing, directing, designing, performing, and technical support) in productions of exciting new plays and beloved classics. Founded in 1937 on the site of an old clock factory, our non-profit organization is now a staple of Montclair’s ever-growing arts scene, and we pride ourselves in presenting quality productions featuring groups of artists that reflect the diversity of Montclair and the surrounding communities. For more information, please visit **[StudioPlayers.org](http://StudioPlayers.org)**

### **About The Montclair Foundation/Van Vleck House & Gardens**

The Montclair Foundation is a beloved cultural hub in the heart of Montclair, New Jersey. A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that awards grants to charitable organizations in the greater Montclair area. In its 47 years of grantmaking, The Montclair Foundation has granted over \$3.8 million to nonprofit programs that strengthen the quality of life for all who live, work, and enjoy Montclair and its environs. Equally important to the Foundation is its commitment to the historic preservation and beauty of Van Vleck House & Gardens, which it acquired in 1993, and the role it plays in the educational enrichment and cultural enjoyment of the community. TMF invites the community to enjoy the gardens free of charge daily and take part in our year-round programming. For more information, please visit **[montclairfoundation.org](http://montclairfoundation.org)**.