

Upcoming Rude Mechanicals Productions at the Greenbelt Arts Center

King Lear

directed by Claudia Bach
August 22nd – September 6th

Romeo & Juliet: A Comedy

directed by Liana Olear
January 30th – February 7th

Salome

directed by Wes Dennis
May 8th - 15th

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Platinum

Covert Beach, Jaki Demarest, Gene & Linda Duda, Alan Duda, Doug Humphrey, Allison McAlister, Marc Sherpanek, Ed Starr

Gold

Claudia Bach and Erin Nealer, Joseph A. Condo, Wayne DeCesar, Joshua Engel, Flying Feet Enterprises, Ginny and Bill Jones, Peter J. Orvetti, Moira Parham, Melissa Schick, Trevor Siegel, J. Calvin Smith, Steven Vaughan-Nichols, Rachel Zirkin Duda

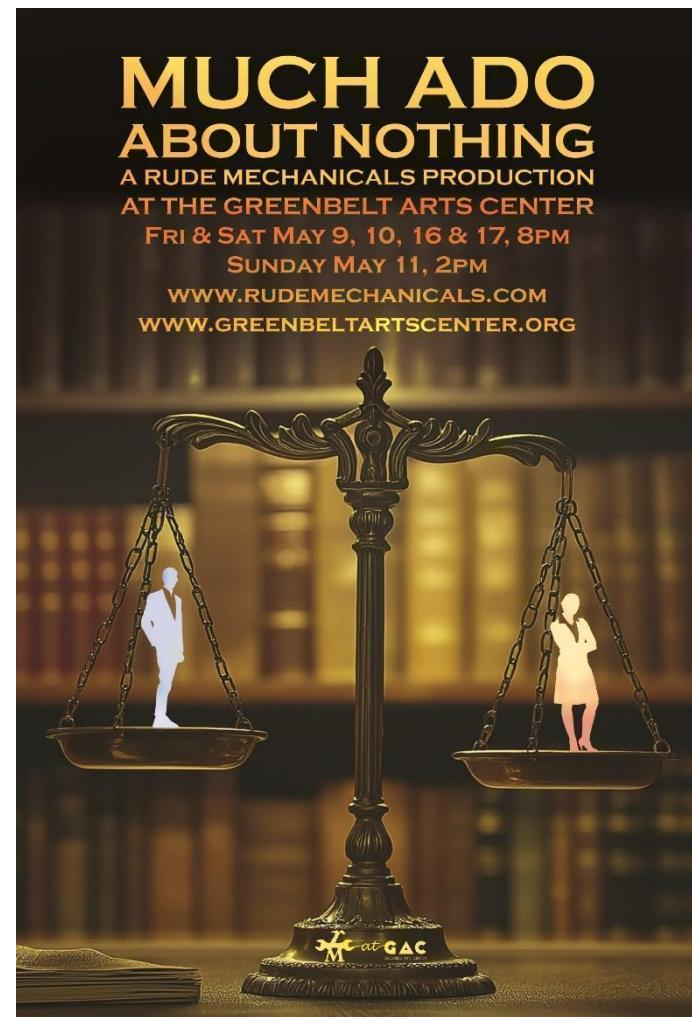
Rude Mechanicals Board

President – Liana Olear
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Lyrics to “No Me Queda Más” – Selena

I had a hope in the bottom of my soul ~ that one day you would stay with me
And I still kept an illusion that fed my heart
My heart that today has to see you as only a friend
And even though I lived in love and totally wrong ~ I don't care
Because this was love ~ for my part, the most beautiful thing, the greatest love
And even if you always give it up, for me ~ it was the most beautiful thing

THE RUDE MECHANICALS IN RESIDENCE AT THE GREENBELT ARTS CENTER PRESENT



*“If they speak but truth of her, these hands shall tear her.
If they wrong her honor, the proudest of them shall well hear of it.”*

The Cast

Leonato	Scott Farquhar
Balthasar	Danielle Delgado
Beatrice	Rebecca Korn
Hero	Peri Walker / Marianne Virnelson
Pedro Prince	Wes Dennis
Benedick	Erin Nealer
Joan the Bastard	Joann Robertson
Claudia	Claudia Bach
Conrade	Monica Duckles
Borachio	Steven Wilson
Musician	Matt Etner
Antonio	Stephen Cox
Margaret	Jenn Robinson
Arturo	Joshua Engel
Dogberry	Daniel Douek
Verges	Peter Orvetti
Seacoal	Samuel Kopel
Oatcake	Liana Olear
3 rd Watch	Jaki Demarest
4 th Watch	Alan Duda
Reverend	Stuart Fischer
Sexton	Chris Dullnig

The Crew

Director	Shirley Long
Producer	Liana Olear
Assistant Director	Jaki Demarest
Assistant Director	Alan Duda
Apprentice Director	Stephen Cox
Technical Director	Jeff Poretsky
Board Ops	Johannes McNulty

Director's Notes

Full disclosure - this is actually my second time directing this show. My 'Much Ado Re-do,' if you will. The first time around, my reading was admittedly rather shallow and more focused on hitting the familiar beats than really delving into what makes the play tick. But that was over a decade ago, for a different troupe. And I was ready to simply move on to other ideas until I saw the PBS broadcast of Shakespeare in the Park's *Much Ado* starring Danielle Brooks - a modern staging featuring an all African American cast, which put the show in a new context and showed me what could be done if I thought outside the box a bit.

Peri Walker (Hero) is delighted to return to the Rude Mechanicals after playing Hermia in *Ill Met by Moonlight*. Other local credits include Charity in *Sweet Charity* (Bmore Broadway Live), Buckingham/others in *Henry VIII* (Baltimore Shakespeare Factory), and Persephone in the world premiere production of *Her Across the River* (Rapid Lemon Productions). Peri also works locally as a stage manager and theatre technician.

Marianne Virnelson (Hero U/S) is always delighted to play with the Rudes! This production is especially exciting, as it is her first opportunity to share the stage with her soon-to-be sister-in-law. She moved to the DMV about three years ago and has made so many friends and memories within the local community theatre scene. Most recent roles include Constantine in *The Seagull* (Rude Mechanicals), Eugene Fodor in *Crazy for You* (LMP), and Feste in *Twelfth Night* (LMP). In 2-3 weeks, you can see her in *Into The Woods* at 2nd Star as Snow White (Cinderella U/S—come see the Thursday night performances!) As always, she'd like to thank her fiancé, Zack, for his love and support.

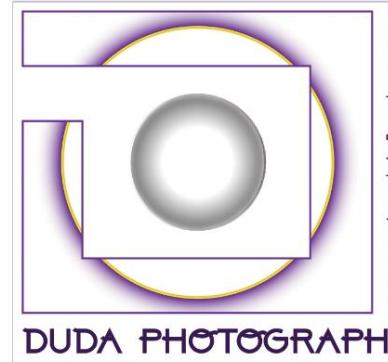
Steven Howell Wilson (Borachio) fell in love with acting when he was eleven and played The Lord High Executioner in a junior version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* at Glenelg Country School. He most recently appeared with the Rude Mechanicals in *The Seagull*. Other work includes productions of *Hello, Dolly!*, *Bring Back Birdie*, Ben Johnson's *Volpone* and *The Odd Couple*. He has also directed, written and voice-acted for the award-winning Prometheus Radio Theatre.

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Shirley Long (Director) is excited to direct her first full-length production for the Rudes, having previously apprentice-directed *12 Angry Women* and directed a short play for a 24-hour Zoom festival. Favorite past roles include Palamon in a Zoom reading of *Two Noble Kinsmen* (Rudes), Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*, Bottom in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Autolycus in *A Winter's Tale* (Britches and Hose). She wants to thank her amazing cast for bringing these characters to life so brilliantly, the crew for making sure everything ran smoothly, and Jaki, Alan, and Liana in particular for helping to turn this long-simmering idea into reality.

Erin Nealer (Benedick) (she/her) has been acting with the Rudes since 2017. She recently performed as Letitia (*Belle's Stratagem*), Callie and Sara (u/s) (*Stop Kiss*), Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*), Yelena (*Uncle Vanya*), and Margery (*The Wife*). In 2020, she directed *HAMLESS*, her own digital adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Erin would like to thank CB and JE for their support. Sorry about the attempted murders, hon.

Liana Olear (Producer, Stage Manager, Oatcake) would like to dedicate this performance to Max Zelikman, from whom she inherited much of her artistic sensibilities, fondness for poetry, and appreciation of proper pacing. She thanks Sam for his support on and off the stage.

Peter Orvetti (Verges) This is Peter's lucky number seventh show with the Rudes, where he usually plays humorous appendages either literally or metaphorically. He is prone to malapropisms and thinks everything Dogberry and Verges say makes perfect sense. Other companies he performs with regularly include Sandy Spring Theatre Group, Silver Spring Stage, and St. Marks Players.

Jeff Poretzky (Technical Director) continues to expand the Rudes' technical horizons while keystoning their profanity.

Joann Robertson (Joan the Bastard) is delighted to make her first appearance with The Rude Mechanicals. Many thanks to the wonderful cast and crew for a great rehearsal experience. This last year, Joann has played in three productions, *Enemy of the People*, *Dracula*, and *It Can't Happen Here*, with Just a Stage I'm Going Through Productions.

Jenn Robinson (Margaret) is always excited to return to GAC and The Rudes. She has recently been seen as Dolly in *One Man, Two Guv'nors* with The British Players, Miss Fairfax in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at GAC, and Ann Putnam and Sarah Good in *The Crucible* with Dominion Stage. She also looks forward to returning to Dominion Stage in the premiere of the winning play from their playwriting competition, *A Lovely Day to Kill Your Spouse*. In her copious spare time, she drinks entirely too much tea and plays with the Society for Creative Anachronism's Shire of Roxbury Mill.

After watching that, I got an image in my mind of Beatrice as an attorney, hard at work in her study, only to be interrupted by the arrival of her family, followed by the Prince's entourage - including her ex, Benedick. My ideas went through multiple evolutions from there, but that image was one that stayed in the back of my mind throughout most of my process.

Once I had the thought of modernizing the show, I took a much closer look at the text, and in doing so realized just how toxic most of the male characters are. Especially the supposed 'nice guys.' In our post-#METOO world, demonstrating that 'nice' doesn't always mean 'good' is more important than ever. And here, Shakespeare gives us Claudio, who immediately latches onto Hero based on some idealized version in his head (as opposed to actually getting to know her as a person), then takes it as a slight on his own honor when led to believe that she's fallen from that pedestal. It's only when the proof of the villain's deception is thrust in his face (without Hero's direct involvement) that he repents, begging the question of why Hero would even consider taking him back in the face of that toxic behavior. Prince and Leonato display similar levels of entitlement to Hero's sexual agency; while Leonato does come around fairly quickly, it's only at the urging of the cleric rather than based on Hero's words. Benedick - for all of his initial bluster - turns out to be the least toxic, as he is the only one of the major male characters to take Hero immediately at her word.

In bringing this piece to the present day, I chose to make most of the main characters attorneys (or attorney-adjacent), as the legal profession is still very male-dominated. And one of the first decisions I made in terms of specific characters was to flip Claudio into Claudia, both to bring some LGBTQ+ representation into the show and to demonstrate that toxic masculinity isn't necessarily just a cisgender male problem; in a male-dominated environment (like the legal profession), a woman trying to be 'one of the guys' in order to advance could easily fall into that same mindset, as Claudia does here. I then flipped Ursula into Arturo to provide some additional contrast (as in another example of a non-toxic male character), and ended up turning John into Joan as well - a decision that came out of the casting process and proved to be quite the addition, as having the villain be a bitter older sister who was passed over in favor of her younger half-brother made the character even more compelling, and her adoption of those toxic attitudes almost understandable (but not quite...Joan is still an unrepentant Bastard in both senses of the word).

Having spent years working on this cut and getting it to the point where it could be brought to life, I'm really proud of everyone's work on this, and I hope you find this interpretation of Shakespeare's classic as compelling as I do.

Best, Shirley Long

Cast and Crew Bios

Claudia H. Bach, (Claudia), (she/they) has wanted to play this role as a woman since she first discovered Shakespeare and is pleased to complete her Claudia-manifest-destiny. Previous favorite roles with the Rudes: Oberon (*Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sonya (*Uncle Vanya*), and Rosaline (*Love's Labour's Lost*); playwright: *The Insect* (The Rudes Abide - A One-Acts Festival); and Director: *Faustus*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*. She will be directing *King Lear* this summer. This play marks the third time her wife has tried to kill her on stage, so love, as always, to Erin. claudiahbach.com

Stephen Cox (Antonio; Apprentice Director) is delighted to be back with the Rudes both onstage and as part of the production team. His last onstage role with them was as Sir Oliver Surface in *School for Scandal* this past Labor Day weekend (his first was in their second production as *Macbeth* back in 2000). He has also acted and directed in over two dozen shows at GAC; most recently directing *The Importance of Being Earnest* last November. He will be directing *A View from the Bridge* for GAC's next year's season.

Danielle Delgado (Balthasar) is thrilled to be making her Rudes and Maryland theatre debut. She sends heartfelt thanks to the entire team for allowing her to infuse this role with her Latina pride. Previously, Danielle performed as Abuela Claudia in *In the Heights* with MCCT in Arizona. She looks forward to more performances with the Rudes and GAC in the future. Extra love and gratitude to her biggest supporters: Connor, Gogo, Sophie, and Franz.

Jaki Demarest (Assistant Director, Watchman) congratulates Shirley and the cast for a fine show; thanks Alan, Liana, and Jeff for all the spoons; and thanks Chris, Josh, Shirley, Joann, and Wes for showing up for multiple weekends of set build, paint and spackle!

Wes Dennis (Pedro Prince) is once again delighted to be performing with the Rude Mechanicals at the Greenbelt Arts Center! His previous stage roles include Snake (*School for Scandal*, RM@GAC), Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*, Laurel Mill Playhouse), Puck (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, RM@GAC), Mercutio (*Romeo & Juliet*, Bard's Wagon Players), and Victor Frankenstein (*Frankenstein*, UpStage Artists). He's also assistant directed two shows -- *Macbeth* (RM@GAC) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (GAC) -- and further contributes to GAC as a member of the Board of Directors. He thanks his friends and family for their support, encouragement, and patience with his sundry quirks and foibles. (Look for his directing debut -- Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* -- in May 2026!)

Daniel Douek (Dogberry) is happy to play with the Rudes again after doing *Tis Pity She's a Whore* about 10 years ago. He has appeared in more than 40 productions and directed shows like *Evita*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* and *Man of La Mancha*. Favorite acting past credits are Tito Merelli in *Lend me a Tenor*, Aldolpho in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Franz in *The Producer*, Lord Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Gary in *I Hate Hamlet*. He thanks the Rudes for this fantastic opportunity to share the stage again.

Monica Duckles (Conrade) is delighted to make her Rudes debut. Professionally, she has been both a teaching artist for Shakespeare Theatre Company and a middle school English teacher. Though she devoted a decade to coaxing adolescents into loving Shakespeare, she secretly thinks it's way more fun to surround herself with folks who need no convincing. Much love and appreciation to this Shakespeare-loving cast and crew!

Alan Duda (Assistant Director, Watchman) On behalf of Dogberry would like to thank his brother Lane for making the final showcase showdown on *The Price is Right*.

Chris Dullnig (Sexton) joined the Rudes about a year ago and has been involved in every production since then, as well as helping with other GAC productions. His narcissism is under control and just likes theatre, the theatre environment and shows up regularly, despite our best efforts to the contrary.

Joshua Engel (Arturo) congratulates Shirley on their directorial debut! Thank you for having me in your show.

Matt Etner (Musician), fresh from his gig as sound engineer and invisible musician for *The Seagull* a few months back, thanks Liana and Jaki for coaxing him out of the booth and onto the stage for the first time since joining the Rude Mechanicals in 2019. Thanks also to Melissa and Chekhov's Gun for warming him to the idea during *The Seagull*, the Rudes in general for being so darn welcoming, Lori for all the encouragement, and his parents for getting him guitar lessons a lifetime ago.

Scott Farquhar (Leonato) Having Rudely played* a prince, killed* a prince, and buried* a prince, Scott is just happy to act* with a prince. (*kinda.)

Stuart Fischer (Reverend Francis) makes his debut with the Rudes, but has performed in seven productions at GAC, most recently as Reverend Chasuble (hmm, a trend) in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. This is Stuart's lucky 13th Shakespeare production (three with GAC between 1996 and 2002) and third production of *Much Ado*. He played Verges (to Steve Cox's Dogberry) at CLS in 1998 and Leonato with the FGCB in 2014. Stuart hated Shakespeare in high school, and in his freshman year in college had to be practically coerced by a friend to see him in a Shakespeare production. Stuart fell in love with Shakespeare watching it. The show was *Much Ado...* His friend played Friar (Reverend) Francis. Stuart dedicates his performance to Rob Rabuck for starting it all.

Samuel Kopel (Stage Crew, Seacoal) blames Liana for dragging him into yet another stage foray, still thinks her an amazingly wonderful wife, and thanks her for having written one of the previous two statements.

Rebecca Korn (Beatrice) is always happy to lend her disdain to the Rudes. Recent roles include Girl in *Veronica's Room* (Rockville Little Theatre) and Molly in *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Montgomery Playhouse). She wants to thank fiance Sam for his support, but more importantly she wants to thank her cats Frank and Anya for being so dang cute.