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**San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's
40th Anniversary production of
Free Shakespeare in the Park comes to McLaren Park**

**Five performances of *Much Ado About Nothing*
scheduled at Jerry Garcia Amphitheater**

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is pleased to announce that its 40th Anniversary season production of Free Shakespeare in the Park will perform in McLaren Park's Jerry Garcia Amphitheater. **Performances of Shakespeare's popular romantic comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*, will take place September 3-11 on Saturdays, Sundays, and Labor Day Monday at 2:00 pm.**

As always, **no tickets or reservations are needed.** All are invited to bring family and friends to enjoy professional theater in this beautiful park environment. Covid safety protocols in place at the time of the performances will be followed and updates will be posted on the Festival website, sfsakes.org.

In addition to this being the 40-year anniversary of Free Shakespeare in the Park, **this is the Festival's tenth season of performing at McLaren Park's Jerry Garcia Amphitheater.** Audiences have readily embraced the option to see performances from the bench seating in the amphitheater or from a blanket on the adjacent hillsides. The stage is flanked by a sylvan backdrop that provides a bucolic reminder that you are indeed seeing Free Shakespeare in the Park.

Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* features the intermingling of two different love stories - Hero and Claudio, whose love is challenged by jealousy, and Beatrice and Benedick who work through their past history with each other to find love again. The villainy of Don John and the malaprop-spouting Constable Dogberry add to the fun!

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 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."

Free Shakespeare in the Park is made possible in part by support from Grants for the Arts, The Bernard Osher Foundation, Bill Graham Memorial Foundation, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, California Arts Council, San Francisco Recreation and Parks, and KQED.

40th Anniversary production of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*

San Francisco: McLaren Park's 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)
- Saturday, September 10 at 2:00 pm
- Sunday, September 11 at 2:00 pm

Earlier this summer, *Much Ado About Nothing* performed in Cupertino's Memorial Park, July 23-August 7, and Redwood City's Red Morton Park, August 13-28.

Admission is free. For more information call the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival at 415-558-0888 or visit www.sfshakes.org

Press photos are available at:

<https://www.sfshakes.org/media/photos/free-shakespeare-in-the-park-2022>

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Note to Editor: To schedule an interview with artists or staff please email 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.