

Love, Lies and Laughter in CDM's Much Ado About Nothing  
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What happens when you mix sharp-tongued banter, life-altering rumors, and a whole lot of 1940's flair? You get Corona Del Mar's lively revival of Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing - a romantic romp across a vine-draped estate.

The story follows two couples: starry-eyed Hero and Claudio, and fiercely independent Beatrice and Benedick. When a vicious lie threatens to tear one couple apart, the other is tricked into falling for each other. But as gossip unravels and truths emerge, both pairs find their way towards love.

Abby Bishai commands the stage as Beatrice, blending keen wit with flashes of vulnerability. Her confident gait and arching eyebrows showcase Beatrice's boldness, while subtle shifts- like crossing her arms when Benedick enters- hint at feelings she's hiding. Her banter and light giggles with Benedick crackle with chemistry, making their romance a highlight.

Ryan Trefz (Benedick) and Cameron Firoozi (Claudio) shine as a standout duo with brotherly chemistry, shoving and ribbing each other over their romantic dilemmas. In the scene where Claudio and Don Pedro trick Benedick into believing Beatrice loves him, Trefz's drunken antics- crawling and tumbling into the fountain- were comedy gold. When Benedick lay in the fountain, Firoozi grabbed his cup and poured water over his head, sending the audience into hysterics.

Stealing scenes with chaotic energy was the iconic comedic group of Logan Booth (Dogberry), Logan Bock (Verges), and their three Watches- Skylar Foster, Ben Hacker, and Avery Wyson. While Booth skipped around with exaggerated antics, Bock cluelessly followed. Teaming up to ruthlessly tease Hacker, Foster and Wyson would high-five each other, deliberately leaving Hacker hanging. Hacker stood out as the lovable oddball, begging for attention and asking pointless questions.

Behind the scenes, the CDM crew brought the romantic comedy to life with stunning craftsmanship. The stage was dominated by a two-story brick house, inspired by the Westbury Estate. Draped in vines and flowers, it featured balconies and pop-out windows from which actors could peek. A true technical feat was the working fountain, whose careful design kept water from spilling across the stage. Costumes, led by Kegan Goodman, nailed the 1940s aesthetic: power suits for headstrong Beatrice, soft pastels for sweet Hero, and bright dresses, pearls and gloves for the ensemble.

Come see CDM's Much Ado About Nothing and witness drama, deception, and a whole lot of delight!