

# CLASSICAL · ACTORS · ENSEMBLE

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PRESS IMAGE (available August): [classicalactorsensemble.org/press/](http://classicalactorsensemble.org/press/)

## **Classical Actors Ensemble to present 1940s-film-focused repertory Performances September 6 - 22 at the LAB Theater**

Minneapolis, MN – Classical Actors Ensemble (CAE), the Twin Cities' theater company exclusively dedicated to English Renaissance drama, will stage a repertory of two thematically related plays with one cast this September. Shakespeare's comedy "Much Ado About Nothing" and the anonymous drama "Arden of Faversham" will run Sept. 6 - 22 at the LAB Theater in Minneapolis. To highlight apt themes and strengthen cultural resonance, CAE is staging both plays in 1940s American film styles: "Much Ado" as a Screwball Comedy and "Arden" as a Film Noir.

Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" is a perennial favorite—listed as his 6<sup>th</sup> most produced play by [shakespeareances.com](http://shakespeareances.com). According to Harvard professor Marjorie Garber, "[Much Ado] is the forerunner of Restoration stage comedy, of the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century 'comedy of manners,' and of what has come to be called 'Screwball Comedy,' the bantering, witty, sophisticated romantic plots that emerged in the films of the 1930s and 1940s." Recently returned from the war, Don Pedro and his soldiers descend on Leonato's estate (here re-imagined as a pineapple plantation in the Pacific) for some much needed R&R. The ingénue lovers Hero and Claudio find love (and complications) while the experienced wits, Beatrice and Benedick, engage in a poison-tongued battle of the sexes until they're tricked into revealing their affections for each other. "Much Ado" will be directed by core artist Tom Conry, who has been performing with CAE since 2017.

"Arden of Faversham" was published anonymously in 1592. Its title character was the victim in the true story of a famous murder committed in Faversham, a town 48 miles outside London, in 1551. Housewife Alice Arden and her illicit lover, Mosby, conspired to murder her wealthy husband so they could be together. The story was the true crime sensation of its day and was cemented into history by being included in Holinshed's Chronicles—the reference source for Shakespeare's history plays. Treading the line between kitchen sink drama and black comedy at times, its themes of deceit, suspicion, lust, and intrigue fit perfectly into the hard-boiled world of American Film Noir. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, several scholars have claimed that sections of the play were likely written by Shakespeare, but there is no academic consensus. Very rarely staged in the U.S., this will be the Twin Cities premiere, and will be directed by Artistic Director, Joseph Papke.

"We're particularly excited to bring these classics to life at the LAB Theater, which allows for a greater range of technical possibilities than some of the smaller venues we've performed at over the years," says Artistic Director, Joseph Papke.

### **WHERE/WHEN**

The performances will run September 6 - 22 at the LAB Theater, 700 North 1st Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

**(continued)**

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Thursday through Saturday evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., starting with “Arden of Faversham”, alternating evenings with “Much Ado About Nothing”. Saturday and Sunday matinees will be at 2 p.m.

Tickets are priced on a sliding scale \$18 - 42, and two special pay-what-you-can performances will be given Monday, Sept. 9 (“Much Ado”) and Monday, Sept. 16 (“Arden”). Tickets can be purchased online at [classicalactorsensemble.org](http://classicalactorsensemble.org) or at the door.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Audio Described performances on Friday, Sept. 13 (“Much Ado”) and Friday, Sept. 20 (“Arden”). ASL-interpreted performances are TBD. For up to date info, contact the box office at [boxoffice@classicalactorsensemble.org](mailto:boxoffice@classicalactorsensemble.org) or 651.321.4024.

## THE ARTISTS

The skilled cast of 20 includes CAE core artists Timothy Daly, Jacob Hooper (Claudio), Samantha V. Papke (Alice), Daniel Kristian Vopava, and Joe Wiener (Don Pedro), as well as Michael Ooms (Mosby), Robb Krueger (Arden), and Kaija Pellinen (Beatrice). Scenic and lighting design by core artist Dietrich Poppen. “Much Ado About Nothing” is directed by core artist Tom Conry. CAE Artistic Director Joseph Papke will play Benedick in “Much Ado” and direct “Arden of Faversham”.

## ABOUT CAE

Classical Actors Ensemble is a Twin Cities theater company that captures the spirit in which the plays of the English Renaissance were originally performed – as popular entertainment. Since its founding in 2009, CAE has presented twenty-three works by William Shakespeare, John Ford, Thomas Middleton, John Webster, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and Thomas Dekker. Recent productions include “Women Beware Women” and “Measure For Measure” at the Gremlin Theatre in the fall of 2018 and “The Merry Wives of Windsor” for free in Twin Cities’ parks this summer. Their annual educational outreach programs include a spring tour to Minnesota high schools and a summer camp for teen actors. CAE’s goal is to demonstrate why these works of art are considered classic and to freshly prove their relevance in today’s world.

To learn more about the company, please visit: [classicalactorsensemble.org/about-us/](http://classicalactorsensemble.org/about-us/)

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