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Pittsfield Shakespeare returns for a fifth season

Shakespeare's romantic comedy "Much Ado About Nothing" returns to Pittsfield's First Street Common in August

"I do love nothing in the world so well as you—is not that strange?"

—*Much Ado About Nothing*

PITTSFIELD, MA — Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park announced today it will return with a fifth free outdoor production on the First Street Common. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare's romantic comedy of dueling lovers and dangerous rumors. Directed by PSP veteran Maizy Broderick Scarpa, the production will feature actors, designers and technicians from the Berkshire County community, including many favorites from past Pittsfield Shakespeare productions.

Much Ado About Nothing is made possible through the generous support of The Feigenbaum Foundation, the production's Lead Sponsor. Additional in-kind support is provided by the Zion Lutheran Church of Pittsfield, the City of Pittsfield, and a coalition of support from individuals and local businesses.

Featuring the famously witty on-again-off-again lovers Beatrice and Benedick, *Much Ado About Nothing* is the story of the trials of love in a society dominated by patriarchal traditions. Beatrice's cousin Hero and the young soldier Claudio meet and fall in love, but when a man spreads nasty rumors about her, Hero's voice is silenced and their relationship torn apart. Loyalties are tested as the community responds, including a ragtag group of officers who just might save the day.

"This play is incredibly relevant in 2019, casting a light on issues that are all too present today," says PSP artistic director Enrico Spada. "When a man, bent on revenge, swears on a lie about a young woman—why does nobody believe her? In this festive comedy, Shakespeare points to tendencies in society that should be sadly familiar."

In a change from previous years, Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park moves later in the summer, opening August 15, and will run for two weekends of eight performances. Theatre artist Maizy Broderick Scarpa takes the reins as director—audiences will be familiar with her as Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, PSP's first production five years ago.

"Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park is a celebration of community, culture and the joys of sharing stories," Scarpa says. "The Berkshires is full of quality arts experiences, and one of my favorite things

about PSP is its ability to reach with anyone who is interested—whether you are a seasoned theatre-goer, or a six-year-old who lives down the street.”

Much Ado About Nothing opens August 15, following Pittsfield’s 3rd Thursdays street festival that evening, and runs Thursdays–Sundays at 8pm for eight performances ending August 25. Performances take place at the First Street Common in Pittsfield, located next to the Zion Lutheran Church. Admission is free.

AUDITION SUBMISSIONS ANNOUNCED ON PSP WEBSITE

Members of the community are invited to audition for *Much Ado About Nothing* by submitting a video monologue. Details on roles, rehearsal dates, and how to submit can be found at <http://www.pittsfieldshakespeare.org/audition>.

PRESENTING MUSIC FROM ROCK ON! AT SELECT PERFORMANCES

Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park will partner with the young musicians of Rock On! to present a series of pre-show music acts before weekend evening performances. Music begins at 7:15pm, 45-minutes before Friday, Saturday and Sunday shows (full schedule and performers to be announced).

VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS WILL PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED SUPPORT

Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park’s 2019 production will continue the tradition of community collaboration. Each evening performance will be supported by a different local organization, which will provide volunteer ushers and other helpers to hand out programs, park cars, and help with seating. Interested organizations should contact volunteer coordinator Alexandra Warshaw at volunteer@pittsfieldshakespeare.org.

ABOUT PITTSFIELD SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

Launched in the summer of 2014, Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park presents fully-produced performances of Shakespeare’s plays under the evening sky for free to the public. Over ten thousand people have enjoyed its first four productions, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night*.

For photos of past shows visit <http://www.pittsfieldshakespeare.org/photos>

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