



August 23, 2011

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**SHAKESPEARE'S GREAT AND WITTY ROMANTIC COMEDY *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*,
DIRECTED BY SAM BUNTROCK, OPENS TWO RIVER THEATER'S 2011-2012 SEASON**

MICHAEL CUMPSTY AND KATHRYN MEISLE LEAD A COMPANY OF 15 ACTORS

Performances begin September 10 with the opening night on Saturday, September 17 at 8 pm

RED BANK, NJ— Two River Theater Company, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, launches its new season with **Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing***, directed by Tony Award nominee **Sam Buntrock** and starring Obie winner **Michael Cumpsty** and Tony Award nominee **Kathryn Meisle** as Benedick and Beatrice. Performances will begin in Two River's Joan and Robert Rechnitz Theater, 21 Bridge Avenue, on **Saturday, September 10** and continue through **Sunday, October 2**. The opening night performance is **Saturday, September 17 at 8pm**.

Tickets are available from 732.345.1400 or www.trtc.org. Single ticket prices start at \$37. Discounts are available for groups, seniors, students, and patrons aged 30 and under.

A great and witty romantic comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing* delights audiences with the sparkling banter between resistant lovers Benedick and Beatrice. Buntrock sets their "merry war" in the early 20th century, on the veranda of a family home owned by one of Sicily's most powerful men. In this idyllic atmosphere, filled with music and sunshine, the sudden appearance of soldiers returning from battle brings romance—and an undercurrent of danger. In this world of honor and passion, two sets of lovers—Benedick and Beatrice, and the younger couple Claudio and Hero—determine their futures.

John Dias says, "I am thrilled to launch my first season at Two River with this truly glorious comedy. I have long wanted to produce *Much Ado* with the exceptional actors Michael Cumpsty and Katherine Meisle in Shakespeare's greatest roles for mature lovers. Led by the brilliant director Sam Buntrock, they are joined by some of the most accomplished artists in the American theater, including a great ensemble and an exciting, inventive design team."

Sam Buntrock directed the first Broadway revival of *Sunday in the Park with George*, a production that originated at London's Menier Chocolate Factory and also played in the West End and at Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre. The production has been honored with five Olivier Awards including Outstanding Musical Production and an Olivier nomination for Best Director; nine Tony nominations including Best Director; and a Drama Desk nomination for Best Director. His other recent credits include plays for New York Stage & Film and (Manhattan Theatre Club).

Michael Cumpsty (Benedick) has appeared in 14 Broadway productions including *Sunday in the Park with George* (directed by Buntrock) and *Copenhagen*. His Shakespeare credits include his Obie-winning performance as Hamlet at Classic Stage, Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* at the Delacorte Theater in Central

Park, and Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* for the Royal Shakespeare Company. His film and television credits include *Boardwalk Empire*, *Nurse Jackie* and *The Ice Storm*.

Kathryn Meisle (Beatrice) received a Tony nomination and the Callaway Award for Roundabout's *Tartuffe*; her Broadway credits also include *Racing Demon* and *The Constant Wife*. She starred in *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It* (Drama Desk nomination) and *Othello* for New York Shakespeare Festival. Her New Jersey credits include productions at McCarter and Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey.

The company also includes **John Ahlin** (Dogberry), **Tom Bloom** (Leonato), **Connor Carew** (Friar Francis, Verges), **Sean Dugan** (Don John), **Christopher Hirsh** (Borachio), **Tia James** (Margaret), **Kevin Kelly** (Conrade), **Nick LaMedica** (Balthasar, Watchman), **Aaron Clifton Moten** (Claudio), **Mary Anne O'Brien** (Ursula, Sexton), **Steven Skybell** (Don Pedro), **Annapurna Sriram** (Hero) and **Zeke Zaccaro** (Antonio, Watchman).

The creative team includes scenic designer **Tony Straiges**, costume designer **Mattie Ullrich**, lighting designer **Brian Tovar**, sound designer and composer **Mark Bennett**, and vocal coach **Deborah Hecht**. The casting is by **Janet Foster, CSA** and the stage manager is **Whitney McAnally**.

For complete biographies of the company, visit www.trtc.org.

Discussions and Events

Before Play: Before every performance of each subscription show at Two River Theater, an artistic staff member, artist, educator or community leader hosts a free discussion to give context and background about the show. Audience members interested in attending the **Before Play** discussion should arrive at the theater 45 minutes prior to their scheduled performance.

Post-Play Conversations: The audience is invited to stay for a discussion with a member of the artistic staff and members of the cast after the following performances:

Wednesdays: **September 21** at 7pm and **September 28** at 1pm

Sundays: **September 25** at 3pm

Accessibility: Two River Theater is fully wheelchair accessible and offers assisted-listening devices and large-print programs at every performance. To reserve wheelchair accessible seating or tickets for a performance listed below, patrons should call 732.345.1400.

Audio-described performances are scheduled for **Wednesday, September 28** at 1pm and **Saturday October 1** at 8pm; tickets are \$15 for patrons needing audio description.

An **open-captioned performance** is scheduled for **Saturday, October 1** at 3pm; tickets are \$15 for patrons needing open captions.

Calendar

Saturday, September 10 at 8pm

Sunday, September 11 at 3pm

Tuesday, September 13 at 8pm

Wednesday, September 14 at 7pm

Thursday, September 15 at 8pm

Friday, September 16 at 8pm

Saturday, September 17 at 8pm (Opening Night)
Sunday, September 18 at 3pm
Wednesday, September 21 at 1pm and 7pm
Thursday, September 22 at 10am and 8pm
Friday, September 23 at 8pm
Saturday, September 24 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, September 25 at 3pm
Wednesday, September 28 at 1pm and 7pm
Thursday, September 29 at 10am and 8pm
Friday, September 30 at 8pm
Saturday, October 1 at 3pm and 8pm
Sunday, October 2 at 3pm

Institutional support for Two River Theater is provided by: The Hickory Foundation, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, The Stone Foundation of New Jersey, OceanFirst Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Community Foundation of New Jersey, The Jorgensen Foundation, Durso-Frazier Wealth Management Group, Investors Savings Bank, Bank of America, RBC Wealth Management, Zager Fuchs PC, and The Merrill G. & Erita H. Hastings Foundation. The theater is supported in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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TWO RIVER THEATER COMPANY is under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst. Founded in 1994 by Joan and Dr. Robert M. Rechnitz, Two River Theater is a member of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT), Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the New Jersey Theatre Alliance, and ArtPride New Jersey, and has been designated a "Major Arts Institution" by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. For more information, visit www.trtc.org.