

B.O.D.S!



2017

September
2022

Prebendal



A Christmas Carol

May
2022

BODS



December
2022

Burford Garden Centre

May
2023

Goodnight Mr Tom



June
2023

Blue



September
2023

Husbands Supplied



January
2024

A Lad in Boots



September
2024

July
2024

Background Artist/
On Location



January
2025

Blood Brothers



May
2025

Close to Corydon/
Dogs Life



October
2025

Curtain Up!



Snow Queen



January
2026

Goldilocks



June
2026

Much Ado
About Nothing

B.O.D.S!



Much Ado About Nothing



By William Shakespeare
Directed by Mandyrae Jessey
18th - 20th June 2026

Director's Notes

When you are sitting in a room surrounded by hundreds of scripts on a cold winters night looking for the ‘next one’ and there looking up at you is Shakespeare! Well, what are you to do? Go for it of course!

Casting was easy, so many enthusiastic Bods wanted to be in it and even the newer members wanted to give it a go, so within two weeks we were off...but it seems like just a couple of days ago we started rehearsing and now find ourselves in the excessive heat and longing for it to be the day we can show our wonderful audience and supporters our play, *Much ado about nothing*.

Shakespeare is a delight for directors, we almost have a free hand to re-create his every play in the way that we want to. Although we have stayed true to the story and characters I have added a few tweaks and a little live music from modern singers and some lively jigs to brighten the story and make it our own. Although I have directed Shakespeare before and some of the cast have acted in Shakespeare's plays for some it's new and a great new understanding of his writing and humour has been learnt. Thank you to one of the best casts ever, they are so talented, to all the crew, and technical help. It's been a busy time making costumes, props and set but it's been worthwhile. We have had many laughs and so much fun during rehearsals and this has continued to gel the Bods more so than ever. Special thanks to John, Teresa, Dave and Kirsty for all their extra support to me behind the scenes.

A massive thank you to Jane Potter and Bruern farms and cafe who not only welcomed us for this event but have supported us in so many ways as well as some sponsorship. We really hope that everyone enjoys this show and maybe next winter I can look at a script again and think it might be a good one to bring back here!

Shakespeare loved his long plays but they go along at a pace, but with the bar and food in plenty of supply let's now bring this to the stage! Thank you to every one of you in the audience for coming and watching and supporting us, we do this for you!



B.O.D.S!

BODS was founded and run by Mandy in 2017 As a group for teenagers but struggled to continue through the Covid lockdown period. In early 2022 Mandy decided to re-start and open up the group to adults as well as teenagers. This initially started just with weekly sessions for learning and fun but has now developed into a multi-level, committee-run group with those who attend the weekly sessions and those who want to be involved with the bigger shows such as this one...or you can do both!

Our first stage production 'A Christmas Carol' won 3 awards including 'Best Show' in the ODN Winter Drama Festival 2023.

We would love to get some new members and everyone is very welcome so please get in contact if this interests you. We also hold social events.

Look out for our next production, in January 2027!

Contact Chair: Mandyrae Jessey Wychwoodbods@hotmail.com
Or visit our Facebook page 'Branching Out Drama Society'



Mandyrae Jessey



Scenes

Act One

- Scene 1 - Before Leonato's House
- Scene 2 - A Room in Leonato's House
- Scene 3 - A Room in Leonato's House

Act Two

- Scene 1 - A Hall in Leonato's House
- Scene 2 - A Hall in Leonato's House
- Scene 3 - Leonato's Orchard

Act Three

- Scene 1 - Leonato's Garden
- Scene 2 - A Room in Leonato's House

Interval

- Scene 3 - A Street
- Scene 4 - Hero's Apartment
- Scene 5 - Another Room in Leonato's House
- Scene 3 - A Street

Act Four

- Scene 1 - A Church
- Scene 2 - A Prison

Act Five

- Scene 1 - Before Leonato's House
- Scene 2 - Leonato's Garden
- Scene 3 - A Church
- Scene 4 - A Room in Leonato's House

Follow us on social media...

Facebook and YouTube:

@Branching Out Drama Society



Take a look at our new website: Wychwoodbods.co.uk

Cast

Leonato.....	Mark Jessey
Messenger.....	Daisy Ball
Beatrice.....	Kate Bull
Hero.....	Amy HD
Don Pedro.....	Luke Rasdall
Benedick.....	David Cooke
Don John.....	Anthony Gofton
Claudio.....	Chris Bull
Antonio.....	Daryl Jenkins
Conrade.....	Pete Newbold
Borachio.....	Richard Hogan
Balthasar.....	Barbara Saunders
Margaret.....	Jane Arnold
Ursula.....	Kirsty Plant
Dogberry.....	John Witts
Verges.....	Teresa O'Hara
Friar Francis.....	John Witts
Sexton.....	Liz Rasdall
Boy.....	Felix Bull
Watchmen/Women.....	Claire Hogan, Lyn Newbold, Laura Pickford, Ian O'Hara
Courtiers.....	Tilly King, Leila Hogg, Belle King, Bea Rasdall, Frank Rasdall, Hope Duncan
Musician.....	Josh Rowley
Soloist.....	Kirsty Plant



5 Things to Look out for ...

While many of the themes in *Much Ado about Nothing* about love, honour, and the role of women in society are universal and very recognisable to this day, the 400 year-old language, full of Elizabethan puns, slang and references to social customs, mean that there are some elements that would have been much more obvious to an Elizabethan audience than one of today. If you spot the following references and can't quite figure what is going on, we are here to help...

“Signior Mountanto” as an insult - Almost the first line of the play is an archaic term that modern audiences will not recognise. Beatrice calls Benedick Signior Mountanto, which was a fencing term for an upward thrust, mocking him as a show-off. If you struggle to find this funny, don't worry - the joke seems to go over the heads of the other characters as well!

Repeated references to Horns - Several of the characters make comments about growing or wearing horns if they are married. In Shakespeare's time, “wearing horns” meant a man had been cheated on by his wife and was a “cuckold”. To be married made men vulnerable to this social shame, and the repeated jokes about it hint at a deeper reason why Benedick is resistant to being wed, and why Claudio is so insecure about the idea of his future wife being unfaithful.

Leading “Bear Apes” into Hell - This is one of the strangest descriptions in the play, but would have been more well known to an Elizabethan audience as a proverb relating to dying unmarried as an old maid. The idea was that women who had no husband or children when they died would be condemned to take apes down to hell. But whilst it was traditionally said as a warning to avoid such a fate, Beatrice embraces the cruel joke, defiantly accepting the perceived punishment rather than the social obligation of marrying an inferior man.

Puns on the multiple meanings of “Noting” - In the 1500s, “nothing” was pronounced similarly to “noting”- meaning that term had multiple meanings, which Shakespeare riffs on throughout the play. Noting meant eavesdropping or paying attention, so the title implies the play is simultaneously all about eavesdropping, a central theme of the plot, and about not much at all – signposting it is a comedy where everything is wrapped up neatly and happily by the end. The bard Balthasar takes it even further by punning at some length about the musical meaning of the word as well.

Dogberry's many long-winded Malapropisms - Dogberry, the constable of the neighbourhood watch, constantly uses the wrong or even opposite words and proverbs to what he intends, in an effort to impress people. He is also so long-winded that he becomes distracted from his own point, and other characters can't follow him either – which adds to the dramatic tension when he does actually have key information to impart. So, struggling to follow what he is trying to convey is all part of the joke! More generally, the incompetence of the Watch was a common joke in Elizabethan times and featured in many plays.

This is my first performance with bods but I've played a range of instruments in various bands as well as pit bands for Chicago and We will rock you.

I'm not a massive fan of dressing up, wearing a costume or being on stage but here we are and I've ended up in a bright green outfit, with a bright green guitar.

Josh Rowley (Musician)





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Production Crew

Director.....	Mandyræ Jessey
Stage Manager.....	Sue Mellerick
Crew.....	Elliott Large, Archie Townsend, Tom Hogg, Paul Coombes, Cathy Pickford, Jenna Saunders
Sound.....	Anthony Gofton
Lighting.....	Tony Mellerick
Props/Set.....	Mandyræ Jessey, Naomi Rowley, Ian O'Hara, Teresa O'Hara, Daryl Jenkins
Costumes.....	Jenna Saunders, Mandyræ Jessey, Claire-Marie Mason
Music.....	Mandyræ Jessey
Choreography.....	Mandyræ Jessey
Chaperone.....	Claire Pridmore
Rehearsal Prompt.....	Teresa O'Hara
Photography.....	Elizabeth-Rae Large, Mandyræ Jessey
FOH.....	Mandyræ Jessey
Programme sellers.....	Henry Bull, Sue Smith
Bar/BBQ.....	Buern Cafe
Publicity.....	Mandyræ Jessey
Poster & Programme.....	Kirsty Plant
Box Office.....	Elizabeth-Rae Large, Rowan Large

B.O.D.S strives to provide a high standard of entertainment to the people of the Wychwoods and beyond involving members of the community of all ages and experiences. It is important to our committee to keep membership costs down to make this group accessible to as many people that want to join as possible. However, it costs a lot of money to create a show like this one and money is short. Any donations would be greatly appreciated to help us keep bringing the entertainment. Please sit back and enjoy our Show!

From The Cast...



I am excited to perform the role of Claudio in this production, which has been so much fun to put together with friends from the local community. This is my first time performing Shakespeare, although I have been a member of BODS since 2022, taking part in A Christmas Carol, several Pantomimes (as both the villain and the Dame) and in shorter plays, one of which (Blue) was taken in 2023 to several Oxfordshire drama festivals. This performance is a family affair, with my wife Kate playing the Beatrice, and my son Felix taking on the role of Boy, so thank you to who have come to support us!

Chris Bull (Claudio)

When joining BODS in 2022, I was new to acting. This is now my 9th production on stage with the group...! Previous roles include: The Spirit of Christmas Present in A Christmas Carol, The Cat in A Lad in Boots Pantomime, and Linda in Blood Brothers (a personal highlight).

Since Summer 2025 I've attended several Screen Acting workshops, and done some filming work on set. Shakespeare isn't something I've done before, so it's a challenge but a great learning experience (as always). I love acting and enjoy being with so many of the kind and talented people here.

Thank you for supporting amateur dramatics! **Amy HD (Hero)**



Welcome dulcineas, better late than never!

The bards offerings are, as they ever were for everyone's enjoyment. So enjoy you the secrets of Shakespeare amongst good company in the open air on a balmy summers night, for we may be wormsmeat afore long.

I heartily pray that you wake on the morrow to the sound of wood pigeons and church bells, and smile at the memory of our shared exchanges.

Come revel in our bounty overplus and enjoy yourself ... that none is left to protest!

Luke Rasdall (Don Pedro)



I've been involved with BODS for a number of years, although until now my role has been as sound designer and audio tech. Being offered the chance to play the sour sociopath Don John was irresistible - I'm hoping for some boos! BODS are a welcoming, inclusive family and it's a pleasure to be involved in a big show. **Anthony Gofton (Don John)**



This will be my 3rd performance with BODS. Dying Dog, Dodgy Dame and now Defiant Duellist! It's actually my 2nd time performing this character, though I don't remember a single line from last time. The best thing about performing with BODS is the people. They make the whole process from rehearsal to performance a joy. I hope you enjoy us bringing the Bard's words to life for you.

David Cooke (Benedick)

It has been such a joy to bring Beatrice to life for this production of Much Ado About Nothing. It's been wonderful to be part of the cast with my husband, Chris (playing Claudio) and my son Felix (playing Boy). While I've previously performed as Olivia in Twelfth Night and Margaret in Henry VI, I think this is the Shakespeare role I have enjoyed the most. Beatrice is a fiercely loyal friend, a bright spark who makes complicated jokes that only she understands, until Benedick comes along, and an idealist who turns down a Prince for the argumentative ex who broke her heart. And Benedick loves her even after she reveals to him the true depths of her rage at men for the injustices they have done to women. I hope you enjoy the story of how they both overcome the obstacles they have put in their own paths and find love. **Kate Bull (Beatrice)**



Having played the 'Baddie' in our last production, I was delighted to be given the role of Verges but not having acted in a Shakespeare play before, I thought I would look up the description of the character to see why the Director thought that it would suit me. It read 'elderly, comical and senile' I think the director and I will be having words soon!!! We have all had such fun in Rehearsals and can't wait to perform for you all and we hope you enjoy it. Thanks for coming!

Teresa O'Hara (Verges)

I'm being typecast, for BOTH roles! Having previously played Bottom in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', I am once again playing an Ass! Not only that, but the other role I'm playing ... well, I'll let you figure that out. This is my third Bods show (on top of other shows directed by Mandy). Prior to this I played Kermit, sorry I mean Bob Cratchit, in 'A Christmas Carol.' I then took on the role of Mr Tom in 'Goodnight Mr Tom.' The one and only time I'll grow a beard! Having since had some respite, during which I've had both hip and knee surgery, I've been lured back by the prospect of another Shakespeare outdoor performance. Rehearsals have been a blast. Now for the real thing. Right ... now where did I leave my horse? **John Witts (Dogberry/Friar Francis)**

