

THE CURTAIN THEATRE RETURNS TO OLD MILL PARK 2022

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# *TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA*

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



DIRECTED BY STEVE BEECROFT

2:00 PM

OLD MILL PARK AMPHITHEATRE  
MILL VALLEY

SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS,  
AND LABOR DAY MONDAY  
AUGUST 13<sup>TH</sup> TO SEPTEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>  
2022

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## PLAYERS

ENSEMBLE .....	Steve Beecroft
EGLAMOUR, OUTLAW, ENSEMBLE .....	Marc Berman
PANTINA, OUTLAW, ENSEMBLE .....	Kim Bromley
PROTEUS .....	Nelson Brown
SPEED .....	Heather Cherry
SYLVIA .....	Gillian Eichenberger
JULIA .....	Isabelle Grimm
DUKE OF MILAN .....	Glenn Havlan
THURIO (CRAB in some performances).....	Jamin Jollo
VALENTINE .....	Nic Moore
LUCETTA, OUTLAW, ENSEMBLE .....	Michele Sanner Vargas
ANTONIO, THE HOST .....	Mark Shepard
SERVANT, OUTLAW, ENSEMBLE .....	Abigail Wissink
LAUNCE .....	GreyWolf
CRAB, the dog .....	Banjo

## PRODUCTION

DIRECTOR .....	Steve Beecroft
CHOREOGRAPHY/FIGHT/PRODUCTION.....	Steve Beecroft
MUSIC DIRECTOR .....	Don Clark
SET DESIGN .....	Steve Coleman
COSTUME DESIGN .....	Jody Branham
COSTUME ASSISTANTS .....	Lisa Claybaugh, Sondra Schwartz
PROPERTIES .....	Michele Delattre, Janelle Ponte
STAGE MANAGER .....	Diane Pickell-Gore
ASST STAGE MANAGER .....	Lisa Immel
HOUSE MANAGER.....	Nic Meredith
ASSISTANT HOUSE MANAGER.....	Trish Hueber
DRAMATURG.....	Peter Bradbury
PHOTOGRAPHY .....	Russell Johnson
POSTER DESIGN .....	Mark Shepard

☞ THE BAND: Don Clark (guitar/mandolin); Michele Delattre (concertina);  
Hal Hughes (fiddle/percussion); Jo Lusk (flute) ☞

## 🦋 DIRECTOR'S NOTES 🦋

Many people have asked me why I wanted to direct this play. Initially, it was the beauty of its poetry that drew me in. But when I delved more deeply into this, one of the Bard's earliest plays, I found, not just beautiful poetry and prose, but great comedy, deep characters and serious issues as topical today as they were in 1593. *Two Gents* is no light soufflé comedy. While it has lots of humor which we try to bring out to the full, it also has real elements of tragedy - in this case the fall of a seemingly noble man due to a central character flaw - inconstancy.

In terms of message, the play starts out seeming to propagate the male friendship myth so actively written about at the time by the likes of Montaigne, Lyly, Spencer and Elyot. But it ends up exploding it. Instead of extolling the superiority of the male character and male friendship, in *Two Gents* it is the women who are by far the more honorable, constant and thoughtful characters. This is true to my view of Shakespeare as a proto-feminist vastly ahead of his time. (Just look at the strength and resourcefulness of the female characters he creates in his plays: Rosalind, Beatrice, Hermione, Viola, Helena, etc.)

To this mix we add the Curtain Theatre's special sauce of original music, choreography and fight action. So strap yourself in and prepare for a wild adventure of fun and pathos, betrayal and redemption, and, yes, a bit with a dog - all brought to you by the truly wonderful group of actors, musicians and artists that make the Curtain Theatre their home. Enjoy the show!

– Steve Beecroft, August 2022

## 🦋 DRAMATURG'S NOTES 🦋

An early play, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* offers us the beauty and truth of Shakespeare's language and two firsts: Julia is the first Shakespearean heroine to dress as a man; and it is the first of what we currently know as the problem plays, in which dark themes challenge the audience's aesthetic and social expectations. We open with two friends in love with wordplay, sonnets and courtly idealizations of love and friendship. Valentine leaves the staid Verona for the sophisticated and dangerous Milan, where he falls in love with the beautiful and smart Sylvia; and she with him. His friend Proteus (named after the shape-shifting god of change) courts the also beautiful and smart Julia, until he too leaves for Milan. He meets Sylvia and desire immediately takes hold and he forgets Julia and turns against Valentine. Past reason hunted, as Shakespeare wrote in Sonnet 129, he scuppers his friend's plan to elope with Sylvia and pursues her into the forest. His dark obsession and refusal to take No for an answer, which are at the root of his inconstancy, are challenged by the loyal and perceptive Sylvia. Julia, in male disguise, becomes a witness to her beloved's passion for another woman.

In language that is riveting and nuanced - the two women get the best lines - the play explores the way desire explodes the project of being social and human. In a finale where forgiveness and silence greet the sudden awakening of Proteus, we see Shakespeare's youthful attempt to reconcile the imperatives of love and friendship.

– Peter Bradbury, August 2022

## COMPANY

**Banjo (Crab the Dog).** Banjo is happy to be in his first Shakespearean play and wants to thank his owners for making him the happiest dog in Mill Valley.

**Steve Beecroft (director, producer, choreographer, fight director, ensemble).** Steve found his home with the Curtain Theatre in 2009 and has enjoyed every minute since. He directed *Henry IV part one* in 2018 and has been choreographer and fight director throughout his time with the company. Favorite roles include Sir Andrew Aguecheek in last year's production of *Twelfth Night*, the crazy Dr. Caius in *Merry Wives*, Tranio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Caliban in *the Tempest* and Cookie in *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. Steve is also a member of the Curtain Theatre's Board of Directors. Many thanks to my lovely lady Trish for her support and patience.

**Marc Berman (Eglamor/Outlaw).** Marc is proud to return to Curtain Theatre, where he previously portrayed Antonio in *Twelfth Night* and Master Ford in *Merry Wives of Windsor*. An American Academy of Dramatic Arts alumni, and 2-time Irene Ryan Award nominee, Marc is a self-taught make-up artist (Seduction Make-Up). In recent years he has performed in many Bay Area theatres. During lockdown, Marc started filming readings of haunting tales and old poetry as a vampiric character for a radio personality, as well as performing Shakespearean and Greek plays for Zoom productions with Clinquant Bosom Friends. He dedicates performances to his Consort: Lisa, and the kids Aidan & Xander, and all various supporters. Always in his thoughts is his mother, Margaret (RIP.) "Marilyn Monroe, you were everything. Thanks for everything, Julie Newmar."

**Peter Bradbury (dramaturg)** has been in love with Shakespeare's language since he first heard an actress say, "My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown / Too headstrong for their mother."

**Jody Branham (costume designer)** is delighted to be working on her second Curtain Theatre production. "It's like joining a family."

Jody has recently earned a masters degree in Theatre Arts with an emphasis on costume design from San Francisco State University and previously earned an AA in Drama from College of Marin.

**Kim Bromley (Pantina, Outlaw, ensemble, dog wrangler).** Kim was raised by Milanese outlaws. She holds a BA in Theater Arts and an MA in film production. A resident of the North Bay for 35 years, Kim's many local acting credits include *Gypsy*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (NTC); *You Can't Take It With You*, *A Month in the Country* (RVP); *Laramie Project* (TAL); *Sightlines* (Custom Made); *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Urinetown* (Stapleton); *Pippin* (MMTC) and *Twelfth Night* (Curtain). In addition to her acting life, Kim is also a director, writer and producer.

**Nelson Brown (Proteus)** is happy to return to the park after playing Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, Poin in *Henry IV Part 1*, and LaFleche in *The Miser*. Also a musical theater nerd, his favorite roles include Roger in *RENT* (MMTC/NTC), Riff Raff in *The Rocky Horror Show* (MMTC), Nathan Detroit in *Gays and Dolls* (MMTC), and Vince Fontaine in *Grease* (Mountain Play). Thanks and love always to Nikki, family, and friends!

**Heather Cherry (Speed)** first worked with Curtain in 2010, playing Jaques in *As You Like It*. She had no idea then that this would turn into her longest running gig, in her favorite flavor: free Shakespeare in the park. It is a joy to work with this company of kind, creative, funny, thoughtful and devoted friends. Welcome to the Curtain family of players - we are so happy you are here! Special thank you to Connie and Peter and our FAMILY, xoxo.

**Don Clark (music director)** has played guitar in the Curtain band since its founding in 2000, and once again composed songs and tunes for this production. Besides work with this company, he and spouse Michele Delattre perform Celtic music with the band Luck Penny and rock with the band Off the Record.

**Steve Coleman (set designer)** is a longtime artist in Mill Valley and award-winning set designer. He is known for his loving, often fantastical creations of everything from small models to the elegant reborn performing spaces at the 142 Throckmorton Theatre.

**Michele Delattre (band – concertina, production)** cherishes her summers in the Curtain band. Thanks to Don and Hal for all the great music and to Jo for keeping the melody alive. She is a founding member of the Curtain.

**Gillian Eichenberger (Sylvia)** Gillian Eichenberger is an Actor, Director, and Theater Educator from Marin, and is proud to be making her Curtain debut! She recently directed *A Doll's House Part 2* for NTC, and was seen onstage at MTC understudying in *Christmas at Pemberley: Georgiana & Kitty*. Regional credits: Sheila in *Hair* (6th St), Roxie in *Chicago* (NTC), and Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* (Throckmorton). She is a passionate educator of artists of all ages, working as a music director and vocal coach in the Bay Area. When she's not acting, she sings and plays synth with Oakland-based band "The Hot Takes." Next: Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors* at 6th St! [gillianeichenberger.org](http://gillianeichenberger.org)

**Isabelle Grimm (Julia)**. Isabelle is thrilled to be spending another summer with her friends at Curtain! Previous Curtain shows include *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV part 1*, *The Miser*, and *The Comedy of Errors*. Locally, she has also worked with Marin Shakespeare Company, Theatre Lunatico, Ross Valley Players, and Sonoma Arts Live, among others. A Bay Area native, she received her BFA in Theatre Performance from Chapman University and attended Shakespeare & Company's Month-Long Intensive in Lenox, Massachusetts.

**Glenn Havlan (Duke of Milan)** returns to Curtain after playing Sir Toby Belch in last year's *Twelfth Night*. He has performed in and/or directed over thirty productions of twenty different Shakespeare plays, including nine with Marin Shakespeare Company. He founded two San Francisco companies, the Free Civic Theater and the Theater of Others, staging fifty productions from 2000-2019.

**Hal Hughes (band, composer).** Hal has worked with music and theater in the Bay Area since the 1970s, with Tumbleweed, Overtone Theater, Nightletter Theater, Subterranean Shakespeare, Word for Word, Backyard Beckett, Indra's Net and many others. He's delighted that Curtain Theatre likes to use his tunes in their productions. This is his twelfth Curtain production.

**Jamin Jollo, he/him/his (Thurio, Crab the dog in some performances)** is an actor, movement artist, and classically trained mime hailing from Southern Oregon. After training with Oregon Shakespeare Festival creators, Jamin spread his branches to the Bay Area. He's been seen recently in *Hair* at 6th Street and *Matilda* at Spreckels Performing Arts and he's excited to use his physical prowess in *Two Gentleman of Verona!* This January he'll show his puppeteering skills in *Little Shop of Horrors* at 6th Street and see where the wind takes him until then.

**Jo Lusk (band - flute)** is tickled to be allowed back into the Curtain Theatre band. She played in the pit for many Masquers Playhouse shows, and served as costumer for countless others. Once in a while unsuspecting directors let her get on stage.

**Nic Meredith (house manager).** Returning after a period of good behavior as Front of House Manager, Nic brings unfettered enthusiasm and charm matched only by his lack of experience. Coming from England, he is a bit of a scallywag so count your change when buying snacks at the break. Nic is a member of the Curtain Board.

**Nic Moore, he/him (Valentine).** Nic is happy to be working with Curtain Theatre for the fourth time. He has previously performed in *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV part 1* and *The Miser*. He has also worked with New Conservatory Theatre Center, Theatre Rhinoceros, Alter Theatre and many more lovely Bay Area theaters. He is also the founder of Theatre Vision Productions, a digital media company which creates multimedia content for local theaters.

**Diane Pickell-Gore (stage manager)** is happy to be returning for her 10th Season with the Curtain! (With a BA in Theatre Management from San Francisco State she's actually using her degree.) She can be found during the week managing the office at Bread and Roses, and "stage managing" services at Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church in Corte Madera on Sunday mornings. Enjoy the show!

**Michele Sanner Vargas (Lucetta, Outlaw, ensemble)** studied theater at the Marin Theater Company Conservatory with roles including Anita in *West Side Story*, Sarah Brown in *Gays & Dolls*, Hermia in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. This is her first production with The Curtain Theater. In addition to theater, Michele is a High School Chemistry teacher, athletic coach and mom of two boys who (reluctantly) also participate in theater. She dedicates this performance to the memory of her beloved Dad, Steve.

**Mark Shepard (Antonio, Host)** is very happy to be back on the Curtain Theatre stage. He has performed in comedy, commedia dell'arte, musicals, modern and classical drama and Shakespeare all over the Bay Area. In addition to his work as a graphic designer, Mark enjoys genealogy, jewelry design, camping, photography and being a grandfather. He couldn't do this without the love and encouragement of his wife Laurel.

**Abigail Wissink, she/they (Servant, Outlaw, ensemble).** Abigail is an actor, theater educator, director, and choral singer. She graduated from Walla Walla University with minors in drama and vocal performance, and after spending many years in the Walla Walla Washington theater scene, Abigail is excited to be in their first show in California since 2012.

**GreyWolf (Launce).** Thank you Redwoods. Thank you most special Curtain Theatre. Thank you Patrons, Supporters, and Audiences. Thank you Shakespeare and All Great Writers. Thank you Muses, including all the great artists I have learned and stolen from. Thank you, thank you. Our special shared journey has included Harpagon in *Miser*, Falstaff in *HIV-Pr1*, Falstaff in *Merry Wives*, Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*.

## —————MUSIC—————

Original and traditional folk music are hallmarks of every Curtain production, helping to establish the setting and underscore the personalities and moods of characters. We were inspired this time by the music of Italy--particularly the lively tarantella form that is a key element of its folk dance. Traditional tarantellas were picked for the beginning of the second half of the show and the finale. Don Clark composed the tune and lyrics to "The Road to Milan," Julia's song, Sylvia's song, and "We Love our Wine," as well as the melody to "Who is Sylvia?" Hal Hughes composed the incidental music played before, during and after the show.





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