

Shakespeare

A Beautiful Trick

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Shakespeare is for everybody

I come from a very international background. My mother is Japanese and my father is English, but I grew up in Munich in Germany. So I feel very international and not belonging to one place. I first came across Shakespeare at school and only by playing Shakespeare did I start loving Shakespeare. The stories are based all over the world. The majority of them are in England but he writes about Troy, about Egypt, about Greece, Denmark, so having worked in theatre in different countries and seeing how audiences react to Shakespeare, everyone gets it. And I think it's very universal. So my outlook is that it's for everybody. It's for any culture and any person.

The story of *Much Ado about Nothing*

Much Ado About Nothing is probably one of the most popular Shakespeare plays. And the reason is probably because of the love stories and the relationships. I love the central plot of Beatrice and Benedick and their love. Their hate and their love and their wit. Their war of wit is so fun to watch. And the nastier they can be to each other the better. You want them to be horrible to each other because it's so great. And then when they do get together at the end it pays off. So it's about love. It's about marriage, relationships, communities, expectations from elders. And also deception, people playing tricks on each other and trying to be horrible to each other but also trying to help each other by playing tricks. And so you've got Hero and Claudio trying to trick Benedick and Beatrice so that they fall in love, although that's a beautiful trick to do. There's so much there so it's a great story.

The characters Hero and Beatrice

In *Much Ado About Nothing* I played the character of Hero. And she's one of the central characters. But she's a much more traditional woman from Shakespeare's day or how people in that time would have expected women to be. So she's quiet, she's obedient, she's kind, she wants to fall in love. She falls in love at first sight with Claudio and they get married very quickly. But also she's very vulnerable and she becomes a victim. So she's basically become part of the trick and she's very vulnerable in that way. So she's a very fun and complex character but probably a simpler character to play than Beatrice who's much more modern. A modern-day woman, I suppose. She's complicated, she's witty, she's nasty. She doesn't want to do what she's told. She doesn't want to listen to what men say just because they're men and she's a woman. So that dynamic ... the difference of the two women is a great part of the story. So that was very fun to play. Also the comedy is fun so it's great when the audience laugh at you when

Hero and the maid are trying to trick Beatrice by pretending that Benedick is in love with her. And they know she's listening but they're pretending that she's not. Like that seems really fun. You can tell the audience are gripped. So it's a really fun play to do.

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