

As You Like It

CAST

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Orlando | Adam Fontana+^ |
| Rosalind | Erika Vetter+^ |
| Celia | Mohriah James+ |
| Touchstone | Zachary Chiero+^ |
| Oliver/Amiens | Conor Sheehan+ |
| Duke Frederick/Silvius | Matt Bodo |
| Duke Senior | Stephen Bowers+ |
| Jaques | Paul E. Laakso |
| Corin/Charles | Charlie Grice+ |
| Phoebe/courtier | Katie Dittelberger+ |
| Audrey/courtier | Jessica McCallum |
| Ada | Peppi Sanders+ |
| Madame LeBeau | Ashley Hunt |
| Dennis | Jamie Pickering+ |
| Duke Senior's Attendant | Shaunibah Morfin+ |
| Duke Senior's Attendant/ Trainer | Eric Pfeiffer |
| Jacqui DeBois | Selena M. Trujillo+ |

CREATIVE TEAM

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Director | Mona Wood-Patterson+ |
| Technical Director/ Set and Puppet Designer Costume Designer | Charles Ford+ JoAnn Nevils+ |

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Choreographer | Zachary Chiero+ |
| Composer | Conor Sheehan+ |
| Stage Manager | Deborah Heath+ |

This production's original tunes feature music by Conor Sheehan and lyrics by William Shakespeare.

CREW

| | |
|--|---|
| Assistant Stage Manager | Selena M. Trujillo+ |
| Light Technician/Props Manager | Natalie Cohn+ |
| Sound Technician | Michael Chapman+ |
| Costume Manager | Abby Kubicek |
| Ticket Manager | Greta Richter+ |
| Dresser | Jeanette Hohnke |
| Lead Scenic Artists | Mariah Kaminsky Heather Howe+ |
| Props Master/Production Asst. | Diane Panelli+ |
| Company Manager | Mary Lynn Clark+ |
| Photographer | Kara Cavalca+ |
| PlotChat Leaders | Mona Wood-Patterson+ Stephen Bowers+ |
| Set/Props Construction/Scenic Painting | |
| Mariah Kaminsky | Michael Lee+ |
| Heather Howe+ | Natalie Cohn+ |
| Eric Pfeiffer | Michael Chapman |
| Abigail Katzer | Jenny Mason |
| Diane Panelli+ | Mary Lynn Clark+ |
| Poster Distribution | |
| Grace Dendy | Anna Newman |
| Conor Sheehan+ | Mary Lynn Clark+ |

Parking Lot Guides

Jeff Widen

Tami Hanson

Mary Lynn Clark+

Marc Arbeeny+

Katy Schneider

+ Merely Players Artistic Company

^ Member of Actors' Equity Association

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission. Greta's Goodies will be offering concessions. It's a cash only deal.

Please silence your cell phones; they don't work that well down here anyway.

*We welcome you to take photos/video in the theatre before and after, **but not during**, the performance. If you post photos of the stage, please be sure to credit and tag Merely Players. @merely_players_durango*

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited. We know that, for many of you, taking performance photos or video of your loved ones is a huge temptation. Please respect this rule of theatre etiquette and resist! Phone use during a show is distracting to actors and audience members, violates our contract, and is disrespectful of our creative property. Live theatre is meant to be temporal – let it be just that. Thank you!

To enhance your theatre experience, we invite you to join us for a pre-show PLOT CHAT 45 minutes before each performance.

WHO'S WHO

Matt Bodo (*Duke Frederick/Silvius*) is a third generation native of Durango. After graduating from CU Boulder with a BFA in Acting, Matt spent 10 years in New York City writing theatre & television, acting, and performing stand-up comedy. Raised in an acting family and classically trained, most of his Shakespearean background was with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Plays included *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Macbeth*. A founding member of the short-lived, off-Broadway Blue Coat Repertory, host of a public access varietal *Talk Show This*, and a writer/performer for COURT TV's *Snap Judgment* in NYC, Matt, an avid snowboarder, returned to the Rocky Mountains to attempt to put the "rad" back in Colorado.

Stephen Bowers (*Duke Senior*) is delighted to be exiled with his co-mates in the Forest of Arden where he finds good in everything. Most recently, he appeared Underground as Robin in *The Children*. Other Merely Players credits include Macduff in *Macbeth*, Sam in *Mamma Mia!*, Vanya in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* and George Banks in *Mary Poppins*. His life "exempt from public haunt" has been as a physician on the Navajo Nation.

Michael Chapman (*Sound Technician*) has been in a few Merely Players productions: *Mary Poppins*, *The Secret Garden*, *Shrek* and *Macbeth*. Is excited to be doing tech and not learning lines. This is his absolute favorite Shakespeare play. Nobody dies and all the worlds a stage!

Zachary Chiero (*Touchstone/Choreographer*) is thrilled to be back with Merely Players, after appearing in *Buyer & Cellar* this summer! After graduating from Muhlenberg College, Zachary has spent the last decade performing in theatres throughout Philadelphia. Currently an associate Artistic Director with Enchantment Theatre Company, he has created three world-premiere national tours; and, in February of 2023, Zachary will be performing the title role in *Peer Gynt*, debuting with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He is a proud member of Tribe of Fools, a physical theatre company, where he has received Barrymore nominations for his choreography in the premieres of *Fly*, *Eagles Fly* and *Fishtown: A Hipster Noir*. Favorite performances include Leo in *The Producers*, Riff in *West Side Story*, Prince Herbert in *Spamalot*, and Clown in *Clown Sex Ed*. Love to my husband, Dallas. zacharyjchiero.com

Mary Lynn Clark (*Company Manager*) recently appeared in the ensemble of *Matilda*, and is thrilled to be part of the Merely Players family as the new Company Manager. For many years, she has had the joy of working on sets with Merely Players because of her daughters' acting involvement. Mary Lynn taught ballroom dancing for six years, where she met her wonderful husband, who ended up bringing her to Durango. She and Matt are parents to Laura, Ellie, and Gabe.

Natalie Cohn (*Light Technician/Props Manager*) is happy to manage props for *As You Like It*, as well as, perform a myriad of tech projects as Master Jedi Charles Ford's official Padawan. Tech is very cool! Check out Durango High School's upcoming performance of *Anastasia!*

Katie Dittelberger (*Phoebe/Courtier*) is thrilled to be in her first Shakespearean production, and with the amazing Merely Players theater company to boot! She was born and raised in Indiana, but has been proud to call Durango home for many years. She plays the role of "lawyer" during the workdays, and the roles of "wife," "friend," "Auntie Katie," "bookworm," and "amateur hiker" on the weekends. To quote the Bard – she also loves "long life better than figs!"

Adam Fontana (*Orlando*) always jumps at the opportunity to come home to Durango and make theatre with Merely Players, as he did in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mary Poppins*, *The Shape of Things*, *Dames at Sea* and *Forever Plaid* (Merely Players). He's also been on stage in Seattle, NYC, on tour, underscored by Enya for a commercial, and even rained on by tater tots. Upcoming: Lifetime movie released this fall and *Into The Wild Frontier Season 2* streaming soon. When not acting: snuggling his pup and his Rosalind, eating popcorn and taking pictures. www.adamfontana.com
[@fontana_fotography](https://www.instagram.com/fontana_fotography)

Charles Ford (*Technical Director and Designer*) is a master backstage technician and the Technical Director of Merely Players. An avid puppeteer, mask-maker, make-up artist, robotics engineer, and special effects designer, he has designed dozens of sets for a variety of theatrical genres. During his career as Durango High School's tech director and resident designer, Charles was the recipient of several awards, including the Durango Foundation of Educational Excellence's Outstanding Teacher Award and the Rocky Mountain Theatre Association Technical Theatre Award. World travel is a passion, and he strives to bring the joy and exhilaration of travel back to use the inspiration to create theatre magic.

Charlie Grice (*Corin/Charles*) would like to dedicate this performance to the loving memory of Georganne Sugden. Charlie's first foray into the Durango theater scene was with Merely Players as King Duncan in *Macbeth*. In the summer of 2020, he was part of the "Socially Distant Shakespeare" production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. He was also part of the cast and crew of the ill-fated *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*. He has directed shows at the Durango Arts Center for the 10-Minute Play Fest and 24hr Theatre. In addition to acting, he enjoys working on set design and construction. In his spare time, Charlie is a blacksmith and enjoys writing about himself in the third person.

Deborah Heath (*Stage Manager*) has lived in Durango since 2001 and has been part of the Merely Players community since 2013. Deborah enjoys both onstage and backstage work. This is her third stint as a stage manager (*Other Desert Cities* in 2015; *All Together Now!* in 2021) and her second foray into Shakespeare. She was last seen on stage as Witch 3 in the Merely Players production of *Macbeth* in 2020. In addition to being a member of the company, Deborah joined the Board of Merely Players in 2021. She is excited to be an integral part of such a dynamic and creative organization and to be in this Shakespeare production with such talented old and new friends.

Jeanette Hohnke (*Dresser*) is grateful to return to Colorado after spending nine years in Wisconsin. She has worn many hats in her work with Mona and Charles, including box office manager of DHS's Troupe 1096 and assisting with costuming for *Grease* (DHS), and *Forever Plaid* (Merely Players). She appreciates her retirement by avoiding alarm clocks at all costs and relaxing in the valley with her dog, Rocky.

Ashley Hunt (*Madame LeBeau*) is very excited to once again join Merely Players on stage. She previously was in their production of *Matilda the Musical* in the adult ensemble. Ashley would like to thank Mona for the opportunity to play once more, her kiddos at the daycare where she works for listening to her monologuing, and her wonderful husband, Kristian, for supporting her.

Mohriah James (*Celia*) is a Durango native and received her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Fort Lewis College, where she also met the love of her life, fellow actor Geoff Johnson. She first discovered Shakespeare in middle school when she acquired a copy of *Romeo and Juliet* from the highly alluring Scholastic book-order form. As an adult, she has been in two productions of *Macbeth*, one at FLC and one with Merely Players. Mohriah was last seen on the Merely Underground stage in *Matilda the Musical*, *All Together Now!*, and *Men on Boats*. Other recent credits include *Heathers: The Musical*

and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Durango Theatreworks) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Durango Arts Center/Strater). Thank you to Mona, cast, crew, audiences, and Geoffrey.

Abby Kubicek (*Costume Manager*) has been in a number of roles both on stage and behind the scenes in South Dakota, Nebraska, and North Carolina. Most recently she performed with an improv troupe, Denver TheatreSports, for three years in Denver, Colorado. Her favorite role is whatever one she is currently in. She is very excited to finally be joining the theater community in Durango and is grateful to be working on the costume crew for *As You Like It*.

Paul Laakso (*Jaques*) After enjoying many roles in Minneapolis on the University and community theater stages, Paul weathered a dry spell. Work and family obligations kept him off the stage. Now retired and having moved to Durango, he is anxious to crawl out of the shadows of Covid and return to the stage. He is absolutely delighted to join Merely Players in this play from his favorite author.

Jessica McCallum (*Audrey/Courtier*) has loved Shakespeare marvelous much for most of her years on Earth. She teaches Humanities and other cool stuff at Animas High School, where she has been able to engage young people in the profound fun of consuming and producing Shakespeare's works. She has been the executive producer of many Shakespearean shenanigans, including a handful of metatheatrical shadow puppet productions put on by 9th graders that transformed her perception of 21st Century education. This is her first time as merely a player.

Shaunibah Morfin (*Duke Senior's Attendant*) was born and raised in Window Rock, Arizona on the Navajo Reservation. She graduated from Fort Lewis College in 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in Theatre. She has been very active in the theatre community in Durango, Colorado. She recently acted in *Matilda the Musical*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *monsterSLAYer*. She is honored to be in her third Merely Players production. She would like to thank everyone involved in the production of *As You Like It*, as well as everyone in our dedicated Durango theatre community.

JoAnn Nevils (*Costume Designer*) has spent most of her life playing with costumes, fabric, and embellishments. She has an ETSY shop (CoComfortDurango) and has worked closely with Merely Players for many years. You may have seen her recent costume runway show during Merely Players' latest production of *All Together Now!*, showcasing costumes of past Merely productions. *Matilda* has been a reminder of the many, many musicals she has costumed for Merely Players. So much fun!

Eric Pfeiffer (*Duke Senior's Attendant/Trainer*) is returning to the stage after a twenty-year hiatus. His involvement with theatre began in grade school, leading to study at Emerson College (Boston) where he graduated with a BS in Theatre (1976), appearing as Demetrius in an ensemble workshop production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Notable roles include Dick in *Moonchildren*, He in *How He Lied to Her Husband*, Lieutenant in *The Man of Destiny*, Charlie in *On Golden Pond*, Louis in *Play On! and Murray* in *The Odd Couple*. He appeared in Maine with Mystery Café, a dinner theatre

murder mystery production. He has also directed, appeared in, and worked tech on numerous other productions. Retired after a career in Materials Management, Eric lives in Mancos.

Diane Panelli (*Props Master/Production Assistant*) was co-founder of a production company at Sarah Lawrence College. After graduating from cooking school in New York, she went on to own a restaurant in Telluride before moving to Durango. She currently serves on the board for Merely Players and thrives on the "Treasure Hunt" of finding all the little goodies that make a play come to life. Diane loves what she does!!

Jamie Pickering (*Dennis*) Having spent her time behind the light board for almost every show last season, Jamie is very comfortable lurking in the shadows of Merely Underground. However, wishing to have a well-rounded theatrical experience, she decided to audition. When not lurking on the dark side she spends her days as a professional vampire at the local veteran's clinic. Weekends are spent trying not to trip over her five cats while waiting excitedly for her weekly Dungeons and Dragons game on Sunday afternoons.

Greta Richter (*Ticket Manager*) was born and raised in Sierra Madre, not far from Hollywood and Burbank. She grew up enjoying musicals and was excited when her children became involved in theatre when they moved to Durango. Formerly the Box Office Manager for Durango High School's Theatre, Greta loves her work as Merely Players' Ticket Manager. She is grateful to God for bringing amazing theatre people into her life.

Peppi Sanders (*Ada*) is thrilled to be back filling her lips and limbs with the rhymes and rhythms of the Bard. After a fulfilling youth through middle-age stint on radio, stage and screen, it doesn't get any better than living the life in Durango, being mom to the best kid ever, and stretching her creative muscles once more. "All the world's a stage..."

William Shakespeare (*Author*) wrote *As You Like It* in 1599, halfway through his career. His works have been translated into over one hundred languages, and they are the universal language of the human heart.

Conor Sheehan (*Oliver/Amiens/Composer*) can Bard-ly contain his Shake-citement to get lost in this festively fabulous Forest. Past credits include JD in *Heathers: The Musical*, Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Rudolpho (and an assortment of others) in *Matilda the Musical*. As always, an abundance of love to his friends, both near and far, all the Merely magic makers, both on and off-stage, and to Mom, Dad and Grace. For everything. Now enjoy taking a part in Arden!! Peace and love.

Selena M. Trujillo (*Assistant Stage Manager/Jacqui DeBois*) is a Durango native. She was the production and backstage manager for Salt Fire Circus and Bare Bones Burlesque and has stage managed and worked tech for Merely Players, Durango Arts Center, the Henry Strater Theatre, Snowdown Follies, 20Moons Dance Company, Imaginario Circus, Tami Graham Presents, as well as running the spotlight for Montgomery Gentry and being backstage staff for Chippendales. Recently she has been

seen onstage instead of backstage, in the role of Andrew Hall in *Men on Boats*. A forever dabbler, she likes to play with art mediums outside theatre and use her skills in digital media. Selena enjoys playing with her dogs, painting miniatures, drawing, playing video games and playing Dungeons & Dragons with friends.

Erika Vetter (*Rosalind*) formerly appeared with Merely Players as Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Favorite credits include: Elizabeth in *Teenage Dick* (Seattle Repertory), W in *Lungs* (Really-Really Theatre Group), Armande in *Learned Ladies*, Gregg in *Best of Everything* (University of Washington), Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Island Stage Left), Rose in *The Flick* (Mendocino Theatre Co.), and Celia in *As You Like It* (Classics on the Rocks NYC). Training: BA, University of N. Colorado; MFA, University of Washington PATP. Up Next: Amazon Studios film *Somebody I Used To Know*. So much gratitude to Merely Players and the *As You Like It* family for the opportunity to grace a stage in such loving company; to all of you for sharing space with us; and to my favorite husband, Mr. F. www.erika-vetter.com

Mona Wood-Patterson (*Director*) has devoted her professional life to studying, teaching, and making theatre. She has directed somewhere around 150 productions in various venues and presented at educational and theatre conferences both in the United States and abroad. The Artistic Director of Merely Players, Mona has been the recipient of numerous awards; including Colorado Theatre Teacher of the Year and Fort Lewis College Distinguished Alumnus. Mona was recognized as the director of an exemplary theatre program by the International Thespian Society, and was awarded a Fulbright to teach theatre in England. In 2011, she was inducted into the Colorado State Thespian Hall of Fame, and she was selected as a participant in LaMama's International Director's Symposium in Italy in 2019. She is grateful that she gets to work and play amidst remarkable people in Durango.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We offer our sincere gratitude to those who helped us with this show. Many hands and kind hearts help us to do our work:

Ann Christensen/ DHM Design
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Chuck and Janet Williams
Cristen Alexandria/4 Corners Arts Forum/ KDUR
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Jamie Pickering
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Mick Souder

Nancy and Tom Mace
Stephen Bowers

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Mere words cannot describe how honoured we are by your support. We encourage our audience members to solicit these businesses and to tell the individuals that they are grand!

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Diane Panelli

MERELY PLAYERS was founded in 1995 and has been bringing theatre to our community ever since. Our vision is to consistently provide quality theatre in this region, while broadening the range of types of experiences available to local theatergoers through relevant, exciting productions. Merely Players is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and we assure you that any money donated will go toward making quality theatre in Durango both now and in the future.

Our 2022-2023 MERELY PLAYERS THEATRE SEASON continues:

The Story of Two Extraordinary Women

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Tickets for all shows are on sale on our website now.

ANNOUNCING AUDITIONS:

Murder on the Orient Express

October 10 and 11, 2022

Bright Star

December 5 and 6, 2022

Watch our website or join our mailing list for more details.

For more information on Merely Players, to buy tickets, to get involved, or to be added to our mailing list:

Website: <http://www.merelyplayers.org/>

Telephone: 970.749.8585

Email: merelydirectors@gmail.com

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Technical Director Charles Ford+

Company Manager Mary Lynn Clark+

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Merely Players is supported in part by an American Rescue Plan Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support general operating expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for spending your time with us. We would love to know what you thought about the play. Drop us an email at merelydirectors@gmail.com or share with us on Facebook at Merely Players – Durango.

Playwright Ben Jonson declared William Shakespeare "not of an age, but for all time," for he gives life to emotions and thoughts that are inherent to the human condition. In the belief that Shakespeare should not be restricted to the past, our goal is to tell the story in a way that eliminates the distance and formidability often associated with the Bard, infusing his brilliant words with imagination and spontaneity, and transcending fixed time. We embrace theatricality and a sense of play.

Once again, this production is dedicated to the memory of Tom Byrne, who loved Shakespeare and inspired others to do the same.

The STORY

ACT ONE. The story opens with strife between two brothers. Orlando, the son of the late Sir Roland, is lamenting to his servant, Ada, that his elder brother, Oliver, has relegated him to a life of labor. Oliver has paid for their middle sibling's education, but has refused to allow Orlando to seek an education or a life of substance. Oliver enters, and an altercation ensues. When Oliver learns that Orlando will challenge the formidable wrestler, Charles, he urges Charles to kill Orlando.

Meanwhile, in another part of the realm, Rosalind and Celia also face the aftermath of sibling rivalry. Celia's father, Duke Frederick, has usurped the throne of his brother, Duke Senior, who is Rosalind's father. Duke Frederick has allowed Rosalind to stay in the palace because she and her cousin, Celia, are so close. The cousins witness the upset at the wrestling match, during which Orlando beats Charles. Rosalind and Orlando meet and are instantly attracted to each other.

Duke Frederick has a change of heart and decides that Rosalind must be banished. Celia cannot bear to live without her, so the cousins plan an escape to the Forest of Arden. Rosalind will dress as a boy named Ganymede, and Celia will dress as Ganymede's sister, Aliena. They recruit the court fool, Touchstone, to accompany them.

ACT TWO. Oliver is furious that Orlando was victorious, and Ada warns Orlando to flee his brother's wrath, entreating Orlando to let her go along to serve. Duke Frederick is outraged to hear that the girls have fled. Having reason to believe that Rosalind and Celia are in the company of Orlando, he orders Oliver to find Orlando on penalty of forfeiting all of his possessions if the runaways are not found.

In the forest, Duke Senior has assembled a merry band and has learned to love the simplicity and clarity of country life. One of his band is the melancholy Jacques, who amuses the Duke because of his contrary outlook. Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone arrive in the forest and are able to buy a cottage with the assistance of the good shepherd, Corin. Orlando and Ada also arrive in the forest. The aged Ada is suffering from exhaustion and hunger. When Orlando sets out to find a food, he comes upon Duke Senior and his band. Despite an unfortunate introduction, Orlando, Ada, and the Duke's band become friends.

ACT THREE. Orlando pines for Rosalind and hangs notes in the forest to the love he believes he will never see again. Rosalind and Celia find the notes and discover that Orlando is the writer. Still dressed as Ganymede, Rosalind confronts Orlando and offers to tutor him in the ways of love. Orlando agrees to pretend that Ganymede is Rosalind and to practice wooing.

There are still more love matches in the forest. Touchstone has fallen in love with the tempting shepherdess, Audrey. A shepherd named Silvius is deeply in love with a country girl named Phoebe. Phoebe, wanting nothing to do with Silvius, sees young Ganymede (Rosalind) and promptly falls in love. Rosalind negotiates an agreement whereby if Phoebe finds a reason why Ganymede is ill-suited for her, Phoebe will marry Silvius.

ACT FOUR. Oliver has set out for the magical forest in hopes of finding Orlando and narrowly escapes being bitten by a snake. It is Orlando who saves him; in the course of the rescue, Orlando is attacked by a lion. Because of his injury, Orlando has asked Oliver to find Ganymede and explain his absence from the daily lesson. Oliver repents from his wicked ways, and he and Celia fall in love at first sight.

ACT FIVE. A wedding for all four couples closes the play. Rosalind and her father are reunited, and – to make the ending even more sweet – Orlando and Oliver’s sibling comes to the forest to tell the company that Duke Frederick has converted to a religious life and returned the dukedom to Duke Senior. All ends merrily in the Forest of Arden.

Warmth. Joy. Full of life.

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