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**AFRICAN-AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE COMPANY CAPS 19TH SEASON WITH
SHAKESPEARE'S "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING," A CELEBRATION OF THE
JOY OF LOVE AND THE POWER OF REDEMPTION,
May 3-25, 2014**

SAN FRANCISCO. APRIL XX, 2014. Closing **African-American Shakespeare Company's** 19th season is William Shakespeare's glorious comedy of love delayed, **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**. Celebrating the joy of love and the power of redemption, the play chronicles the clever banter and sincere affection of two pairs of lovers, Benedick and Beatrice; and Claudio and Hero. Benedick and Beatrice are engaged in a very "merry war" in which they both proclaim their disdain of love. In contrast, Claudio and Hero are a sweet young couple who are practically rendered speechless by their love for one another. While Benedick and Beatrice are tricked into confessing their love, Claudio is tricked into rejecting Hero at the altar. Despite the villainy and betrayal, all ends well, proving that love does indeed conquer all. African-American Shakespeare Company Artistic Director L. Peter Callender directs a modern take on this Bard classic. **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** plays Saturdays and Sundays, **May 3 through May 25** (*press opening: May 3*) at the Buriel Clay Theater at the African American Art and Culture Complex, 762 Fulton Street (at Webster) in San Francisco. For tickets (\$12.50-37.50) and more information, call 1-800-838-3006 or visit African-AmericanShakes.org.

CAST LIST	PRODUCTION TEAM
Leonato: Dwight Dean Mahabir Don Pedro: Dedrick Weathersby Beatrice: Leontyne Mbele-Mbong Benedick: Ryan Vincent Anderson* Hero/ Margaret: Danielle Doyle George Seacol: Tavia Percia Ursula/Verges: Monica Cappuccini Boraccio/Balthazar: Aejay Mitchell Claudio/Conrade: Twon Marcel Dogberry/Friar: ShawnJ West Don John: Jim Gessner	Director: L. Peter Callender Production Manager: Gregg Hood Stage Manager: Cheryle Honerlah Technical Director/Lighting Designer: Kevin Myrick Set Designer/Carpenter: Bert van Aalsburg Costume Designer: Maureen "Mo" Stone Assistant Director: Donna Simone Johnson

*Member of Actors Equity Association

Director's Notes

Much Ado About Nothing combines great humor with more serious issues of honor and shame and is considered one of Shakespeare's sharpest comedies. The story focuses on two pairs of lovers, the more mature and combative Beatrice and Benedick, and the younger, innocent Claudio and Hero, each couple having a different take on romance. Soldiers returning from war, false accusations, faked death, rampant eavesdropping (or 'noting'—which is how the word 'nothing' was pronounced in Shakespeare's London), and two weddings provide for rich plot of twists and turns. We will explore the relationship of courtship and romance and the realities of suppressed anger, frustrated sexuality and complicated longing that all the characters wrestle with throughout the play. The exuberant celebration of youth and love and the devastating consequences of their shame and fear; romance, anxiety, sexuality and fiery rage, set in post WWII, the music of the incomparable and majestic Ella Fitzgerald, and the style of the many wit-warring romantic comedies of the era—look for a fun, emotional, heart gripping ride!

- Director L. Peter Callender

African-American Shakespeare Company was introduced in 1994 to open the realm of classic theater to a diverse audience, and provide an opportunity and place for actors of color to hone their skills and talent in mastering some of the world's greatest classical roles. The company produces plays from the classical theater canon, including the works of William Shakespeare, as well as classic and contemporary works from American and international playwrights, that are lively, entertaining, and relevant.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

Much Ado About Nothing. African-American Shakespeare Company stages Shakespeare's celebration of the joy of love and the power of redemption, The play chronicles the clever banter and sincere affection of two pairs of lovers. L. Peter Callender directs a modern take on this Bard classic, including a tribute to the music of Ella Fitzgerald. With Dwight Dean Mahabir, Leontyne Mbele-Mbong, Dedrick Weathersby. Opens Saturday May 3 at 8:00 pm. Plays Saturdays, May 3, 10, 17, 24 at 8:00 p.m.; Sundays, May 4, 11, 18. 25 at 3:00 p.m. African-American Shakespeare Co. Buriel Clay Theater, 762 Fulton Street (at Webster), San Francisco. Tickets \$12.50-\$37.50. 800-838-3006 or www.African-AmericanShakes.org.

SHOWS: **Opening: Saturday, May 3, 8:00 p.m. (also press opening)**

Sunday, May 4th, 3pm

Saturday, May 10th, 8pm

Sunday, May 11th, 3pm

Saturday, May 17th, 8pm

Sunday, May 18th, 3pm

Saturday, May 24th, 8pm
Sunday, May 25th, 3pm

WHERE: Buriel Clay Theater at the African American Art and Culture Complex
762 Fulton Street (at Webster), San Francisco, CA 94102

TICKETS: For tickets (\$12.50–\$37.50) and information, the public can call **1-800-838-3006** or visit **www.African-AmericanShakes.org**

As part of their outreach to public schools in the Bay Area, **African-American Shakespeare Company** provides free student matinee performances for all their productions.

African-American Shakespeare Company is funded in part by The Columbia Foundation; Creative Work Fund; The Zellerbach Family Fund; Grants for the Arts/SF Hotel Tax Fund; The San Francisco Foundation; The California Arts Council, a state agency; The National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; and Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest.