Once yearly, Bainbridge Performing Arts takes their act out of doors. Leaving their theater on Madison Ave. (the classiest address in Puget South theater) BPA repairs to the lovely Bloedel Reserve. There, in the shadow of a forest, they put on Shakespeare. The audience pulls up lawn chairs or blankets and experiences The Bard at Bloedel. This year’s entry is “Much Ado About Nothing.” It’s anything but nothing. It’s an excellent show with an excellent cast that opened Friday night.

Deftly directed by Kate Carruthers, the BPA company throws themselves fully into the task. Shakespeare’s comedies are fast-moving, fun, physical, and a little bawdy. To be done well they need a cast willing to learn a lot of dialogue and get a little messy. BPA’s “Much Ado…” cast delivers on both counts.

The story is somewhat slight. Shakespeare knew that, in spite of protestations to the contrary, everyone wants to be in love. He used that truism to craft this tale of Claudio and Hero, with Benedick and Beatrice. Love, jealousy, deceit, melodramatic fake death, and reconciliation occur over the course of two hours.

Several members of the cohesive cast stood out in praiseworthy fashion. Pete Benson’s Benedick bought into the humor and physicality of his role. His performance was both wry and completely believable. Mr. Benson’s sparring partner/love interest Beatrice is played by Kylie McKenzie Soder. They both engaged the audience with aplomb and good humor. They were the highlight performances in a show with many good ones.

Maxwell Levit’s Signor Claudio is besotted with love and also the victim of a cruel hoax by his cousin Don John, played by Bob Downing. In character throughout, Mr. Downing doesn’t show the audience his smile until the curtain call. Both actors performed admirably.

Max Martina returns to the stage from a 15-year hiatus. He plays Don Pedro. The break may have refreshed Mr. Martina but audiences shouldn’t be made to wait so long again. His performance was another excellent part of the play.

Opening Night always provides a spark of adrenaline and a chance to find out things that need to be fixed. Much of the former and little of the latter were found. Voices must carry in an open air setting. Ms. Soder’s voice carried with ease to, and beyond, the back row. Chris Martinez’ Leonato could use more vocal power in an otherwise engaging performance.

“Much Ado About Nothing” has a lengthy run, affording the theater-loving public an opportunity to enjoy the show. It continues weekends through July 24, with Thursday night performances July 17 and 24. All shows begin at 7 p.m.

The Bloedel Reserve is located at 7571 NE Dolphin Dr, on the Island. Tickets are available at bainbridgeperformingarts.org and by phone at 206.842.8569. The first couple of shows sold out. Don’t get shut out of this excellent theater experience.