

## EDUCATION PACK 2012

A co-production between Headlong Theatre, Nuffield Theatre,  
Southampton and Nottingham Playhouse in association  
with Hull Truck Theatre.

## CONTENTS

### ABOUT THE PLAY

William Shakespeare - Biography	3
Play Synopsis	4
Key Themes	6
Character Breakdown	11

### ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Set Design	12
Interview with the Director	14
Interview with the Set & Costume Designer	15
Cast and Creative Team Information	16
Rehearsal Diary	21
Rehearsal Photos	23
Tour Dates	25
Notable Productions - Stage	26
Notable Productions - Film	27
<i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> Trivia	28
Further Resources	29

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE - BIOGRAPHY

Although he is celebrated as perhaps the greatest playwright and poet in the English language, surprisingly few facts are known about the life of William Shakespeare. He was born in Stratford upon Avon in 1564, the son of John Shakespeare – a glove-maker and alderman – and Mary Arden. He was baptised in the local church on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1564, and although his exact birthday is unknown it is traditionally observed on 23<sup>rd</sup> April (St. George's Day). In 1582, at the age of 18 Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years his senior. They had three children together: Susanna, born in 1583, and twins Hamnet and Judith, born two years later.



Not much is known about Shakespeare between 1585 and 1592 – often referred to by scholars as his 'lost years' – but by 1592 Shakespeare was well established on the London theatre scene as both a playwright and actor, enjoying considerable success as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later renamed The King's Men under James I).

In total, Shakespeare's surviving works, including some collaborations, consist of more than 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and several other poems. His plays in particular are known the world over and have been translated into more languages and performed more than any other dramatist.

Because of the considerable volume of his work, and the perception of Shakespeare as 'uneducated' by Elizabethan standards, some people speculate about the

### Improvisation Exercise

In groups, pick a moment from Shakespeare's life and improvise a scene about what envisage was happening to him at this time..

Decide who you are, where you are, and what you want.

(dir. John Madden, 1998) which imagines what might have been happening to Shakespeare at the time he was writing *Romeo & Juliet* and the effect this might have had on the play.

authorship of many of the works attributed to him. Amongst others, it has been suggested that the philosopher and scientist Francis Bacon, the playwright Ben Jonson, or even Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford might have been the real author of his work. The recent feature film *Anonymous* (dir. Roland Emmerich, 2011) examines the last of these theories. Equally, due to the mystery surrounding his biography many scholars have attempted to 'fill in the gaps' in Shakespeare's life. The most famous – and fictional – of these is the feature film *Shakespeare in Love*

Shakespeare is also credited with having coined many of the phrases we commonly use today. Phrases such as 'in a pickle' (*The Tempest*) or 'in stitches' (*Twelfth Night*) can be found in his work, along with many other modern constructions still in use, further highlighting the considerable contribution he has made to the English language.

## ABOUT THE PLAY

### DATE & SOURCE

*Romeo & Juliet* is generally believed to have been written some time between 1595 and 1596. The story is taken from Arthur Brooke's poem *Romeus and Juliet*, based on Italian folklore, which was published in 1562.

### SYNOPSIS

*Romeo and Juliet* is set in the Italian city of Verona. A longstanding feud between two noble families - the Montagues and the Capulets – has once again erupted into fighting in the streets. Prince Escalus, the Prince of Verona, threatens to severely punish anyone who takes part in further violence.

A young man, Romeo Montague finds himself hopelessly in love with Rosaline, a relation of the Capulet's, who does not reciprocate his feelings. In an attempt to cure his lovesick misery, his cousin and friend Benvolio persuades him to go in disguise to a party being held at the Capulet mansion. Romeo reluctantly agrees to go when he learns that Rosaline has been invited. Also invited to the party is Count Paris, a suitable young nobleman who has asked is to be betrothed to the Capulets only daughter, Juliet. At the party, Romeo meets Juliet and, without even knowing each other's names, they fall instantly in love. Juliet's hot-headed cousin, Tybalt, spots Romeo and his friends at the party but is prevented from challenging them by her father, Old Capulet. He does not wish to see his party disrupted, and speaks well of Romeo's reputation in Verona. Nevertheless, Tybalt vows that Romeo's intrusion into the party shall not go unheeded.

Though shocked by the discovery that their families are sworn enemies, both Romeo and Juliet are determined to marry, and choose go-betweens to help them arrange a secret wedding. Romeo asks his friend and mentor, Friar Laurence, to conduct the ceremony, while Juliet sends her Nurse to meet Romeo and learn of the arrangements he has made. Friar Lawrence is amazed by Romeo's sudden change of heart with regards to his love for Rosaline but reluctantly agrees to marry them, believing that such a marriage might bring an end to the ancient feud between the two families. As arranged, the Nurse meets Romeo and is instructed to make sure that Juliet arrives at the Friar's the following morning ready to be married.

The next day, immediately following the wedding, Romeo encounters Tybalt, who challenges him to a duel. Now secretly married to Juliet, Romeo is unwilling to fight with him for Juliet's sake, but his closest friend, Mercutio takes up the challenge instead. When Romeo steps between them in an effort to stop the fight, Mercutio is stabbed and dies. Tybalt flees, but returns a short time later and Romeo – in a rage – kills him and is forced to fly the scene. Angry that his laws have been broken, but accepting that Tybalt started the fight, Prince Escalus banishes Romeo to Mantua. Romeo is distraught and runs to the Friar for advice and help.

Meanwhile, alone in her room on her wedding night and unaware of the death of her cousin or her new husband's banishment, Juliet eagerly awaits Romeo's arrival. When she learns what has happened, she is so distraught that the Nurse promises to arrange one night together for the newly-weds before Romeo must leave Verona for Mantua. The following morning at dawn, the couple part sadly,

promising each other that they will find a way to be together forever and that their current problems will be solved.

Juliet's parents, believing that her grief is caused by Tybalt's death and unaware of her marriage to Romeo, suggest that she marry Count Paris immediately in order to cheer her up – the wedding date is set for two days later. When she refuses, her father threatens to disown and abandon her, so she too seeks advice from the Friar, who has simultaneously been approached by Paris to marry him to Juliet. The Friar, realising that she is so desperate she might commit suicide (and perhaps fearful of the consequences for himself if he allows her to commit bigamy), advises her to go home and make peace with her parents. He then gives her a potion that is guaranteed to make it appear that she has died in her sleep. He explains that the effects will wear off within 42 hours, by which time she will be buried in her family's crypt. He promises to send a letter to Romeo in Mantua, explaining the situation and asking him to return in time to be with Juliet when she awakes and escape from Verona with her, thus solving their predicament. Juliet takes the potion and the next morning is discovered 'dead' by the Nurse and Lady Capulet when they try to wake her for her marriage to Paris. Her body is taken to the crypt where it is laid beside that of the dead Tybalt.

At the same time, the Friar has sent a message to Romeo in Mantua explaining the plan. However, the message is delayed and instead of learning of the Friar's plan, Romeo's servant, Balthasar, returns to Mantua from Verona bringing news of Juliet's supposed death. Devastated, Romeo visits an Apothecary and purchases poison with which to kill himself. He hurries back to Verona, planning to die by Juliet's side.

Attempting to break into the crypt, Romeo is interrupted by Paris and they fight. He kills Paris and, reaching Juliet's body at last, embraces her and drinks the poison, kissing her as he dies. Having learned that his message had not reached Romeo, the Friar races to the crypt, discovering Paris's body and reaching Juliet's side

just as she revives. Unable to persuade Juliet to leave her dead husband, and fearing for himself if he is discovered there, the Friar runs away, leaving Juliet alone with Romeo's body. Finding her husband dead and realising that all their plans have failed, she stabs herself with Romeo's dagger and dies.

The bodies are soon discovered and the Friar confesses everything he knows. He is pardoned by Prince Escalus who believes he acted with good intentions. Realising that their feud has brought about the deaths of their children, Montague and Capulet reconcile their warring families and vow to build a monument to the young lovers.

**NB** *Some of the events discussed in the above synopsis do not appear in this cut of the play but have been included for educational purposes.*

### Directing Exercise

Make notes on the Headlong production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and think about what choices the director made to modernise the play?

If you were directing a production of 'Romeo and Juliet', where would you choose to set it and why?

If you need any help read the interview with director Robert Icke later on in this pack.

## KEY THEMES

### LOVE

Perhaps the most widely recognised theme in *Romeo and Juliet* is **love**, and the characters of Romeo and Juliet have themselves become emblematic of the young love they share. However, Shakespeare's presentation of love within the play can be seen as more complex and varied. The first image of love we are confronted with is Romeo's early love for Rosaline. This love is seen as insincere and lustful, and is dismissed by Friar Laurence as 'doting' (2.4.78). Equally, Juliet's relationship with Paris, where he has 'little talked of love' (4.1.7), is characterised by the seeming absence of feelings. His attitude towards her is one of domination - he tells her 'thy face is mine' (4.1.35) - and he seeks to marry her as a suitable match rather than because they have fallen in love.

The love between Romeo and Juliet, however, is more in-keeping with our classic idea of romantic love. Firstly, unlike Romeo's feelings towards Rosaline or Paris's feelings towards Juliet, it is reciprocal and there is an 'exchange' (2.2.127) of vows between them. When they first meet, their use of metaphor - 'saint', 'pilgrim' and 'shrine' - is strongly resonant with the romantic courtship etiquette of the Elizabethan period. More importantly, in both their language and their behaviour it is clear that they are willing to do anything for each other. Indeed, Juliet vows to 'follow [Romeo]... throughout the world' (2.2.113/48) to which he responds that were Juliet 'farther than the farthest sea... [he] would adventure' to find her (2.2.84). This mutual devotion culminates in their ultimate desire to join the other in death, as they cannot exist without each other. The idea of choosing death in order to remain faithful to your love is a reference to the medieval conception of 'courtly love' - or noble and chivalric love - which was traditionally popular in the Elizabethan period.

Another view of love presented by Shakespeare is that which occurs between friends. This is shown in the love shared between Juliet and her Nurse, the Friar and Romeo, and the friendship between Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo. In each of these relationships the characters show a close bond and a clear understanding of each other. For example, in Act 2, Scene 4, Mercutio teases Romeo 'now art thou what thou art' (2.4.90) - telling him he is now more like his usual self. Although they might make fun of each other and criticise one another's choices, they respect, advise and care for each other in equal measure. Indeed, they take great risks for one another too: when Mercutio dies, he does so to protect Romeo's honour.

Finally, also present in the play are the sexual connotations related to love. A number of characters, particularly Mercutio and the Nurse, make repeated references to sex and commonly employ innuendo when they speak - an example of this is the Nurse's assertion that 'women grow by men' (1.4.95), in reference to pregnancy.

### INDIVIDUAL VERSUS SOCIETY

Throughout much of *Romeo and Juliet* the lovers' struggle against social institutions which either explicitly or implicitly oppose the existence of their love. These conflicts manifest themselves in a range of social themes from the family, to law, to religion and to the emphasis on masculine honour. The latter, for example, time and again results in brawls that disturb the public peace.

The enmity between Montague and Capulet families, coupled with the emphasis placed on

loyalty to kin, combine to create a profound conflict for Romeo and Juliet. In falling in love they have effectively rebelled against their families. To circumvent this, Juliet begs Romeo to 'deny thy father and refuse thy name' (2.2.34), in return for which she will 'no longer be a Capulet' (2.2.36). The conflict between the shared love of the protagonists and the pressures of familial loyalty is expressed most concisely by Juliet when she reflects, 'my only love sprung from my only hate' (1.5.137).

Furthermore, the patriarchal hierarchy inherent in Renaissance families, with the father at the head of the household and with particularly emphasis on the subjugation of women, places Juliet in an extremely vulnerable position. She, in her family's mind, is not free to make her own choices, particularly with regards to suitors - a sentiment she reflects in her response to Paris when he claims ownership of her body: 'it may be so, for it is not mine own' (4.1.36).

For Romeo, it is the rule of law - enforced by the decrees of the Prince - and the emphasis on social civility that demands terms of conduct with which the blind passion of love cannot comply. Romeo's murder of Tybalt is sparked not only by his love for Mercutio, but by the belief that his love for Juliet has made him 'effeminate' (3.1.116). He is honour bound to defend both Juliet's name, by refusing to challenge Tybalt, and Mercutio's death, in killing him. The maintenance of this honor forces Romeo to commit actions he would prefer to avoid, but the social emphasis placed upon it is so profound that Romeo cannot simply ignore them.

Religion similarly demands priorities that Romeo and Juliet cannot abide by because of the intensity of their love. Though in most situations the lovers uphold the tradition of religious doctrine - they wait to marry before consummating their love - their love is so powerful that they begin to think of each other in blasphemous terms. Not only does Juliet refer to Romeo as 'the god of my idolatry' (2.2.113) but the couple's final act of suicide is a fundamental sin against God.

It is possible to see *Romeo and Juliet* as a battle between the responsibilities and actions demanded by social institutions and those demanded by the private desires of the individual. Romeo and Juliet's appreciation of night, with its darkness and privacy, and their renunciation of their names, with its attendant loss of obligation, make sense in the context of individuals who wish to escape the pressures of society. Nevertheless, the lovers cannot stop the night from becoming day and it is only in their death, the ultimate night, that they can find the ultimate privacy.

## VIOLENCE AND DEATH

The themes of **death** and **violence** permeate *Romeo & Juliet* and are present from the outset in the street brawl between the rival households of Capulet and Montague. Tybalt - arguably the most aggressive character in the play - characterises the animosity between the families in his early attack on Benvolio: 'peace? I hate the word, as I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee' (1.1.85).

However, just as hate is a consuming emotion, so is love. The inextricable nature of the two is expressed by Romeo in his examination of 'brawling love' and 'loving hate' (1.1.174), with relation to the enjoyment the warring families take from their conflict. Indeed, the love between Romeo and Juliet is linked with violence and death from the moment of its inception: Tybalt notices that Romeo has appeared uninvited at the Capulet feast and

determines to challenge him just as Romeo first catches sight of Juliet and instantly falls in love with her. From that point on, this love seems to push the lovers, and those around them, closer to violence and death rather than farther from it.

Throughout the play, Romeo and Juliet are plagued with thoughts of suicide and a willingness to experience it. In Act 3, Scene 3, Romeo begs Friar Laurence for a 'sudden mean of death' (3.3.45) to take his own life rather than be banished from Juliet. She too threatens to take her own life, expressing her 'power to die' (3.5.242) rather than marry Paris, and it is Friar Laurence's acknowledgement of her 'strength of will to slay thyself' (4.1.72) that convinces him of the plan to fake her death. Romeo's love for Juliet has wider consequences too: when it prevents him fighting Tybalt, the challenge is taken up by Mercutio and consequently leads to his death. Indeed, it is Tybalt who links the ideas of love and death most clearly when he tells Romeo, 'the love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: thou art a villain' (3.1.59).

There is also a strong link between death and sexual experience for Romeo and Juliet. The morning after the consummation of their marriage - their first, and only, sexual experience - Juliet tells Romeo, 'methinks I see thee... as one dead in the bottom of a tomb' (3.5.55-56) to which he characterises their parting as sorrow 'drink[ing] our blood' (3.5.59). The almost inevitable conclusion of this violent strain is the eventual suicide of both Romeo and Juliet. Here death is welcomed - brought by a 'happy dagger' (5.3.168) - and their violent end is portrayed as an act of love.

### FATE AND COINCIDENCE

The presence of **fate** and **coincidence** in *Romeo & Juliet* demands that the two themes be considered separately. Whilst the Prologue reveals Romeo and Juliet to be 'star-cross'd lovers' - with the stars being thought to control human destiny - 'death mark'd' from the very beginning, it is equally possible that their death is the result of a series of coincidences and unlucky chances.

At times both Romeo and Juliet feel that their fate has been pre-determined in some way and is unavoidable, whether it be the 'consequence yet hanging in the stars' (1.5.107) felt by Romeo, or the 'prodigious birth of love... that I must love a loathed enemy' (1.5.139) felt by Juliet. Indeed, it is undoubtedly clear that they are fated to be from rival families. However, it is impossible to ignore the role chance and coincidence plays in their relationship. If we consider what would have happened had the illiterate Peter not asked Romeo to read the list of guests invited to the Capulet party - he might never have met Juliet - or had Friar John delivered his letter - he might not have assumed Juliet's death real - the idea of Romeo as 'fortune's fool' (3.1.138), just the victim of an unlucky series of coincidences, becomes more compelling.

This is compounded by Shakespeare's reliance on the delivery of messages throughout the play - from the invites to Capulet party, to the Nurse to Romeo from Juliet, or most importantly from Friar Laurence to Romeo via Friar John - which seems to increase the possibility of something going wrong.

Unlike most tragedies, where an individual event sparks the decline of the protagonists which is charted over the course of the play - for example, in *Macbeth* where the title character kills the King and experiences the resulting consequences - there is a sense in *Romeo & Juliet* that right up until the last moment things could still turn out alright. Had



Romeo arrived at the tomb just a little later, even though he arrives close enough to Juliet's waking that he notices the reappearance of 'crimson in [her] lips and in [her] cheeks' (5.3.95), then there would have been a happy ending. Nevertheless, whether this is due to fate or coincidence is something open to individual interpretation.

## TIME

*Romeo & Juliet* is a play preoccupied with **time**: there are over 103 references to time and it is the only Shakespeare play where it is possible to determine exactly what day, and approximately what time, it is at any given point. Whether it is Juliet reminding us that 'the clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse' (2.5.1) or Mercutio telling us that 'the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon' (2.4.111-2) it is clear that time plays an important role in the language and plot of the play.

The whole course of events in *Romeo & Juliet* covers just a few days, whereas in the source poem they lasted over nine months. However, throughout the play Shakespeare counterpoints vaguely defined and extended periods of time with exactly stipulated moments of day, hour and moment. When we first meet Romeo he has been melancholic for an indefinite period, but with the arrival of Benvolio specific time and the world intrudes:

ROMEO:	Is the day so young?	
BENVOLIO:	But new struck nine.	
ROMEO:	Ay me, sad hours seem long.	(1.1.156-8)

This is important for the relationship between Romeo and Juliet because, from the moment of their first kiss their union is characterised by its rapidity, and they withdraw into a private world of intimacy suspending the world's ordinary time and replacing it with that of their imagination. Their love is a place where exact time is of no consequence, where a meeting the following day can feel a lifetime away: 'tis twenty year 'til then' (2.2.169).

However, the temporal nature of reality places increasing pressure on their love. The fast-paced world that Shakespeare builds up around them allows little possibility for adherence to Friar Lawrence's counsel of 'wisely and slow' (2.3.90): Romeo must leave Verona before sunrise, Capulet rushes Juliet's marriage to Paris - even so far as bringing it forward an extra day, the sleeping potion only lasts a specific amount of time and Friar Laurence's letter does not reach Romeo in time. The effect given is that the two lovers are racing towards their deaths - had Romeo waited but a minute more, they might both have survived. Even Juliet describes her death in terms of its duration, promising to 'be brief' (5.3.168), and in ending their lives Romeo and Juliet escape the rigours of time by stopping it dead.

## DREAMS

The significant role of the imagination in Romeo and Juliet's love also hints at Shakespeare's preoccupation with **dreams** within the play. Although Mercutio's 'Queen Mab' (1.4.53-94) speech is a clear example of this, it is Romeo who does a significant amount of dreaming throughout *Romeo & Juliet*. When we first encounter him, he is not fighting with his fellow Montagues but shut up in his room with the curtains drawn, supposedly in bed. He also twice predicts his own 'untimely death' (1.4.111) in his dreams, initially sharing his experiences with Mercutio - 'I dreamt a dream tonight' (1.4.49) - immediately prior to 'Queen Mab', and later in Mantua when he reveals, 'I dreamt my lady came and found me dead' (5.1.6). This latter dream Romeo believes to 'presage some joyful news' (5.1.2), but

instead he hears almost immediately after of Juliet's death. There is an element of dramatic irony here, as the audience are aware of the plot to fake Juliet's death of which Romeo has no knowledge. Ultimately, the portentous nature of Romeo's dreams help to emphasise the tragic nature of the events experienced by him and Juliet. Interestingly, there is a dream-like quality present in the final section of the play, prompted by the relative speed and ease with which he decides to die by Juliet's side and purchases the poison with which to take his life - perhaps it was Shakespeare's intention for his audience to momentarily perceive the 'thoughts of desperate men' (5.1.36).

### LIGHT AND DARK

One of the play's most consistent visual motifs is the contrast between **light** and **dark**, often in terms of day and night imagery. However, this contrast is not as simple as it seems: light is not always good, and dark is not always evil. On the contrary, light and dark are generally used to provide contrast and to give the effect of doubling or duality. Both Romeo and Juliet charge each other with providing light in darkness. Romeo characterises Juliet as the sun, teaching 'torches to burn bright' (1.5.43), who banishes the 'envious moon' (2.1.46). Even when he finds her body in the tomb and supposes her to be dead he describes her beauty as making 'this vault a feasting presence, full of light' (2.3.86). In turn, Juliet describes Romeo as 'day in night' and 'whiter than new snow upon a raven's back' (3.2.17-19).

Frequently for the lovers night is seen as something to be welcomed. Juliet's speech which begins 'Gallop apace...' (3.2.1-31) is an expression of desire for night to arrive, bringing with it not only Romeo but also a metaphorical - and under the cover of 'night's cloak' (2.2.75) a physical - privacy to their union. A similar blurring of night and day again occurs in the early hours of the morning following the consummation of the lovers' marriage and their only night together. Romeo, forced to leave for exile in the morning, and Juliet, willing him not to go, both try to pretend that it is still night, and that the light is actually darkness. Indeed, as most of their time spent together - from the party, to the arrangement and consummation of their marriage - occurs at night, light for them brings distress and is unwelcome, as Romeo explains, 'more light and light: more dark and dark our woes' (3.5.36).

At the end of the story, with the 'glooming' morning and the sun who 'will not show his head' (5.3.304-5), light and dark have been restored to their proper places, the outward darkness of the day reflecting the inner darkness of the mourning felt by the Capulet and Montague households.

**NB.** All line references are taken from the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, edited by Brian Gibbons (Third Edition).

## CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

**ROMEO** is the only son and heir of Montague and his wife. At the beginning of the play he is in love with Rosaline.

**JULIET** is the daughter, and only child, of Capulet and Lady Capulet.

**FRIAR LAURENCE** is a Franciscan friar and a friend to both Romeo and Juliet.

**MERCUTIO** is a kinsman to the Prince and a close friend of Romeo.

**NURSE** is Juliet's nurse, she breast-fed Juliet when she was a baby and has cared for Juliet her entire life.

**TYBALT** is a Capulet, Juliet's cousin on her mother's side. He is short-tempered and violent, with a strong belief in the Montague-Capulet feud. He is a strong fighter and his sword is something to be feared.

**CAPULET** is the patriarch of the Capulet family. He is the father of Juliet and the husband of Lady Capulet. He has a long-standing, though unexplained, feud with Montague.

**LADY CAPULET** is Juliet's mother and Capulet's wife.

**MONTAGUE** is the patriarch of the Montague family. He is Romeo's father and Benvolio's uncle. He is the enemy of Capulet.

**PARIS** is a nobleman – similar to an Earl today - and a kinsman of the Prince. He wishes to marry Juliet.

**BENVOLIO** is Montague's nephew and Romeo's cousin and best friend. He is often found trying to cheer Romeo up or diffuse fights.

**PRINCE ESCALUS** is the Prince of Verona and a kinsman of both Mercutio and Paris. As the seat of political power in Verona, he is concerned with maintaining the public peace at all costs.

**FRIAR JOHN** is a Franciscan friar charged by Friar Lawrence with taking the news of Juliet's fake death to Romeo in Mantua.

**APOTHECARY** is an apothecary in Mantua. He is in possession of drugs it is illegal to sell under Mantua's law, which he reluctantly surrenders to Romeo.

**PETER** is a Capulet servant and a companion to the Nurse. He is often found accompanying her and is illiterate.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

### SET DESIGN

The Director and Designer work closely together to realise their concept for the production. Below is a photo of Helen Goddard's original drawing and model box for the *Romeo & Juliet*:





## **DESIGN EXERCISE**

*Take a close look at Helen's design. Think of specific examples of how the set reflects Robert's decision to contemporise the play.*

*Use your answers to this - and the directing question - to draw your own set design. Where would you set the play and why? On a separate sheet of paper write a paragraph that explains your choices.*

## INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR ROBERT ICKE

### **What originally attracted you to the play?**

Reading it again, I realised that I didn't really know it. It's a play which pitches opposites hurtling toward each other - fate and coincidence, violence and peace, sex and death, comedy and tragedy - and I got very excited about the idea of trying to preserve those opposites and contradictions rather than (as I'd often seen in the past) examining only one half of a balanced pair.

### **Your concept is very interesting, where did you get your idea from?**

The play is famous - but not well known. That means that while people can quote 'Wherefore art thou Romeo?', they often misunderstand its actual meaning. So conceptually, I wanted to generate the energy that comes from people being surprised that they don't know it as well as they think. And I tried to focus on the bits I felt I hadn't seen in productions before - the play's examination of dreams, of time, of coincidence and chance (rather than fate) and hoped to underline the fact that in this play, unlike many of the other major tragedies, up until the final moment it could still turn out OK. Things fall out unluckily - but they could as easily have turned out well.

### **How did you work with Helen Goddard to come up with set design?**

Helen and I talked a lot, looked at images, films, drew pictures, and kicked around lots of different ideas of how the play might be designed - from teenage bedrooms to Italian architecture. We also considered the practicalities of staging a multi-locational play and how best to achieve a variety of settings in a single construction which could also be easily toured.

## INTERVIEW WITH THE SET & COSTUME DESIGNER HELEN GODDARD

### **What originally attracted you to the play?**

Romeo and Juliet is one of my favourite Shakespeare plays. It is a challenge to align elements of violence; serendipity, dreams, innocence, sex, capitalism and love into a robust and fine tuned vision. Love and youthful abandon are the plays resounding life force. As our teenage years are truly indulgent in emotion, it's energy can be both liberating and cruel. I'm fascinated by Shakespeare's concerns and deliberate text exclaiming children as the unfortunate victim in society's wheel. Romeo and Juliet make the ultimate sacrifice in their families unwavering feud. This feature of the play feels particularly relevant. It is freedom from constraints that keep love alive.

### **Your concept is very interesting, where did you get your idea from?**

Rob and I looked toward modern Verona for ideas. We were keen to describe the city's classical architecture and its cosmopolitan flair. Contemporary Italian architecture inspired the new money world of the Capulets. The concrete viewing gallery has a reality in the Capulet fortune and frames a continual stream of scenes; sound bites and visions much like an episode of 24.

### **How did you work with Rob Icke, director to come up with set design?**

I offer things, Rob offers things and we meet somewhere around the way.

### **Describe the role of a set and costume designer.**

Working with the rest of the creative team we hopefully bring clarity and the play's world to life. The aim is to create a space where an audience can dream and be enriched.

### **What do you enjoy about your job?**

Being part of creating something that will only be seen as a live piece of drama. When an actor delivers a performance in harmony with what I have done I get very excited.

## CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM INFORMATION

### **ROMEO & JULIET**

by William Shakespeare

#### **CAST**

ROMEO	<b>Daniel Boyd</b>
JULIET	<b>Catrin Stewart</b>
CAPULET	<b>Keith Bartlett</b>
FRIAR LAURENCE	<b>Simon Coates</b>
LADY CAPULET	<b>Caroline Faber</b>
MONTAGUE / APOTHECARY	<b>Stephen Fewell</b>
PETER	<b>Daniel Hooke</b>
BENVOLIO	<b>Danny Kirrane</b>
PARIS	<b>Tunji Lucas</b>
TYBALT	<b>Okezie Morro</b>
MERCUTIO / FRIAR JOHN	<b>Tom Mothersdale</b>
PRINCE	<b>Matthew Spencer</b>
NURSE	<b>Brigid Zegeni</b>

All other roles played by members of the company.

#### **CREATIVE TEAM**

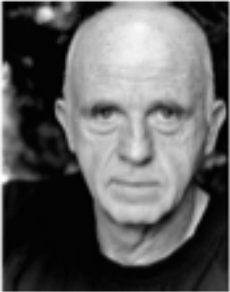
DIRECTOR	<b>Robert Icke</b>
SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER	<b>Helen Goddard</b>
LIGHTING DESIGNER	<b>Johanna Town</b>
MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGNER	<b>Tom Gibbons</b>
PROJECTION DESIGN	<b>Louise Rhoades-Brown for Knifedge</b>



## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



**Daniel Boyd** plays Romeo. Daniel will be seen in Rupert Goold's upcoming film version of *Richard II* due for release in 2012.



**Keith Bartlett's** theatre credits include *New World* (Shakespeare's Globe) *Henry VI parts 1, 2 and 3*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV, part 1 and 2* (RSC) *A Lie in the Mind* (Donmar), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Donmar) and *Macbeth* (Cheek By Jowl). Television and film credits include *New Tricks*, *Silent Witness* and *Truly Madly Deeply*.



**Simon Coates'** theatre credits include *Tartuffe* (ETT and Liverpool Everyman), *Plenty* (Sheffield Crucible), *The Prince of Homburg* (Donmar), *The Hypochondriac* (Liverpool Everyman/ETT) *The Constant Wife* (Gate Theatre Dublin), *Translations* (National) and *Coriolanus* (RSC). Television and film credits include *Doctors*, *Holby City* and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (Working Title).



**Caroline Faber's** theatre credits for Headlong include *King Lear* and *Paradise Lost*. Other credits include *Hangover Square* (Finborough), *The Norman Conquests* (Birmingham Rep), *Keepers of the Flame*, *Edward III* and *The Malcontent*, all for the RSC. Television credits include *Merlin*, *Holby City* and *Foyle's War*.



**Stephen Fewell's** theatre credits for Headlong include *Enron* and *Paradise Lost*. Other stage credits include *The Tempest* (Barbican), *Wiff Waff/Things that make no sense* (Latitude/TheatreUncut), *Henry IV, part 1 and 2* (Bristol Old Vic) and *Lady Windemere's Fan* (Royal Exchange).



**Daniel Hooke's** theatre credits include *Squirrels* (Vivid), *The Duchess of Malfi* (Vivid), *Comedy of Errors* (Queen's College), *Oklahoma!* (Cambridge Arts Theatre) and *Twelfth Night* (Arden). Film includes: *A Moment's Silence* (NightThief Films), *Artist and Athlete* (NightThief Films).



**Danny Kirrane's** theatre credits include *Jerusalem* (Royal Court/Apollo/Broadway), *Tarantula in Petrol Blue* (Aldeburgh Music) and *The History Boys* (NT Tour). Television credits include *Hustle*, *Casualty*, *The Inbetweeners*, and *Skins*.



**Tunji Lucas's** theatre credits include *Greenland* (NT), *Eleven and Twelve* (Barbican), *Gone Too Far* (Royal Court) and *Small Things* (Paines Plough). Film and television credits include *Gone Too Far*, *Raising Baby Rio*, *Taking the Flak*, *The Bill* and *Bike Squad*.



**Okezie Morro's** theatre credits include *The Riots* (Tricycle), *As You Like It* (Rose Theatre), *Innocence* (Arcola), *Ruined* (Almeida) and *Rum and Coca Cola* (ETT). Film credits include *Red Tails* (Lucas Films) *Gulliver's Travels* (Fox), *World War Z* (Paramount). Television credits include *Outnumbered*, *Placebo*, *Batch*.



**Tom Mothersdale's** theatre credits include *Iphigenia* (Theatre Royal Bath), *The Phoenix of Madrid* (Theatre Royal Bath), *The School of Night* (RSC), *An Ideal Husband* (Vaudeville), *The Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare's Globe) and *A Thousand Stars Explode in the Sky* (Lyric Hammersmith).



**Matthew Spencer's** theatre credits include *This Happy Breed* (Theatre Royal Bath), *War Horse* (NT/New London), *People are Stupid* (Arcola Theatre), *Nicholas Nickleby* (Gielgud Theatre), *Bent* (Trafalgar Studios) and *Tartuffe* (Watermill). Television and film credits include *My Family* and *The Trap*.



**Catrin Stewart** plays Juliet. Catrin's stage credits include *Buried Child* at the Leicester Curve and *The Lady from the Sea* at The Royal Exchange. Television credits include *Doctor Who*, *Misfits* and *Stella*.



**Brigid Zegeni's** theatre credits include *The Duchess of Malfi* (Greenwich Theatre), *The Hypochondriac* (ETT/Liverpool Everyman), *A Christmas Carol* (Rose Theatre), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (RSC), *Julius Caesar* (RSC) and *The Winter's Tale* (National Theatre). Television credits include *New Tricks*, *Silent Witness* and *William and Mary*.

**Robert Icke** is Associate Director at Headlong. He most recently worked alongside Headlong's Artistic Director Rupert Goold in conceiving and developing *DECADE* at St Katharine Docks. Icke founded the Arden Theatre company in 2003 and over five years as Artistic Director directed nine productions for the company: *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Hughie*, *The Zoo Story*, *Richard III*, and *Journey's End*.

His other directing work includes *Catalyst* by Allister Bain (Oval House), *The Alchemist* by Ben Jonson, *Motortown* by Simon Stephens, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Swan Theatre Company) and *Coat* by Rory Mullarkey (Edinburgh Fringe). His credits as an Assistant and Associate Director include *Blithe Spirit*, *The Misanthrope* and *As You Like It* for Thea Sharrock and *Measure for Measure* for Michael Attenborough.



Director Robert Icke

## REHEARSAL DIARY

***Below is extract from the first installment of the production rehearsal diary:***

### Romeo & Juliet: Rehearsal Diary

#### Week 1

On a Monday morning in early January, still in the shadow of Christmas and New Year, the company gathered for the first time. Apart from a few individual conversations and some preliminary work with Robert, our director, it was the first time most people had met each other, so over tea and cake everyone tentatively introduced themselves. There wasn't much time to soak in the ambience as introductions were sped along by a speed dating game, in which the company were split into pairs to gather as much information about each other as possible to be fed back to the group. With the ice broken, and safe in the knowledge of who was a big fan of cryptic crosswords, and whose hero is Ryan Gosling, the company was encouraged to talk about their responses to Shakespeare. It was interesting to see how strong many of their likes and dislikes were, influenced in turn by some of their best and worst experiences in the theatre. It was soon clear that everyone was singing from the same hymn sheet and that we all felt a responsibility to work hard to make the production exciting and innovative.

Robert is allergic to tables and dislikes a traditional read-through, so the company were soon up on their feet and working with text to get everyone comfortable with the language and verse of Shakespeare. There was a large range of experience, from those with many Shakespeare productions under their belt to those who had never spoken verse before. Everyone became a beginner again, united in a crash course on a little known speech from *Richard II*. Over-acting it to free up the text, beating the pentameter into the floor, and bullying each other to find the flow of the argument. As well as ensuring everyone got used to working in verse, the exercises were especially good for encouraging good verse-speaking habits, enabling a better understanding of the language. After a quick break for lunch, the afternoon session saw the cast discuss their response to the play, with particular attention to the cut we are working from - a creative and very unique version of the original. However, mystery remained as Robert kept his cards close to his chest with regards to specific details, collecting the thoughts and ideas of all present on the various themes that pervade the play. Finally, the company was introduced to the ancient sport of 'ninesquare', a ball game which got the competitive juices flowing and started a tradition with which each subsequent rehearsal would begin.

The rest of the week saw the actors working on the text. Having split the entire play down into bite-size chunks the cast was called in groups to work on certain scenes, explore and talk through relationships, and get the play on its feet. This was in no way prescriptive and the actors were encouraged to explore different variations and choices, to try things out and introduce ideas, and to play around with the text. Objects of all shapes and sizes: wheelie-chairs, footballs, cutlery, sofa cushions and a tea trolley, were pulled out of cupboards and off shelves and handed over to the cast. Scenes and soliloquies were occasionally hammered out to the strains of

Goldfrapp or Marvin Gaye. The aim was to encourage freedom to explore the text and to ensure that all the actors had a strong understanding of the meaning, arguments and ideas therein. The results ranged from the perverse to the brilliant, and gave the company a solid foundation and understanding of the text from which to work before building up to staging.

By this time, the production office was in full swing and the stage management team were on hand to ensure the whole show was running in a smooth and organised fashion. Kala, our Deputy Stage Manager, had her hands full noting down any changes, additions or requests made in the rehearsal room - to send to the production team and keep them updated - as well as cataloguing props, costume and other items we might need. By mid-week the cast were all very comfortable with each other and enjoying the opportunity to explore their characters and scenes in great detail, and with even greater freedom. The world of the play and the relationships within began to solidify as the actors became more confident in their discoveries - developments greatly helped by the fact that by now many of the actors had learnt all their lines and were able to rehearse off-book.

On Friday evening, the Headlong team, along with the producers from Nottingham Playhouse and The Nuffield, Southampton descended on the rehearsal room for a meet and greet. All were intrigued to learn about the process so far, and the company were eager to share their stories of the week and the progress that had been made. The highlight of the evening was the presentation (by Helen, our Designer) of the model box, a scale mock-up of the set. This allowed the company to see the space in which they would be performing, and ask any questions about it. After a week of working on the play without any concept of spacing or blocking - focusing only on the text - there was a thrill of excitement from the actors when they saw what they would have to play with. By the next morning, a plan of the set had been taped out on the floor of the rehearsal room so that they would be able to stage scenes with the correct blocking, safe in the knowledge of where all the doors and walls would be when it was eventually constructed. The realisation that the elements of the show, which had been worked on separately for months, were beginning to come together - particularly in the presence of all the people who had worked so hard to make it happen - provided a truly exciting end to the first week.

***To read the full rehearsal diary or hear the latest news on the production visit [www.headlongtheatre.co.uk](http://www.headlongtheatre.co.uk) or [#starxlovers](https://twitter.com/starxlovers) on Twitter.***

REHEARSAL PHOTOS



Daniel Boyd and Catrin Stewart



Simon Coates, Brigid Zengeni and Okezie Morro



Catrin Stewart



Keith Bartlett and Stephen Fewell



Brigid Zengeni and Catrin Stewart



The Cast of *Romeo & Juliet*



## TOUR DATES

Thursday 2 February to Saturday 18 February 2012

**The Nuffield Theatre**

Tickets: 023 8067 1771

[www.nuffieldtheatre.co.uk](http://www.nuffieldtheatre.co.uk)

Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 February 2012

**Yvonne Arnaud Theatre**

Tickets: 01483 44 00 00

[www.yvonne-arnaud.co.uk](http://www.yvonne-arnaud.co.uk)

Tuesday 28 February to Saturday 3 March 2012

**Salisbury Playhouse**

Tickets: 01722 320333

[www.salisburyplayhouse.com](http://www.salisburyplayhouse.com)

Tuesday 6 to Saturday 10 March 2012

**Cambridge Arts Theatre**

Tickets: 01223 503333

[www.cambridgeartstheatre.com](http://www.cambridgeartstheatre.com)

Tuesday 13 to Saturday 24 March 2012

**Nottingham Playhouse**

Tickets: 0115 941 9419

[www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk)

Tuesday 27 March to Saturday 7 April 2012

**Hull Truck Theatre**

Tickets: 01482 323638

[www.hulltruck.co.uk](http://www.hulltruck.co.uk)

## NOTABLE PAST PRODUCTIONS

### STAGE

1935: dir. John Gielgud.

Peggy Ashcroft played Juliet whilst Laurence Olivier and Gielgud alternated the parts of Romeo and Mercutio at each performance.

1947: dir. Peter Brook

Brook's controversial and tough approach stressed the play's violence and the lovers' extreme youth: Laurence Payne (Romeo) was 21 and Daphne Slater (Juliet) only 18. Brook cut the reconciliation between the families at the end of the play.

1957: *West Side Story*, book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, directed by Jerome Robbins

A musical based on *Romeo and Juliet* and set in New York, where the Jets and the Sharks are two rival teenage street gangs from different ethnic backgrounds. Tony, a Jet, falls in love with Maria, the sister of the leader of the Sharks. It is one of the most successful musicals of all time and in 1961 was made into a film of the same name (see below).

1960: dir. Franco Zeffirelli

Starring John Stride as Romeo and Judi Dench as Juliet, Zeffirelli followed Brook's lead and removed around a third of the text to make the play more accessible. This production formed the basis for his film eight years later (see below).

1986: dir. Michael Bogdanovich

This modern-dress production boldly cut the text after Juliet's suicide, replacing it with the Prologue. Strikingly modern, Sean Bean (Romeo) and Niamh Cusack (Juliet) were the rare possessors of sincerity and innocence in a materialistic and hypocritical society, evoked on stage with Armani suits and Tybalt in a glamorous red sports car. Romeo poisoned himself with a drug from a hypodermic needle.

2000: dir. Michael Boyd

A minimalist, modern set, combined with sixteenth-century costumes created a hostile, harsh setting for this production. It began with a violent fight between the two families from which Romeo emerged to speak the Prologue and predict his own death. At the end of the play the lovers left their tomb and walked off along this pathway through the audience. Tybalt and Mercutio also returned from the dead to watch the closing scenes.

2006: dir. Nancy Meckler

Dealing with the fact that nearly everyone educated in English knows what happens, Meckler staged *Romeo and Juliet* as a play-within-a-play. Musicians and singers remained on stage throughout, and the play's fights were stylised aggressive dances with long staffs.

2010: dir. Rupert Goold

Set in a torchlit, Spanish and heavily Catholic world, Goold emphasized the themes of youth, death and sex with a heavily violent production. He highlighted the isolation of the lovers within this world by placing them in modern clothes, with everyone else in Renaissance costume.

## NOTABLE PAST PRODUCTIONS

### FILM

*Romeo and Juliet*, dir. George Cukor, 1938

Starring: Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer

Badly received by critics but nominated for four Academy Awards.

*West Side Story*, dir. Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, 1961

Starring: Richard Beymer and Natalie Wood

A film version of the successful stage musical. It was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, of which it won ten.

*Romeo and Juliet*, dir. Franco Zeffirelli, 1968

Starring: Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey

Zeffirelli courted controversy by casting Hussey who was an untrained actress and only fifteen at the time the film was shot.

*Romeo + Juliet*, dir. Baz Luhrmann, 1996

Starring: Leonard DiCaprio and Claire Danes

Possibly the most well known adaptation, which relocated and modernized the setting and soundtrack to appeal to the MTV generation.

*Romeo and Juliet*, dir. Carlo Carlei, 2012

Starring: Douglas Booth and Hailee Steinfeld

The newest film adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* set for release later this year.

## ROMEO & JULIET TRIVIA

- There are 3,003 lines in *Romeo & Juliet* (although the First Folio has 3,185) and 24,023 words. Measured by number of lines it is the 12th longest play. (*Hamlet* is the longest at 3,834 lines and 29,844 words).
- 86.9% of *Romeo and Juliet* (2,610 lines) is written in verse; 13.1% (393 lines) in prose. (*Richard III*, *King John* and *King Edward III* are written entirely in verse; while *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has only 12.5% of its lines in verse).
- In the original text Romeo speaks 617 lines and Juliet speaks 542.
- Up to the year 2000, it is thought there have been 479 films based on, or adapted from Shakespeare's plays. Of these the number one title with 77 versions is *Romeo and Juliet*. (*Hamlet* is second with 75, and *Othello* third with 43).
- The part of Romeo is the 19th largest male role in Shakespeare's canon at 617 lines. (*Hamlet* is the longest at a whopping 1,506).
- Juliet is the 5th largest female role in Shakespeare's canon at 542 lines (*Rosalind* in *As You Like It* is the largest at 685 lines).
- There are 24 scenes in *Romeo & Juliet* (excluding Prologues) making it number 10 on the list - the play with the most scenes is *Antony and Cleopatra*.
- *Romeo & Juliet* opens with a Prologue – which also happens to be a sonnet! There are seven other Shakespeare plays which open with a Prologue: *Henry IV Part II*, *Henry V*, *Henry VIII*, *Pericles*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *The Winter's Tale*. In *Hamlet*, there is a Prologue spoken in the play within a play, *The Mousetrap*.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### TEXTS

*Preface to Romeo & Juliet* by Harley Granville Barker

*The Actor Speaks* by Patsy Rodenburg

*The Actor and the Text* by Cicely Berry

*Playing Shakespeare* by John Barton

*Manga Shakespeare: R & J* by Sonia Leong

### WEBSITES

[www.jc-schools.net/tutorials/eng9/romeo.htm](http://www.jc-schools.net/tutorials/eng9/romeo.htm)

[www.absoluteshakespeare.com](http://www.absoluteshakespeare.com)

[www.rsc.org.uk](http://www.rsc.org.uk)

[www.bloggingshakespeare.com](http://www.bloggingshakespeare.com)

[www.nosweatshakespeare.com](http://www.nosweatshakespeare.com)

**Education Pack written by Tim Ford.**

**WORKSHOPS ARE AVAILABLE FROM HEADLONG ON REQUEST.**

**PLEASE CONTACT YOUR THEATRE OR CALL HEADLONG ON 020 7478 0275  
OR VISIT [www.headlongtheatre.co.uk](http://www.headlongtheatre.co.uk)**