

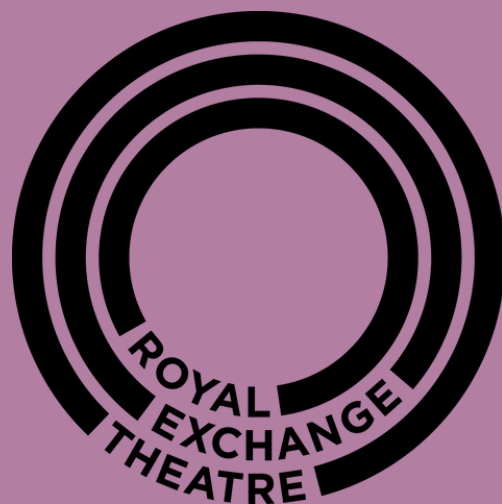
Romeo & Juliet

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

DIRECTED BY NICHOLAI LA BARRIE.

FRI 20 OCT – SAT 18 NOV 2023

Resources, Content Warnings & Self Care Pack



Resource Pack - Great Expectations

This document has been designed to support audiences attending performances of Romeo & Juliet By William Shakespeare.

Directed by Nicholai La Barrie.
Fri 20 Oct – Sat 18 Nov 2023

We've created this document for those who would be comfortable with more information and to give you a little insight into the show. We hope the information and resources in this document will help audiences experiencing the show, and support planning for anyone who may be concerned about their visit.

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Show Information

Content Warnings

- For ages 12+
 - Romeo & Juliet deals with a number of difficult subjects including knife crime, drug use, references to sexual violence, sexism, violence leading to death, domestic abuse, and suicide. There is also use graphic scenes that use blood.
-

Running Time

3 Hours with interval.

Travel Recommendations

Trams

If your school or college is near a tram stop you can get your students to us for just £1 each and £2 per teacher. A great way to save money on coaches and also give students the life experience of how a lot of our audiences use public transport to access our theatre. More information [here](#).

[Fares and passes for young people | Transport for Greater Manchester \(tfgm.com\)](#)

Coaches

For all information about coach drops offs and parking please click [here](#)

A bit about the show

No matter how tragic it is. This love story still has immense hope at its heart.

“Love is heavy and light, bright and dark, hot and cold, sick and healthy, asleep and awake – it’s everything except what it is!”

In a hostile city two rival families flood the streets with cruel, uncontrollable violence, yet it takes just a single spark to rewire the world forever.

A reckless, impulsive, boundary-crossing instant can send shockwaves through everything you know. You are seduced, soaring high above the hate and the fury – you’re dancing to a new refrain and the chemistry is awesome. You’re willing to risk it all!

It’s perfection. Just as quickly it burns out.

Theatre and film director Nicholai La Barrie makes his Royal Exchange Theatre debut with this fiery retelling of Shakespeare’s tragic love story. This contemporary version of *Romeo & Juliet* is a love-letter to Manchester, a celebration of youth, love and aspiration. A vision of hope in troubled times.

A special thank you to Mills & Reeve for supporting this production.



Art direction: Alfred Mulroy. Photography: Felicity McCabe

Meet The Cast

5.



Conor Glean
Romeo



Shalisha James-Davis
Juliet



Geoffrey Aymer
Friar Lawrence



Adam Fenton
Benvolio



Dominic Holmes
Paris



David Judge
Mercutio



Ike Bennett
Prince/Gregory



Daniel Poyser
Montague



Kate Hampson
Lady Capulet



Ashley O'Brien
Tybalt



Gemma Ryan
Nurse

Creative Team

6.

Production Manager Jacqui Leigh
Stage Manager Alec Reece
Deputy Stage Manager Natasha Guzel
Assistant Stage Manager Sarah Longson
Supernumerary Coordinator Katrina Heath
Lighting Technician Beth Harvey Stage
Management Placement Amelia Blackburn
Set Construction Splinter Scenery
Prop Maker Sarah Worrall
Singing Teacher Rob Hiley
Additional Vocals Emily Spowage
Co-Costume Supervisor Annabeth Fernley
Costume Assistant Rosie Holditch
Costume Assistant Lucy Woodcock
Costume Assistant Leah Bradbury
Dresser Katie Deegan
Dresser Emma Wilcox
Costume Maintenance Rachael Jones
Wig Technician Neelam Aurelia
Costume Work Placement Serena Creag



Scan Me

Check out our meet the cast Instagram Reel

Meet The Director

We would like to introduce you to our wonderful director
Nicholai La Barrie.

Below you can listen to him talk about the show

As part of research into the show
Nicholai visited Abraham Moss
school, at the start of the year

Scan Me



Listen to Nicholai break down the story

Scan Me



Exclusive Director Interview

For Nicholai La Barrie, director of this new production, a key part of his fascination with the story of *ROMEO & JULIET* is what might happen next. Here he discusses his approach to bringing a play that's over four centuries old into the present – and to Manchester.



Can you remember the very first time you encountered *ROMEO & JULIET* in some form?

Nicholai La Barrie: Oh my God! I think it has to be when I was in my early teens. I would have been in school. In our literature class we didn't use to read plays, but maybe our literature teacher might have taken a speech from *ROMEO & JULIET*. The thing that I remember is 'for I never saw true beauty 'til this night'. I think we were dissecting the poetry of it.

When it really landed for me, though, was actually when I watched the old Zeffirelli film version [from 1968]. I was like 'oh, this is what this is'. That's when it became a real story and I understood the format of it. And then obviously the Baz Lurhmann one – everybody's seen that, it's like a cultural zeitgeist thing.

With there having been so many different previous versions of it, does that make it easier for you to bring your own interpretation, because there's such a rich tradition of it, or harder, because you have to find your own unique take?

Nicholai: No no no, it's easier. I think as artists, when we make something, we're building it on stuff that has come before us, changing it. And as artists, you have all this stuff inside of you that you've consumed as you've grown up, and it's reinterpretations of those things. Anyway, there's very rarely a purely original idea comes out nowadays. I think we are curators of lots of different bits of art that we have inside of us and then how it comes out is our own interpretation of that.

So that doesn't feel weird to me at all. All of that stuff is around and you choose to pull from it or not. The play is still the play. The play doesn't really change. So I think it's easier.

That's probably the only way to approach it, isn't it? Otherwise you might get overwhelmed by the weight of it all.

Nicholai: Yeah, you can't. We've been in the rehearsal room with the cast and they've just been lovely, approaching it as if this was the first time you saw these lines and these words, and you saw this play presented to you without all that baggage? What does this mean now, in our context? What does this mean within this frame that we want to put it in?

Is there a particular speech or scene that provides a way into the play for you, one that peaked your interest?

Nicholai: I've always been fascinated by the epilogue of the play, where Prince Escalus comes on and says:

A glooming peace this morning with it brings. The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head. Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things. Some shall be pardoned, and some punished. For never was a story of more woe Than this of Juliet and her Romeo

...right? And I have been fascinated by what happens the day after that. They build a statue to Juliet and Romeo, they immortalised them, but the fact that matters is that those two people were the youngest of their clans, right? The parents are much older. It stands to reason that they're not going to have more kids. So the direct Capulet line dies and the Montague line probably dies. It is a tragedy and in the ramifications of that tragedy, of a society not choosing love but choosing violence and pain, means that they are wiped from the planet. And I find that fascinating.



As a species, we've been given a choice. We can choose compassion or violence and nine times out of ten, we choose violence. I find the choice fascinating.

This production is set in contemporary Manchester. Was that important to you?

Nicholai: Yeah, definitely. Roy Alexander Weise said 'come and make the show', and for me, theatre is about giving something back. The gesture of a show is 'I want to give you something, I want to present a story to you, I want to give you something to take away'. And I thought 'if that's the gesture of the play, then who is it for?' And it has to be for people in Manchester. I would make a very different production if I was in Kyoto or if I was in Hoi An or wherever.

So I came up to Manchester a couple of times, just to do some research, to walk around. I went to places like Cheetham Hill, I went to Chorlton, I went to Salford. I went around lots of different places. I just wanted to chat to people in communities, to see what life was like here for them, to see what it means to be a Mancunian now.

It was really instructive, it was really beautiful, and some things stuck out. One, it's incredibly multicultural. It just feels like everybody lives in Manchester. Two, the amount of languages spoken is quite bananas. Three, the communities, outside of gentrification and stuff, they feel really tight-knit. People are intertwined in people's lives and they know people in their community, They still say hello to people in the community. Little things really matter to them still. It feels like it's immediate, so I wanted to get all of those senses in.

So is your imaginary Mancunian version of Verona located somewhere specific?

Nicholai: Yeah, our Verona is like a suburb. It's just beyond Cheetham Hill, somewhere like that. It's very close to the town centre. If you imagine four or five streets, and there's a main thoroughfare, our Verona is that.

In one school I visited, I met these three teenage girls who were articulate and brilliant and really, really smart. I was chatting to them and they were talking about where they lived and how proud they were of where they lived, how proud they were of their communities and their parents and how proud they were of their languages. Each of them spoke, like, four different languages and they were talking to each other in these languages. It was crazy. I couldn't even understand what the hell they were talking about! And then when I left them I thought 'I want to make the show for you guys'. If you are Somalian or Eritrean or Pakistani, wherever you come from, if this is your first time seeing a Shakespeare play, your first time being introduced to ROMEO & JULIET, I want to make sure, one, that you understand it. Two, that it's accessible. That it feels like something that you can go and talk to your friends about after, that it's not elitist, that any barrier to entry into Shakespeare is gone completely.

This is your first time directing at the Exchange. How do you feel about that prospect?

Nicholai: It's super exciting. Directors have to solve problems, right? The play is a thing that exists on paper and you have to stand it up and walk it around. No matter if it's in proscenium or flat, you have a bunch of problems to solve, for people to see things and hear things with clarity.

So it's just really exciting to have these questions: where do I sit? How do I put people in this space? Who do they talk to? That kind of stuff is really interesting.

Also, the Exchange feels way more intimate than you think it does. It's deceptive like that. When you see pictures of it, it feels grand, right? And it is grand. But then when you sit inside of it, you're like 'oh, this is really close'. It's really intimate. It feels like you're inside a cocoon, inside a body, inside of the thing, which I really love, which I feel very excited about

What would you hope for audiences to take away from seeing the production?

Nicholai: I hope they have a full meal. I hope they go on a full ride with us. I hope they are delighted and excited and blown away and bewildered and satisfied by the end of it. I hope they laugh with us, I hope they cry with us, I hope they feel everything that those people feel in the story.

And if somebody comes to see it thinking, 'oh, I know ROMEO & JULIET, I know exactly what to expect'?

Nicholai: I hope they're surprised. I hope people who've seen this play a lot hear things for the first time.

Andy Murray



Rehearsal Snaps




 Ella Mayamoht



 Ella Mayamoht



 Ella Mayamoht

Trailer & Teaser Time



Scan Me



See our official trailer here to get a feel of the show



A little teaser of the show



Meet The Cast

Here are some brilliant silly videos to help get to know our cast

Tortilla Slap Challenge

Ashley James O'Brien, playing Tybalt, and Dominic Holmes, playing Sampson/Paris, went head to head

Scan Me



Scan Me



Woah Challenge

Ashley James O'Brien, playing Tybalt, and Dominic Holmes, playing Sampson/Paris, went head to head



Scan Me



Join in with the cast and guess if it's Shakespeare or Rap!



Exclusive Cast Interview

During the rehearsal period, Shalisha James-Davis (playing Juliet) and Conor Glean (Romeo) talked about their relationship to *ROMEO & JULIET*, the long legacy of the characters and their hopes for this new production.

How are the rehearsals going?

Shalisha James-Davis: Good. Yeah, really good. I feel like I've been eating and sleeping this play, and it's what's keeping me up at night as well. Because it is a lot, especially for us two. This is not any surfacelevel *ROMEO & JULIET*, it really isn't. We're going to make sure everybody feels something. So, in order to do that, we have to feel a lot.

Conor Glean: Yeah, I totally echo that. It feels as if the room Nicholai [La Barrie, director] has cultivated, the place he's allowed us to go to, now that we've been, we know that's where the play sits. So now it's about keeping that level and keeping energy to that level.

[to Shalisha]: Do you remember, on the first day, Nicholai gave that speech? He said, 'We are but custodians of this text while we have it, and it will then move on to whoever has it next'. Within that he's brought a sense of ease and play. When I think about the past couple of weeks of rehearsals, I just feel so joyous to be on this journey with you, but also with the company that we have, because the heavier the themes, the lighter the room must be

Is there any point when it gets overwhelming? Do you ever wake up thinking 'I wish I was just playing third Capulet on the left?'

Shalisha: Ha! I haven't yet. I mean, I think yesterday, we were going through the script together and I was like 'when do I get a tea break? When am I off stage for a little bit?' But no, it's an honour to feel like we are – not carrying the story, but driving the story with the characters that we're creating. It's a big responsibility, but it's so fun. It's so fun to work with yourself.



‘Conor: Yeah, conversely, I woke up the other day, I was going through some lines in my mind, and I was like ‘oh, I’m starting to feel ready for it’. I’m at the point in rehearsals when I’m still finding things and feeling inspired. But I’m sure if you asked me in a week’s time, I’d be like ‘give me Capulet no 3’. (laughs)

Do you know each other? Have you worked together before?

Shalisha: No, it’s our first time working together.

It must surely be one of the weirdest experiences in your line of business to be introduced to somebody playing opposite you in ROMEO & JULIET: ‘Hello, we’re going to be starcrossed lovers...’

Shalisha: Well, I don’t know. We’re from a similar generation of actors coming up, so that’s always helpful. We run in similar circles and things like that, but we’ve just never actually worked together. And then obviously, when you get the cast list, the first thing you do is find out who’s playing Romeo! And then you know someone who knows him, so you’re messaging them asking ‘what’s Conor like?’ ‘Ah, he’s lush!’

Conor: Exactly the same, I feel like I’ve known you for far longer than I have now. Even the few chats that we had before we started, it just felt like easy from jump. A mutual friend of ours, the wonderful Rosie Sheehy, you had spoken to her about me and I talked to her about you, and she was just singing your praises. So I was like ‘cool, it’s gonna be calm, it’s gonna be easy’. Shalisha: Same, same. Also, we know what the story is, and when you know where it’s going to go, you kind of have to go in already open to that person. We have four weeks, there’s no time to be like [giggles shyly], you know?

Can you remember when you first encountered the play?

Shalisha: I read it in school. I remember not knowing what was going on. Also I thought that it was a romance story, and it’s really not a cute romcom at all. Then when I saw Leonardo diCaprio playing Romeo, I was like ‘it all makes sense now! Ha ha!’ No, that was really, really helpful. But I’ve never actually seen it performed live.



Conor: Yeah, similar. I watched that Baz Luhrmann film, which I love, and I think is such a beautiful cultural reference point for many people of our generation. I watched that at the same time that I was studying it. I played Mercutio in my sixthform college production, and then, at the drama school that I went to, Mountview, they put it on. So I watched it there, but I've never seen it done professionally. This is my first professional foray with it

Like you say, for a whole generation that Baz Luhrmann film is ROMEO & JULIET.

Conor: Yeah. Leo must have been in his early 20s at that point and for me, that's still who Romeo is. It's nice to try and break that for myself as well as an audience. Just how tricky is it to find fresh ways of playing these very well-worn characters?

Shalisha: I find it exciting, Juliet is multifaceted and layered and complex. She's a woman, she's powerful, she's intelligent and she's coming of age. That doesn't look like one thing for everyone. So for me, I had to just approach the character as a new thing. I don't look like Claire Danes [who played Juliet in the Luhrmann film] and I don't talk like that either. So instantly, I'm not your Juliet. But also I am fiery, I am intelligent, I have autonomy over my body and my sexuality. I make my own choices about who I



Lets Set The Scene

18.

Romeo & Juliet is one of the most famous shows in the world and one of the most known storylines. In case you are not familiar with the plot, here is a quick summary below.

Romeo and Juliet is a story about a lengthy feud between two families (the Capulets and the Montagues) that ends in bloodshed. A lovesick Romeo Montague gatecrashes a Capulet party and instantly falls in love with Juliet Capulet who it has been expected will soon marry a rich suitor called Paris. Juliet simultaneously falls in love with Romeo. With the help of Juliet's Nurse an arrangement is made to marry Romeo at the Friar's cell the next day. Following their marriage Romeo attempts to stop a street fight which leads to the death of his good friend Mercutio (killed by Juliet's cousin Tybalt), and the subsequent death of Tybalt (killed by Romeo in revenge for Mercutio's death) for which Romeo is banished. In desperation to be together again with Romeo and avoid marriage to Paris Juliet follows a plot by the Friar and fakes her own death. The Friar intends to send a letter to Romeo to let him know that Juliet is really alive but the letter fails to get to Romeo on time. Romeo, believing Juliet dead, takes his own life in her tomb. Juliet wakes to find Romeo's corpse beside her and kills herself. Prince a civic leader arrives to talk to the audience about how the story of Romeo and Juliet needs to be retold in order to prevent such a tragedy happening again.



Our version encapsulates the hope and tragedy of love, showing us the power it has to make change even when everything feels impossible. Inspired by young people and his visits to schools in our Local Exchange areas across Greater Manchester, La Barrie's new production embraces the vitality and diversity of Manchester, and the city's ability to wear its heart on its sleeve.

One reckless, impulsive, boundary-crossing instant can send shockwaves through everything you know. You are seduced, soaring high above the hate and the fury - you're dancing to a new refrain and the chemistry is awesome. You're willing to risk it all! It's perfection. Just as quickly it burns out. This contemporary version of Romeo & Juliet is a love-letter to Manchester, a celebration of youth, love and aspiration.

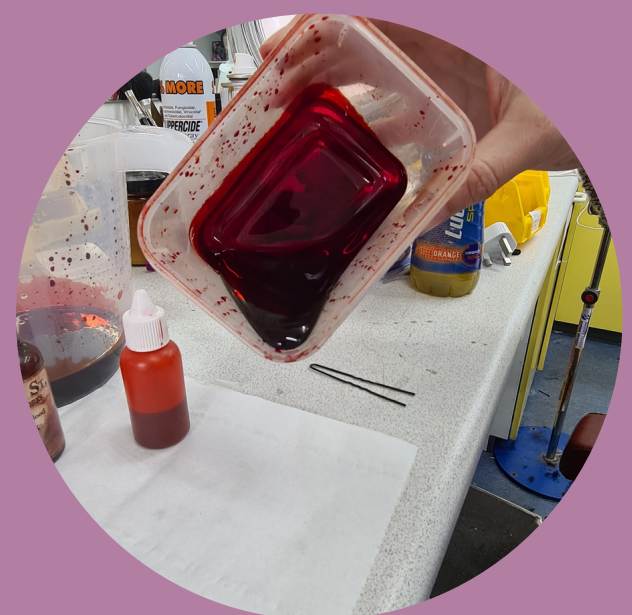
Career In The Spotlight - Wigs & Make up

'Romeo & Juliet is renowned for its violence, check out the images below to see how we created blood on stage.



All of our blood is made from sugar syrup. When mixed in with a product called Arrow Root, the consistency gets thicker. The more you add the thicker the blood.

To get that blood red look we use food colouring, but if you want to get a darker more aged blood we mix in gravy granules.



We hold the blood in various cases, sew or hide them in the costumes so audiences can't see, ready to be burst and create the effect. Below are some examples we use.



Then here you have blood capsules that the actors hide in their mouth



Here are the images of blood bags that are sewn into or underneath the costumes



Costume Inspirations

Costume design is an integral part of our process. Below are the initial costume designs and inspirations by Good Teeth Theatre. These get sent to our costume department before being created into what you see on stage today.

JULIE



Shalisha James-Davies
JULIET



Outfit 2



Outfit 1



Outfit 3 (wedding and death)



Outfit 4

Outfit 5 – nightwear

Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET

ROMEO



Conor Glean
ROMEO



Outfit 3 (wedding and death)



Outfit 1 (opening)

Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET



Outfit 2 (party)

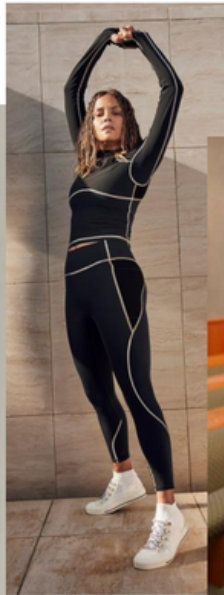


Outfit 4 (underwear)

LADY C



Outfit 2 (party)



Outfit 1



Outfit 3 (day to day, tbc)



Outfit 4 (funeral)

Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET

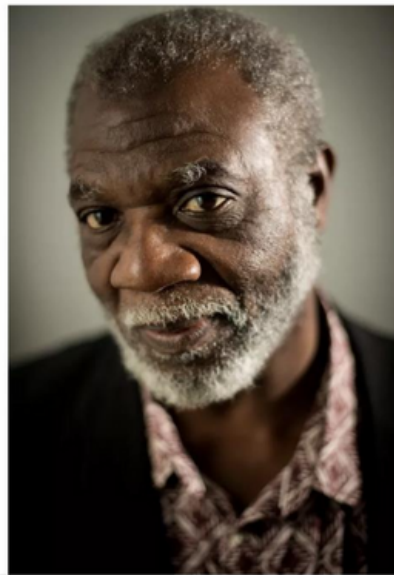
Outfit 5 (spa robe, tbc)

MONTAGU

F



Daniel Poyser
MONTAGUE



Outfit 1 (suit tbc)

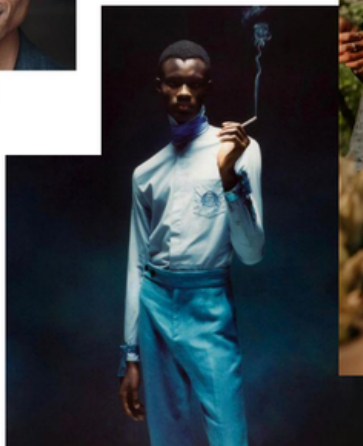


MERCUTIO

10



David Judge
MERCUTIO



Outfit 1 (party)



Outfit 2 (additions only)



Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET

BENVOLI



Adam Fenton
BENVOLIO



Outfit 1 (party)



Outfit 2 (additions only)

Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET

FRIAR L



Geoff Aymer
FRIAR LAWRENCE

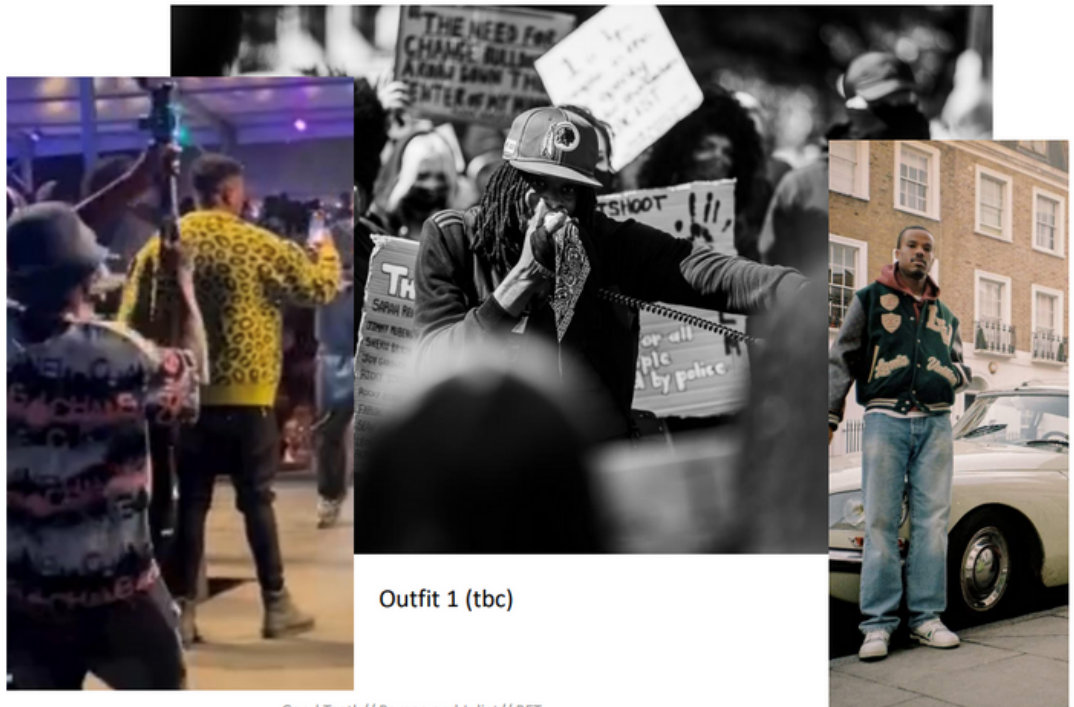


Outfit 2
(add vestments)

PRINCE (TBC)



Ike Bennett
PRINCE / GREGORY



Outfit 1 (tbc)

Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET

TYBALT



Ashley O'Brien
TYBALT



Outfit 1

Outfit 2 (additions for party)



Outfit 3 (tbc)



Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET

CHORUS

Community Company A



Colin Blackledge



Stephen Brown



Josie Julyan



Helen Kozak



Nathan Lea



Jacquie Long



Dorretta Maynard



Elise Melvin



Katie Nedderman



Molly O'Brien



CHORUS

Community Company B



Eddie Fenn



Joseph Figuera



Rosa Gately



Paul Green



Nana Ota



Stefan Pohill



Ann Sarge



Maralyn Tohill



Jennifer Wightman



Carmen Wood-Hope



Good Teeth// Romeo and Juliet// RET

Interested in Stage Design?

Our wonderful designers James and Vicky from Good Teeth Theatre have given us some amazing insight into design and answered some of your questions.

What is theatre design? <https://youtu.be/Y30HcELUDz0>

How did you become designers? <https://youtu.be/1KBRdSYujWU>

How do you work with other creatives? <https://youtu.be/lyLzB6KhDyU>



Self-Care Guide: Romeo & Juliet

As the show explores themes around violence and knife crime we wanted to highlight some organizations doing incredible work in helping young people around this issue.

The Ben Kinsella Trust



1,010

young people have been murdered with a knife or sharp object in the last 15 years

***young people under 24 in England and Wales, to the year ending March 22.**

50,434

**Police-recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument
*in the 12 months to September 2022**

37

children aged just 17 or younger were murdered with a knife or sharp object in 2022

***in England and Wales, year ending March 22.**

We educate young people on the dangers of knife crime and help them to make positive choices to stay safe. Our workshops follow the journey of both the victim and the offender through a series of unique and immersive experiences to show young people how choices and consequences are intrinsically linked.

Our workshops change young people's attitudes to knife crime; debunking the myth that carrying a knife will protect you. They strengthen peer values; ensuring young people give better advice to each other and challenge peer pressure. Carrying (or thinking of carrying) a knife.

<https://benkinsella.org.uk/>



Read more



Reclaim Project

KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

Reports find Manchester's violent crime won't be solved without listening to young people.

Our first report launched Summer 2020 finds that young people across the city feel their knowledge is too often missing in debates on how to tackle the rise in knife crime.

The project, coordinated by local working-class youth charity RECLAIM, asked young people across the city what they want and need to feel safe. With partner organisations it brought them together with professionals working on this issue to explore what would help Manchester pioneer a braver approach

Our follow-up report published Summer 2022 by us and Collective Discovery, Bridging the Empathy Gap, explores how to bridge the gap between professionals and young people and the obstacles to strengthening listening practice and empathy.

The report is based on a review of existing research and practice and a series of discussions with young people and professionals. We hope you find it interesting - we found that improving individual professionals listening practice could strengthen empathy but there are wider obstacles in the systems that are meant to support young people that undermine a more responsive or co-produced response to the violence that impacts young people.

READ
MORE



<https://www.reclaim.org.uk/kcyps>



RECLAIM

Self Care Suggestions

If you're concerned about attending the show, there are a few things we'd suggest that might help.

Before the show

Read the content warnings before deciding to see the show.

Sit with a friend

The show can tackle some tough themes so maybe sit with a friend or someone you trust.

After the performance

If you've found something in the show triggering we'd suggest talk to someone you trust or one of the organisations we've listed above. You can also talk to a member of our staff who will be able to signpost you organisations around the area

More

Graduate Returns!



Nathan Lea and Josie Julyan are two of our Young Company graduates. They both return home again as part of the supernumerary cast in *Romeo & Juliet*. They sat down with our Schools Coordinator Tom for a chat.

Can you tell us a bit about your characters in the show?

Josie - Of course I can! So I am part of the supernumerary company, I am in community A as we have two different companies that alternate different nights. We have spent quite a bit of time coming up with our characters. I have named my character Jules, which I only realised 2 weeks ago is obviously very similar to Juliet, but I promise I didn't steal her name. We are there as support to the actors and main cast on stage as an ensemble, we represent the people of Manchester.

Nathan - So I am also part of the supernumerary company in group A and yeah we fill in the blanks basically. It's mad because I get to dance with Juliet at one point and we even get the audience up.

You are a local people who have stayed in their hometown and became a Young Company graduates, how does it feel to be back home on the Royal Exchange stage again and how important is it to get involved in your local theatre?

Josie- Very Important! Everyone has to be involved in their local theatre. It doesn't even need to be The Royal Exchange, it can be your local, local theatre, I mean mine is the Altrincham Garrick and I try to be involved with them as much as I can. Then all through young company you dream about being on that stage, so getting the chance to do that is amazing and so special and just so grateful for the opportunity.

Nathan - So you said the word home there, it felt so strange, like I couldn't quite grasp or believe.. I very much felt that in my first year, as I did 3 years, but coming back it really does feel like home, everyone makes you feel part of the family. Just walking through the hall and taking it all in you can't imagine the bridge between the rehearsal room and the space, but then all becomes clear. Just having that experience in stepping on that main stage, taking a bow alongside those talented people is crazy. The in terms of local theatre, it is mad that people walk past here every day and still don't know it is a theatre. Just come get involved even if its just to gain confidence, make new friends or just sit and have a coffee.

What would you say to anyone wanting to join Young Company and what was your experience like?

Josie - Firstly, join young company! It's one of the best decisions I made. I didn't go to drama school or young company, this was my training. I chose young company because it was more accessible, less expensive and there's so much going on in Manchester. I did 3 years, so performers, makes and writers, which I think it's the best way to do it. It's like a buffet, there's so much you can take from it. I get so many emails signposting me to opportunities and I just say yes to all of them, so I am busy busy busy, while meeting loads of amazing people. Doing all 3 of them meant I got so many different opportunities, I gained so much confidence and I am a completely different person now.

Nathan - So I did performers and 2 years of writers, I had always done acting but after my 1 year I realised I had passion for writing. I never considered myself a writer, so going in I felt a bit of an outsider, thinking everyone here all knew what they are doing. But you meet people who are from uni, college or high school and we are all different ages and experience but in the exact same boat, we all just share the passion for writing. I just urge everyone to join a youth or young company, even if it's not the Royal Exchange because helps you find yourself, build confidence and meet people that I now call friends.

What's your top tips to any up and coming talent that are wanting a career in acting?

Josie - Try lots of different things out your comfort zone. When I joined performers I thought I only wanted to do performing but because I did the other groups on a whim, it meant I applied to makers. Through this I found I was interested in things like lighting and set design. Just say yes to everything, it doesn't matter if it's not what your interested in but you could learn and find something new about yourself.

Nathan - Join something like the Young Company not just because of the opportunities you get but because of the community of friends you will make. Also I think to realise there's no such thing as competition, you are all in a similar boat, support each other. Be patient with people who might not know as much as you know. Embrace the fact you don't know everything and will constantly learn. learn. Keep creating, even if you don't know what it is yet you want to create. If today is drawing, then draw, as long as you're always making something then you are always actively going towards the thing you want to do, even if you don't know what that is.



Find out more
about Young
Company here



Young Company



Sometimes doing activities outside of school time can open up some great new friendships and connections. The Young Company is the Royal Exchange Theatres', award-winning, resident Company of Young People aged 14 – 21. Providing weekly workshops, production opportunities and free tickets to our main house shows. Applications open in summer 2024.

Careers In Theatre Week



Careers in Theatre Week is for young people aged 14-19 to get an insight into theatre industry careers. Our annual work experience event includes workshops with Royal Exchange Theatre staff, artists and practitioners, discovering the different elements that make a producing theatre come to life.

<https://forms.office.com/e/PmGvA9H3fL>

Young Collective

Read more



Under 26? Become a Collective Member to unlock discounts and offers at the theatre, access a year-round programme of workshops and projects, and join a growing network of young creatives in Greater Manchester.



[Young Company Collective | Get Involved | Royal Exchange Theatre](#)

Read more

Famous Romeos

Do you recognise these famous actors who have played Romeo at The Exchange?



Romeo & Juliet - 1992, Directed by Gregory Hersov - Photo Stephen Vaughan



Romeo and Juliet_2005_Photo by Jonathan Keenan_Directed by Jacob Murray

Answer: Michael Sheen (Top) &
Andrew Garfield (Bottom)

What's coming up at The Exchange

Thank you so much for reading and we hope the resources were useful. Here is what we have coming up over the next few months, we hope to see you again soon.



Brief Encounter

By Noël Coward. Adapted for the stage by Emma Rice. Directed by Sarah Frankcom.

In a busy railway station, where everyone is simply passing through, Laura and Alec find each other. Falling passionately and wildly in love in a few stolen moments they live and breathe a lifetime of epic emotions, reawakening everything they buried deep inside. Together they find themselves in a bittersweet, hopelessly romantic, elegantly awkward love affair.

A heart-stopping story of forbidden love that moves to the rhythm of beautiful songs, swaying dance moves, the odd cup of tea and a bath bun.

Emma Rice's smash-hit adaptation for stage of Noël Coward's iconic BRIEF ENCOUNTER is directed by former Royal Exchange Artistic Director Sarah Frankcom (WEST SIDE STORY).

This huge beating heart of a musical is perfect for all incurable romantics this Christmas.



Shed: Exploding View

By Phoebe Eclair-Powell. Directed by Atri Banerjee.

A devastating and delicately woven piece about violence, love and loss.

“There was a fork in her face. An actual fork. He dug a fork into her face. A fork stood on end in her cheek. A fork.”

Three couples.

Thirty years.

Mothers and daughters. Lovers, partners, husbands and wives. Babies, teenagers, birthdays, holidays, honeymoons, terrorist attacks, fireworks, near-misses, rain. This is a play about all of it.

The smallest tremble. A smashed glass. The ripping apart of space and time.

An explosion.

“Will you kiss me at New Year – when the clock strikes will you?”