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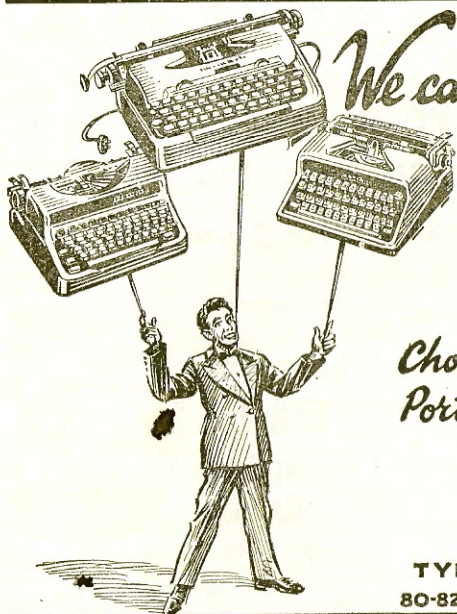
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The Questors Theatre

ROMEO and JULIET

by
William Shakespeare

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directed by David Gower

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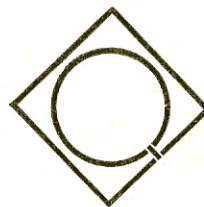
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THE QUESTORS THEATRE

FIRST PERFORMANCE

SATURDAY, 16th MARCH, 1968

"Romeo and Juliet" on the stage

"The most excellent and lamentable Tragedie, of Romeo and Juliet" (as the title page of the Quartos has it) has, after "Hamlet", been probably the most popular of Shakespeare's plays on the English stage, although Pepys, after seeing Betterton's first night on 1st March 1662, wrote ". . . it is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard, and the worst acted that ever I saw these people do . . . for they were all of them out more or less." Whereupon he resolved to go to no more first nights!

Shortly after, Sir James Howard wrote a happy ending to the play, with the lovers alive, and the two versions were played on alternate nights. This version also included a character "Count Paris' wife".

In 1680, Otway made a new version of the play, called 'Caius Marius', which held the stage to the exclusion of Shakespeare's play for many years. In this Juliet awoke before Romeo died, giving the lovers a final scene together.

It was 1744 before "Romeo and Juliet" itself was staged again in London, in a version that borrowed much from Otway and incorporated a chunk from "The Two Gentlemen of Verona". Four years later Garrick produced his immensely popular version, with many "improvements" of his own, and retaining Otway's idea for the final scene. His innovation of a funeral procession with a dirge for Juliet was so popular that it held the stage for a hundred years. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Garrick's version was ousted by Shakespeare's— in a production in which Charlotte Cushman played Romeo to her sister Susan's Juliet.

"Romeo and Juliet" was Irving's first great Shakespearean production, when he played Romeo to Ellen Terry's Juliet. Since then there have been few leading actors who have not essayed the part, though some, like Beerbohm Tree, have preferred Mercutio. John Gielgud and Laurence Olivier had the best of both worlds in the 1935 production when, with Peggy Ashcroft as Juliet, they exchanged parts after a month or so.

The New York stage had, in the middle of the last century, a rage for female Romeos, with no fewer than fourteen in succession over a period of thirty-five years. One of the quaintest productions must have been the New York one of 1877 when Romeo was billed to act with seven different Juliets in successive scenes (one of whom failed to appear on the balcony, one of the others having to step in and take her place.)

In the 1930's, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer made a film of "Romeo and Juliet". Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer published a Motion Picture Version of the play. In the scene where Juliet is waiting for the Nurse's return and says "Had she affections and warm youthful blood, She'd be as swift in motion as a ball!", appears the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer stage direction: "**She imitates the stroke of a racquet**".

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ROMEO AND JULIET

"What is the play about?" is the first question a producer has to ask himself. And when the play is one of the world's great masterpieces, a number of answers are likely to present themselves.

Obviously, 'Romeo and Juliet' is about two young people with a genius for loving, who fall marvelously, wonderfully in love. Equally obviously it is about the enmity and hate of two families—pointless, senseless and corrupting.

It is also about love itself, continually contrasting the purity and poetry of the central love relationship with the sex-bawdy view of Mercutio and the animal sexuality of the Nurse.

It may be a play about Fate. The instruments of Fate are accidents and coincidences that have far-reaching results. Repeatedly in the play events that are trivial in themselves have great and tragic consequences. The tragedy is that the tragedy could so easily have been prevented.

I think it is also a play about the lack of communication, the lack of understanding between the generations, particularly between parents and children. This, I think, is the aspect of the play's theme that has the greatest relevance to the present day. Romeo and Juliet, caught up in forces beyond their youthful capacity to cope with, are desperately in need of help, but no help is forthcoming and so the tragedy is precipitated. As already said, the tragedy is that the tragedy could so easily have been prevented.

* * *

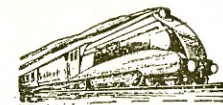
"Romeo and Juliet" is more swift in action than any other play Shakespeare wrote. This is a quality that is almost impossible of full achievement within a proscenium stage. By designing a stage which in its basic elements is very close to that for which Shakespeare wrote the play, we hope to restore this swiftness of action, which is such a powerful factor in the tragedy.

A. E.

Sandwiches and coffee are available in the Bernard Shaw Room before performances and refreshments will be served there in the interval.

Members of the audience are requested to refrain from smoking in the auditorium.

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ROMEO AND JULIET

by William Shakespeare

The characters (in order of appearance)

Chorus JANE DEWEY
Sampson } Servants to JOHN ROBB
Gregory } Capulet PHILIP IRVING
Abraham, servant to Montague GEOFFREY WEBB
Balthasar, servant to Romeo ROGER DE TONEY
Benvolio, nephew to Montague and friend to Romeo ... ANTHONY BROMHAM
Tybalt, nephew to Lady Capulet SIMON KAY
An Officer of the Watch KEITH BAYROSS
Watchmen HAROLD THORNLEY, RONALD LEE, PETER WALL
Capulet, head of a Veronese family at feud with the Montagues BEN KEEN
Lady Capulet, his wife MARY JONES
Montague, head of a Veronese family at feud
with the Capulets DAVID LORRAINE
Lady Montague, his wife DORINNE INGRAM
Escalus, Prince of Verona MICHAEL LANGRICH
Romeo, son to Montague RICHARD GAUNT
Paris, a young count, kinsman to the Prince
and suitor to Juliet DEREK CHANDLER
Peter, servant to Capulet FRANCIS FALLON
Nurse to Juliet RUTH TREMAYNE
Juliet, daughter to Capulet LORNA WATSON
Mercutio, kinsman to the Prince and friend to Romeo DAVID GOWER
Potpan, another servant to Capulet KEITH BAYROSS
An old man, kinsman to Capulet MICHAEL BIRD
Page to Tybalt TREVOR MORRIS or ELIOT HEILPERN
Friar Lawrence PHILIP WRIGHT
Page to Mercutio PETER HAWTIN or DAVID ROSE
An Apothecary MICHAEL BIRD
Friar John GEOFFREY WEBB
Page to Paris PHILIP IRVING
Townswomen, Guests, BELLA BACKNER, ANN BEVAN
Supporters of the Capulets JUNE LOWE, ROBERTA LYONS, GILLIAN REDHEAD,
and of the Montagues, ALLVIN ALPHONSE, MICHAEL BIRD,
Attendants, Musicians PETER LAMB, ADRIAN LYSTER, ROBERT NICHOLLS,
GRAHAM PORTER, CLIVE RALLISON, PAUL RATCLIFFE,
KEITH SPILLET, ALAN STOKES, BRIAN TITE

The action takes place in Verona and Mantua.

The play directed by ALFRED EMMET

Scenery and costumes designed by JANE KINGSHILL

Music composed and directed by DAVID POPE

played by DIANA PORTEOUS, SHEILA PRATT, STEVEN BLOCK
MICHAEL BONNICK, JOHN BURTON, PHILIP DECAUX
CLIVE RALLISON, KEITH SPILLET, DAVID WAITE,
MICHAEL WAITE

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 Production Secretary FRANCES ROBINSON
 Asst. Stage Managers PETER WALL, JACKIE CHAMBERLAIN
 ALISON GIRLING, JACKIE HANDY, MARGARET KING
 Costumes made by JOAN PYLE and HILDA COLLINS
 and MEMBERS of WARDROBE STAFF
 Properties MARIE CRABB
 Assisted by HILARY BRANKIN and GILLIAN DOBSON
 Construction JOHN HOWARD
 Assisted by DOUGLAS BROWN
 Lighting FRANK WOOD
 Assisted by NICK OSORIO, CHRIS DUBOIS,
 DAVID CHAMBERLAIN and PETER MUSSELWHITE
 Sound VIVIAN WEEKS
 Assisted by ROGER DRIVER and FRANCES ALLEN

A discussion is held after each production by The Questors to which all members of the audience are cordially invited. The discussion on ROMEO AND JULIET will be held on Monday 1st April at 7.45 p.m. in the Bernard Shaw Room. This is an excellent opportunity for audience, actors and technicians to discuss the merits and demerits of play and production.

SHAW ROOM ART EXHIBITION

The Art Exhibition during the run of ROMEO AND JULIET is by non-vocational students from Isleworth Polytechnic.

THE QUESTORS FILM SOCIETY

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March 31st

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