

ROMEO AND JULIET

by
William Shakespeare



introduction

'An Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet. As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicquely, by the right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his servants. London. Printed by John Danter, 1597.'

Thus reads the title page of the first printed edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, which rolled off the presses exactly 400 years ago. It wasn't a new story; as usual, Shakespeare had borrowed it from another published source, in this case *The Tragicall Historie of Romeo and Juliet*, a poem by Arthur Brooke published in 1562. In turn this had been based on material from fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian sources, the earliest being that written by Masuccio of Salerno in 1476.

As always, Shakespeare changed and adapted his source for his own artistic purposes; for example, he lowers Juliet's age from sixteen (in Brooke's poem) to nearly fourteen, and compresses the time scale – in Brooke, the relationship between Romeo and Juliet carries on for several months; the whole action of Shakespeare's play lasts four days.

It is likely that at the time that Shakespeare was working on *Romeo and Juliet* he was also writing a number of the sonnets. The sonnet is the classic form of love poetry and it is entirely appropriate that the first speech in the play (the Prologue, spoken by the Prince in our production) is in sonnet form – the form now commonly known as Shakespearean, finishing its fourteen lines with a rhyming couplet. In this Prologue sonnet Shakespeare foreshadows the events of the play, speaking of the fate of the 'star-crossed lovers'. The reference to 'stars' is one of a number of astrological references in the play, relating to the sense of fate or predestination which looms large throughout it. But it is also the first example of the light and dark imagery which pervades the play. On almost any page of the script it is possible to find lines in which Shakespeare plays with these contrasting ideas. In the play's most famous scene (when Juliet appears on the balcony) Romeo sees her immediately in terms of light:

*But soft! What light from yonder window breaks?
It is the East and Juliet is the sun!*

Just as Shakespeare's sonnets are built around antitheses, so *Romeo and Juliet* is built around a series of stark contrasts, of which dark and light is only one.

One of Romeo's earliest lines in the play introduces a powerful contrast evident throughout:

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.

The hate that exists between all echelons of the Montague and Capulet families forms the background for the love between their sole heirs, Romeo and Juliet. But the contrasts between youth and age, life and death, hurt and healing, and duty and individual choice run as similar threads through the play.

And love is shown in a variety of aspects: it isn't just the impulsive passion of the two young lovers who fall for each other at first sight. It exists also in the initial infatuation of Romeo with the unobtainable Rosaline; the formal (but genuine) declaration of love by Juliet's unwanted suitor, Paris; in the earthy, bawdy quality of the Nurse – and in the higher, spiritual love of Friar Laurence.

In the end, the play shows that love has a healing and reconciling power – but tragically only at the expense of two young lives, as the opening sonnet says, bringing a conclusion to "their parents' rage" which "but their children's end, naught could remove". Thus, by the final desperate actions of their love, the play resolves its contrasts, bringing the feuding families together in a "glooming peace".

art exhibitions

Upper Foyer

18 January - 15 March

CATHERINE BATTISTESSA

Catherine Battistessa was born in 1970. Since leaving art college in 1990 she has travelled extensively experiencing many inspiring adventures, setting up home and studio base in the Balearic Islands. She has exhibited paintings and sculptures in Germany and Spain over the last two years.

Grapevine Gallery

15 February - 15 March

MIMEI THOMPSON

Colourful and energetic paintings that are abstractions referring to the landscape and to natural rhythms.

ROMEO AND JULIET

by

William Shakespeare

First night of this production, Tuesday 4th March 1997

Cast

ESCALUS, *Prince of Verona*
MERCUTIO, *his kinsman*
PARIS, *also his kinsman*
PARIS'S PAGE

FRIAR LAURENCE
FRIAR JOHN

The Montagues

MONTAGUE
LADY MONTAGUE
ROMEO, *their son*
BENVOLIO, *their nephew*
ABRAM, *a servant*
BALTHASAR, *Romeo's man*
SERVANT TO BENVOLIO

The Capulets

CAPULET
LADY CAPULET
JULIET, *their daughter*
TYBALT, *their nephew*
NURSE
PETER, *a servant*
SAMPSON, *a servant*
GREGORY, *a servant*
LADIES

KEN RATCLIFFE
MICHAEL DINEEN
PAUL ASHBY
LUCY HOLMES

NORMAN WILKINSON
ALAN CHAMBERS

NICK HAWKER
BRENDA GOTTSCHÉ
STEPHEN BROWN
PETER KENNEDY
AMARJIT BASSAN
CLIVE SMITH
TONI CONESA RIBERA

TONY BROMHAM
ANNE SAWBRIDGE
LISA MILNE HENDERSON
NIGEL LAWRENCE
ANNE NEVILLE
ALAN CHAMBERS
MARK REDRUP
BYRON TODD
LUCY HOLMES
NENAGH MACNAMARA
RENATA NASH
ROISIN RAE
DONNA SHILLING

The action of the play takes place in the sixteenth century in the Italian cities of Verona and Mantua.

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes.

Production

Director
assisted by
original production conception by
Designer
Costume Designer
Music written by
Fight Arranger
Dance arranged by

Stage Manager
D.S.M.
A.S.M.s

Prompt
Lighting Designer
Lighting Operators

Sound Designer
assisted by

Sound Operators

Wardrobe
Music performed by

Masks made by
Construction

JOHN DAVEY
RENATA NASH
SPENCER BUTLER
NICK HAWKER
PATRIZIO CORTI
MICHEL DUVOISIN
PETER KENNEDY
DIANA NESBITT

ERIC LISTER
KIM LANCASTER
LISA CASTLE
ALISON MEIK
MELISSA NAYLOR
JILL GEE
ANDREW DIXON
CHRIS NEWALL
MARIA JOANNIDOU
IAN HOWLETT
LEILA BAYANDOR
ANDREW HUMPHRIES
ADRIAN LOWE
TOM MASTERS
CHRIS GREENING
MICHEL DUVOISIN
SALLY BALLETT
DAISY REID (drums)
KIM LANCASTER
BILL VINEY
GRAHAM CARPENTER

Thanks to: ANTONY BRIDGES, MALCOLM BROWN, FIONA LEE,
GORDON MILLER, JIM CAITHNESS, JACKIETYE,
LINDA SHANNON, WENDY HOLBROOK

coming productions

In the Studio

Student Group Production

THE BEAU DEFEATED by Mary Pix

Mary Pix's play *The Beau Defeated*, written over a century before the heyday of Beau Brummell, is a fascinating example of a play by a female wit of this period. It will be fascinating to see how distinctive is the female viewpoint represented. After all, in 1700, when *The Beau Defeated* was first performed, it was only forty years since the first actress had ever appeared on the English stage.

19 - 22, 25 - 29 March at 7.45pm; 23 March at 2.30pm

Tickets: Members FREE; Non-members £4

In the Playhouse

THE EXORCISM by Don Taylor

"The extraordinary thing is that it was written in a very certain time, at an affluent time when there was plenty of money around, so I wrote a play about that period and about having to take responsibility for the suffering that you inflict on others. It had a context in 1971 and it has a different political and social context now. Inside that context it's really a ghost story and full of the frisson of the unexplained!" — *Don Taylor*

29 March, 1 - 5 April at 7.45pm; 30 March at 2.30pm

Tickets: Members Free; non-members 29, 30 March £5; 1 - 3 April £6; 4, 5 April £7

In the Playhouse

ENTERTAINING MR SLOANE by Joe Orton

Of Joe Orton *The Observer* wrote: "He is the Oscar Wilde of the Welfare State gentility". "*Sloane* was the first play to dramatise the psychopathic style of the sixties — that ruthless, restless, single-minded pursuit of satisfaction — transformed by drugs and rock into myth." — *John Lahr*, biographer of Joe Orton.

12, 15 - 19 April at 7.45pm; 13 April at 2.30pm

Tickets: Members and non-members 12, 13 April £5; 15 - 17 April £6; 18, 19 April £7

information

THE GRAPEVINE CLUB

The Questors has a fully licensed Bar which is now open to all members. The Bar is open every evening plus lunchtimes on Sundays. Questors members are requested to sign in their guests when entering the bar.

THE HOTPLATE

Delicious hot and cold food is available in the upper Foyer between 6.30pm and 8.00pm during the run of Playhouse productions, and coffee, tea and cakes are served during the interval. No hot food will be provided at the Sunday matinées.

NOTE

The Hotplate is not open for Studio productions, but when Studio performances coincide with those in the Playhouse, it will endeavour to serve those audiences whenever it is possible.

NEW MEMBERS EVENINGS

Why not attend one of our new, or prospective members evenings, and have a conducted tour of the Theatre complex. Tours start and finish at the Grapevine Bar, 8.00pm every Wednesday.

THE STUDENT GROUP

The Questors runs a two-year part-time student course in Acting; details can be obtained from the office.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS

There are a number of groups for younger members. These cater for all age groups, from 5-17. The classes are intended to create awareness of the theatre and provide a stimulating channel for imagination.

For The Questors Theatre

President	Dame Judi Dench
Artistic Director	Spencer Butler
Artistic Directorate	John Horwood, Norman Wilkinson
Director of Studies	David Emmet
Chair	John Davey
Vice-Chairman	Steve Hames
Company Secretary	Sue Blake
Club Secretary	Christine Garland
Finance Director	Ken Kettle
Stage Director	Nick Hawker
Marketing Director	Sonja Garsvo
Theatre Manager	Elaine Orchard
Productions Secretary	Christine Greening
Membership Secretary	Alice Pennicott
Marketing Officer	Fleur Lloyd
Programme Editor	Vincent McQueen
Questopics Editor	Laurence Lewis
Sponsorship	Alan Drake
Box Office Management	Bridgett Strevens
Programme Sales Organiser	Val Blaxland
Front of House Manager	Eric Lister
Press Relations	Sandra Hutchinson
Haberdashery	Tootal Craft
Wardrobe Equipment	Wilkinson Sword Scissors..Fiskars Ltd
Wardrobe Care	Persil, Comfort and Stergene
	Courtesy of Lever Bros.
	Dry-cleaning by C.D.S.

Administration

The Questors office is open from 9.30am until 5.00pm every weekday.

If you wish to make contact for details of membership, or hiring the Theatre and rehearsal rooms, telephone the office on 0181 567 0011.

Membership

If you wish to become a member please fill in the application form (copies in the Foyers); just send it to the Theatre with the appropriate subscription. 0181 567 8736.

Box Office

For personal callers the box office is open every Wednesday evening 6.45pm to 8.30pm; Monday to Friday 11.00am to 12 noon; during productions 6.45pm to 8.30pm; Sunday matinées 2.00pm to 2.30pm;