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

ROMEO AND JULIET

SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE

In partnership with
BORN TO BE
The Deutsche Bank youth engagement programme
THEATRE FIRST.

If not one of their ‘Five A Day’, a theatre trip should be one of five cultural experiences that every student enjoys while at school.

According to a recent poll of 11 – 18 year olds only 53% of students had been taken to the theatre by their school.

Cuts in school budgets mean that money for cultural trips is scantier than ever. Add cover and coach fares to a ticket price and headteachers have to think long and hard before disrupting timetables and diverting funds from other pressing needs.

This means that most students meet Romeo and Juliet in a classroom without ever having the opportunity of seeing the play in a theatre. Studying Shakespeare may be compulsory in school but seeing a play in performance, sadly and strangely, is not.

Enlightened boroughs, such as Newham and Southwark, are seeking to address the issue. They appreciate the importance of introducing students to live theatre. I hope other boroughs will follow their lead.

Newham’s programme, Every Child A Theatre Goer, covers the cost of a theatre visit for every Year 10 pupil across the borough. Thousands of Newham students have been to the Globe thanks to the scheme.

Our own borough of Southwark is developing a similar programme for primary school children. Theatre should be regarded as a cultural entitlement.

Theatres have to play their part by keeping theatre tickets as affordable as possible. Some theatres receive Arts Council subsidy. Shakespeare’s Globe does not.

So we rely on trusts and foundations and the corporate pound to support our educational mission and to help make the Globe as popular a theatre as it was in Shakespeare’s day. It is why Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank is so important to us. It is an extraordinary example of corporate support. Now in its thirteenth year, it continues to be the most significant theatre education project in the country.

Once again over 18,000 students from London and Birmingham secondary schools have received free tickets to this production. Free tickets for community groups and subsidised tickets mean that as many as 40,000 people will see Romeo and Juliet this month. This includes Deutsche Bank employees and families who buy their tickets in support of the free ticket scheme.

Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank also offers professional development sessions for teachers and workshops for students in schools to excite discussion and responses to the play through performance. Our online resources are created especially to complement this production and are also used by schools across the globe. The project provides thousands of students with their first visit to a theatre which is exactly where Shakespeare wanted people to meet him.

Heartfelt thanks to Deutsche Bank for continuing to support Shakespeare’s Globe and schools in this way.

Thank you for coming.

PATRICK SPOTTISWOODE
DIRECTOR, GLOBE EDUCATION
REAL LIFE ISSUES.

We are immensely proud of the Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank programme and our 13 year partnership with Shakespeare’s Globe.

In the UK, pupils are required to study a minimum of two Shakespeare plays between the ages of 11 – 14. Through its performances and online learning resources, Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank supports the teaching of the national curriculum for those who are preparing for their GCSE and A level studies and seeks to inspire and culturally enrich young people.

Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank sits within our global youth engagement programme, Born to Be, which endeavours to help young people prepare for the future and unlock their potential. Through Born to Be, we aim to empower young people to follow career paths of their own choosing.

Shakespeare explores real life issues in his plays, such as in Romeo and Juliet, showing us two people whose fate is determined by their backgrounds and upbringings. Many of the topics he addresses are more prevalent today than ever before and his plays can help young people increase their confidence, self-esteem and communication skills through simply mastering his complex language and plots.

I’d like to thank Patrick, the play’s Director, Michael Oakley, the education and creative teams, and all the actors who continue to make Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank the success it is today. I’d also like to thank the 7,000 Deutsche Bank employees who have purchased tickets for an exclusive performance for employees, families and friends over the years, enabling even more young people to see a performance for free. If this is your first experience of seeing Shakespeare in performance, I have no doubt that you will want to come back for more.

TIINA LEE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, UK AND IRELAND
DEUTSCHE BANK
THE COMPANY.

Jeff Alexander
Charlotte Beaumont
Stuart Bowman
Debbie Chazen
Christopher Chung
Ned Derrington
Hermione Guilford
Shalisha James-Davis
Ayola Smart
Nathan Welsh
Hilary Belsey
Sarah Field
Richard Henry
Becky Barry
Alison de Burgh
Olly Fox
Dolly Hurran
Alex Lowde
Glynn MacDonald
Michael Oakley
Jemima Penny
Natalie Rickman
Christine Schmidle
Salvatore Sorce
Dec Costello
Daniel Gammon
Lou Ballard
Kate Foster
Megan Cassidy
Emma Seychell
Heather Bull
Jessica Hughes
Felicity Langthorne
Pam Hmpage
Hayley Thompson
Victoria Young
Marloune Widmer
Sophie Jones
Katy Brooks
Rosheen McNamee
Harry Booth
Paul Golynia
Brendan McSherry
Tash Shepherd
Lorraine Richards
Sally Payne
Kathy Pederson
Will Skeet
Jez Wingham
Premm Design
Cesare de Giglio
Ellie Kurtz

With thanks to Deepa Shastri, Sign Language Consultant

JEFF ALEXANDER
FRIAR LAURENCE / LORD MONTAGUE

My only acting experience before going to BSSTDA drama school was playing a dentist’s patient having all his teeth pulled, at primary school in Birmingham. TV work includes BBC, CBBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky dramas, including: Doctors, Waterloo Road, Hank Zipper, Emmerdale, Hollyoaks and Lucky Man. Theatre: RNT, RSC and the Tokyo Globe – but never Shakespeare’s Globe! Fun Shakespeare roles I’ve played: Macbeth, Othello and Mercutio to name a few. I’m really looking forward to playing Montague and Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet.

CHARLOTTE BEAUMONT
JULIET

My first ever leading role was age five, when Mrs Castelot cast me as ‘Farmer’ in that famous Christmas nativity play The Farmer from Assisi. I had dungarees, a massive straw hat and a solo that I only forgot once. Since then, I’ve done as much acting as I can to try and top my performance as ‘Farmer’. I am SO EXCITED to play Juliet at this incredible theatre. It’s a total dream come true and I really hope you all enjoy the show!

STUART BOWMAN
LORD CAPULET

My first acting job was playing a no-necked monster in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof at the Dundee Rep when I was eight. I got paid £5 and bought a Subbuteo set with it! I did a few school plays after that, before going to Mountview Theatre School for three years in 1986, and have spent the last four years riding horses and wearing wigs at the palace of Versailles, and attempting to get Richard Madden blown up in Bodyguard.

DEBBIE CHAZEN
NURSE / LADY MONTAGUE

My first acting experience was aged five as a camel in the school nativity. That gave me the hump (sorry) as I wanted to play Mary. I’ve gone on to overact and forget my lines on stage and screen. Stuff you may have heard of includes Doctor Who, Holby City, Sherlock and Eastenders. I’m looking forward to playing the Nurse because she’s a great character and I get to play in this fantastic, exciting and beautiful theatre. Enjoy the show. R&J 4EVA <3

CHRISTOPHER CHUNG
PARIS / PRINCE ESCALUS / ABRAHAM

After playing Joseph in my primary school Nativity play I knew I could only get better from there. I started performing in community theatre musicals, which several years later led me to play the National Theatre stage, performing in Here Lies Love. Most recently I worked on Heathers the Musical in the West End, but previously stopped off at the BBC to work on Waterloo Road and Doctors. I’m thrilled and excited to play the Globe stage.

Play the Globe stage.

ANNABELLE CLAY

I’m thrilled and excited to join the Nativity cast this year.

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**NED DERRINGTON**
**MERCUTIO / SAMPSON / FRIAR JOHN**

My first acting experience was playing Mr Bumble in my primary school production of *Oliver*. I am devastatingly bad at most other things but sometimes… just sometimes I get acting right and it all makes sense. I trained at RADA. Credits include: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Lysander) (Shakespeare’s Globe), *Sunny Afternoon* (West End) and *Filthy Business* (Hampstead). For TV: *Fresh Meat*, *Siblings* and *Midsomer Murders*. If there is anyone who feels a bit lost in school; that’s what I felt, but the arts could be where you belong.

**HERMIONE GULLIFORD**
**LADY CAPULET**

My first stage experience was at school aged five playing Gretl Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*. After training at Central, I did a lot of plays, mostly playing people in love with the wrong people. I sometimes do that on screen too. I’ve pretended to be teachers, spies, servants, reporters, lawyers and surgeons, most recently drilling into heads in *Holby City* and defending Buster Smith in *Hollyoaks*.

**SHALISHA JAMES-DAVIS**
**BENVOLIO**

When I was seven, my teacher asked me to play Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*, however, I really wanted to play Dorothy. My friend said, ‘they can’t have a black Dorothy!’ So I practiced ‘Somewhere over the rainbow’ all weekend and they gave me the part! 15 years later, after being told it couldn’t happen, I was Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Ambassadors West End Theatre. Moral of the story: Dream big people! I’m thrilled to be playing Benvolio, a traditionally male role.

**AYOOLA SMART**
**TYBALT / APOTHECARY**

I started acting when I was about five, performing plays to a very captive audience: my Mom! My professional debut was at seven, playing a baby chicken! I trained at East 15 Acting School, and had my adult professional debut at Shakespeare’s Globe in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Other credits include: *Othello* (Unicorn), *The Lovely Bones* (Birmingham Rep) TV: *Vera* (ITV), *Les Miserables* (BBC) Film: *Juliet, Naked and Trendy*. I am looking forward to playing Tybalt because she fights for what she believes in.

**NATHAN WELSH**
**ROMEO**

Aged seven, my mum sent me to a theatre company called Chickenshed. At first I was scared, then I grew to love it. Years later, after working as an actor, working in shops and painting houses, I trained at LAMDA. My first experience of acting Shakespeare was there. I graduated in 2015 and since then I’ve worked at the Donmar and the Jermy Street Theatre and I was in series called *Trust Me* and *Shetland* on BBC1.
ALISON DE BURGH
FIGHT DIRECTOR

At drama school my Fight Instructor said, ‘you look very feminine but fight like a man, you should pursue this, but they’ll never let you be a Fight Director because you’re a woman.’ I went on to become Britain’s first ever female Fight Director. Shows have ranged from Keira Knightley in the West End to Domhnall Gleeson in Dublin; weapons from Christmas trees to Scottish claymores. I’ve trained actors for Game of Thrones, and been the sword wielding arm for actors on movies I’m not allowed to mention…

OLLY FOX
COMPOSER

I did loads of acting at school but then I got into a band and realised nothing beats playing music live. So, I began composing too. I’ve worked in some great places, but the Globe is extra special. There’s magic in the beams. Other stuff I’ve done includes The Norman Conquests (Chichester); Wendy & Peter Pan (RSC); Women Beware Women (National Theatre), plus lots of other productions all over the country and in London. Film & TV includes: No Ball Games and Frayed (Irresistible Films).
PAUL ISLES
CHOREOGRAPHER
My first dancing experience was after I graduated from Bodywork in Cambridge and was lucky enough to join the original cast of *The Lion King* at the Lyceum Theatre where I played a gazelle, a giraffe and a hyena. I’ve also been in *Saturday Night Fever; Porgy and Bess; Fame; Oh What a Night; The Full Monty* and danced on TV quite a bit. I have choreographed Love’s Labour’s Lost and Private Lives for the Oxford Shakespeare Company. Hope you enjoy what you see today.

ALEX LOWDE
DESIGNER
Before training at Motley, my first stage design was for a production of *As You Like It* at school when I was 16. I’ve designed a very bloody version of *Tis Pity She’s a Whore* in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. I’ve created a pool of black treacle for a play about the Greek Warrior Philocetes (with a very rotten foot) at The Yard and a massive foam party for Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre with the foam covered cast body sliding into the audience’s laps.

GLYNN MACDONALD
GLOBE ASSOCIATE – MOVEMENT
I trained in the Alexander Technique in 1972. Since then I have worked in Ireland, Stockholm, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Japan, Australia and the USA, to name but a few. Since 1997 I have been resident Director of Movement at Shakespeare’s Globe. I shared the Sam Wanamaker Award with Giles Block in 2011. I also work on the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. I am a Faculty Member for ‘Arts and Passion-Driven Learning’ at Harvard University.

MICHAEL OAKLEY
DIRECTOR
My first ever professional theatre job was Assistant Director on the first ever *Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank* production – *Much Ado About Nothing*. I was lucky enough to direct the same play for this project last year. I’ve been trainee director in residence at Chichester Festival Theatre, and worked on plays all over the country. One of my favourite jobs was Theatre on the Fly where we built a pop-up theatre from scratch. I’m beyond excited to be returning to the Globe to direct *Romeo and Juliet*!

NATASHA RICKMAN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
I first got involved with theatre through my local theatre in Essex, and used to get friends together to put on our own plays in local studios. Since drama school I’ve worked as associate/assistant director for Storyhouse and the RSC and directed my own work. I teach in drama schools including RADA where I co-run the Women@RADA project to promote gender equality in theatre. I’m excited to be part of bringing *Romeo and Juliet* to this stage; I’ve loved the story since I first read it at school.

CHRISTINE SCHMIDLE
DEPUTY TEXT ASSOCIATE
After the first theatre performance that I attended in Germany, I was completely enthralled by theatre-making. I started off performing in many operas while in school and during my studies I concentrated on acting and directing. In fact, I didn’t know a job like mine here at the Globe even existed! Now I get to work on text, and delve into the use of language, which had always fascinated me about theatre.

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‘MY ONLY LOVE SPRUNG FROM MY ONLY HATE’
STAR-CROSSED LOVERS.

Despite what you might have been taught, Romeo and Juliet didn’t really die. If you type ‘real life Romeo and Juliet’ into an internet search engine, you’ll be presented with dozens of factual news stories from the recent past. Some of them will be heart-warming romances of love that survived against the odds. Others will be upsetting accounts of couples separated or even killed because of their different backgrounds, religions or ethnicities. Nowadays, we use the story of Romeo and Juliet’s ‘star-crossed’ relationship as a short-hand for a particular sort of passionate, heroic love that defies prejudice and convention. There are Romeos and Juliets in every community and country across the world.

This global reach tells us something about William Shakespeare’s influence as a figure in world literary heritage, and about the popularity of Romeo and Juliet, one of his most widely performed plays. In its four centuries on stage, page and screen, the play has taught us to celebrate the power of love over hate, and it has given us a language and a set of characters to embody that celebration. You might have read that it’s a ‘timeless’ love story, which rather suggests that the play has had a consistent effect on its audience and readers over many hundreds of years.

But what happens if we think about the story of Romeo and Juliet on its own terms, and in the context of its own time? The play was written in the 1590s, when beliefs about romance, emotions and sexuality were very different to now. Attitudes to parenting and youth culture were different, too, as were assumptions about the sorts of behaviour appropriate to men and women. The play is evidently intended to address issues around passion and eroticism – but do we respond to these themes in the same way as audience members four hundred years ago?

One way to address this question is to think afresh about the way Shakespeare presents the lovers’ overwhelming passion – a feeling so strong that it leads to their elopement and suicide. The first thing we might notice is that Shakespeare is careful to show us a contrasting sort of love before he develops the relationship between Juliet and Romeo. In Act I, scene 1, Benvolio challenges Romeo to explain his melancholy, and Romeo reveals that he’s in love with the unseen Rosaline. Or is it just infatuation? Although Benvolio is sympathetic to Romeo, one could argue that the conversation seems pretty brisk. The suggested cure for Romeo’s lovesickness is that he ‘forget to think’ of Rosaline and ‘examine other beauties’: he should check out other girls. Perhaps Benvolio has detected that there is something shallow about Romeo’s love for Rosaline, and the giveaway might be Romeo’s language. When he speaks of her, he uses a whole panoply of poetical devices such as hyperbole or exaggeration ('she hath Dian’s wit’ – she’s as clever as a goddess), oxymoron or contradiction in terms (‘a madness most discreet’), word-play (‘She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair’) and complicated imagery (‘Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs’). Benvolio recognises that Romeo is speaking in very conventional – even clichéd – terms about Rosaline. Shakespeare’s audiences might well have realised that Romeo was using poetic terminology that by the 1590s was tired and old-fashioned. In other words, we’re supposed to find Romeo’s obsession with Rosaline unconvincing.

Things are very different when Juliet and Romeo meet for the first time at the Capulet ball in Act I, scene 4. Although Romeo does indeed make use of some rather hyperbolic language when he sets eyes on Juliet (‘she doth teach the torches to burn bright!’), their first conversation together is thrillingly original. For a start, they share a set of lines and stanzas that combine to make up a sonnet, a 14-line poem that in the late sixteenth century exemplified the expression of intense feeling. But it’s the content of their first lines together that would have made Shakespeare’s first audience realise that something unusual was happening. Instead of poetic clichés about the burning fires of love, Juliet and Romeo embark on a complex shared metaphor in which Juliet is figured as a ‘holy shrine’, and Romeo is a pilgrim, or ‘holy palmer’, who has come to pay homage to the sacred statue by kissing it. Juliet initially suggests that they chastely touch palms instead of kissing, but then consents to grant Romeo’s ‘prayer’, and the couple kiss for the first time. Moments later, Juliet is called away – but the young couple have already fallen irrevocably in love.
Today, we might not immediately register that the lovers’ extended religious metaphor is in a very different key to conventional romantic poetry. For Shakespeare and his first audience, however, the Roman Catholic imagery of saints, shrines, pilgrims and prayers might well have set alarm bells ringing: these religious practices were illegal in Protestant England. English men and women had been taught that to worship a shrine was idolatrous, and a sin against God. Here, Romeo is taking this sin one step further, and pretending to worship an earthly woman above the Almighty. Not only is this sort of religious playacting unusual in a love story, but it suggests that the love affair itself might be something dangerous and even profane.

We’re given a number of hints that the meeting of Romeo and Juliet is an event that will have dark consequences. Romeo himself ‘misgives’ (fears) ‘some vile forfeit of untimely death’ when he and his friends make their way to the fateful Capulet ball, and Juliet too recognises the bitter irony that her ‘only love’ Romeo has sprung from her ‘only hate’, the Montague clan. Juliet calls the beginning of their love ‘prodigious’, a word that usually meant an apparition or supernatural event that foreshadowed disaster. And as it turns out, the lovers’ passion does lead to catastrophe. Just as the Capulet ball sees the sudden kindling of Tybalt’s murderous hatred for Romeo, so the events of the party spark the ultimately deadly union of Juliet and Romeo. For people in Shakespeare’s England, overwhelming emotion – passion – was a dangerous thing, whether such feelings tended to violence or to sudden erotic attraction. In either case, so people thought, those powerful feelings made people behave in impetuous and damaging ways.

So although we rightly celebrate Romeo and Juliet today as one of the greatest love stories ever told, it’s quite possible that Shakespeare didn’t intend for his play to champion the heroism and loyalty of his leading lovers. Don’t forget that in the Prologue we are told very clearly that it isn’t Romeo and Juliet’s love that will heal their parents’ divisions, but their death. We might hope, like Friar Lawrence, that the lovers’ marriage will ‘reconcile’ the Montagues and Capulets (Act III, scene 4), but the play seems to be dropping heavy hints that Romeo and Juliet are doomed from the word go.

FINIS.

Dr. Will Tosh
Research Fellow and Lecturer

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‘THESE VIOLENT DELIGHTS HAVE VIOLENT ENDS’
SHAKESPEARE’S POISONOUS REMEDIES

If love is a drug, then Romeo and Juliet pushes that belief to its extremes. You might have noticed that the play’s third biggest role after the lovers is Friar Laurence, the play’s would-be pharmacist. But why is the Friar so interested in drugs and home cures, and what part do they play in Shakespeare’s tragedy?

As most of us know, harmful substances can be medicinal in small doses, and this was understood in Shakespeare’s day too. When we have injections to prevent us from getting certain diseases, that injection actually contains a tiny dose of the disease itself – it’s small, but it’s just enough to kick-start our body into fighting it off and make us immune to the illness. Our familiar word ‘pharmacy’ suggests how both poison and cure are connected: it comes from the Greek word ‘pharmakon’ and means both toxin and remedy.

How might we use this idea to think about Romeo and Juliet?

Like a pharmacist, Shakespeare is interested in substances that can be both healthful and deadly. When Romeo is feeling love-sick over Rosaline, Benvolio encourages him to cure himself by seeking out more poison: ‘take thou some infection to the eye / And the rank poison of the old will die’. In appropriately pharmaceutical terms, something that seems harmful can actually be restorative. Health, in other words, can be achieved via illness. After all, this is a play that seems to tell us that good can arise from harm – Juliet’s ‘only love’ springs from her ‘only hate’ – but the flip-side of that means that too much of a good thing can also be harmful. As Friar Laurence warns, ‘these violent delights have violent ends’.

Pottering around his friary’s herb garden and running a sort of Veronese pharmacy, the Friar is really interested in things that are able to do both good and harm:

Within the infant rind of this weak flower
Poison hath residence, and medicine power.
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;
Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.
Two such opposed kings encamp them still
In man as well as herbs.

The ‘weak flower’ might smell nice and cheer us up, but eating it would be deadly. The dual potential for good and bad, the Friar suggests, is within us, too, and we need to be careful about how we administer our own medicinal or poisonous potential. Like herbs and flowers, we can kill or heal.

It’s no accident that the Friar is so interested in the unpredictable potential of nature. He’s about to oversee a romantic drama that quickly tips into tragedy, in which both he and his pharmaceutical substances will play a crucial role. It’s the Friar who offers a medicinal way out of Juliet’s terrible situation in Act IV, scene 1, when she is told by her father that she must marry Paris (impossible for her to do, as she’s already secretly married to Romeo). It is in these desperate circumstances that the Friar suggests an alternative: a ‘remedy’ that will offer her ‘a thing like death’ – in other words, a coma to make her family believe she’s died. As we can probably all agree, these are dangerous things to be meddling in.
As far as the Friar’s concerned, he’s offering Juliet a cure that will ‘remedy’ her situation. But, as we’ve already seen, the medicinal in this play is often only a small step away from the poisonous. It’s perhaps not surprising given the Friar’s pharmaceutical interests, then, that in order for this medicinal cure to work, it actually behaves like poison – stopping Juliet’s pulse and breath, draining the colour from her cheeks, and making her body ‘stiff and stark and cold’. Even if it’s only temporary, this is a medicine that will in a sense actually kill Juliet, and it’s no wonder that she worries about the remedy being a ‘poison which the Friar subtly hath ministered’ to kill her. In a play that makes clear just how blurry the line between toxin and cure can be, Juliet seems to be well aware of the risk she’s taking.

As we know, things don’t exactly go to plan. The letter to Romeo that explains the Friar’s plot fails to arrive in time, and Juliet’s death-like state proves to be too convincing. In the end, Romeo is driven to mirror Juliet’s actions. Remember that Romeo also uses a language of toxic cure when he kills himself, thinking Juliet has died: ‘Come, cordial, and not poison, go with me to Juliet’s grave; for there must I use thee’. Romeo no longer sees a difference between poison and remedy. For him, poison is a medicinal drink, and playing on the Latin word for heart (‘cor’ or ‘cord’), the broken-hearted Romeo finds that poison as the only thing able to heal him.

Like the Friar’s ‘weak flower’, and like Juliet’s ‘remedy’, Romeo’s ‘cordial poison’ contains a powerful mixture: it has the power to do harm, but also has the potential to heal. Perhaps it’s for this reason that when Juliet wakes up, she also talks about Romeo’s poison not as something that is straightforwardly harmful, but rather as a ‘restorative’ that will end her life. Of course these ‘restoratives’ are lethal to Romeo and Juliet, but as the play makes clear, their death is the remedy that is required to cure Verona’s ‘ancient grudge’ and ‘their parents’ strife’.

FINIS.

Dr. Jennifer Edwards
Research Co-ordinator

‘FOR THIS ALLIANCE MAY SO HAPPY PROVE, TO TURN YOUR HOUSEHOLD’S RANCOUR TO PURE LOVE’
Have you ever said those words? Did you mean them? Have you had them said to you? How did that make you feel?

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the emotions of love and hate are the lifeblood of the play. Everything that happens seems to be caused by one, or both, of these two forces. Shakespeare frequently puts them side by side: ‘Here's much to do with love but more with hate’, ‘My only love sprung from my only hate’. Such juxtaposition of conflicting ideas is called antithesis, and Shakespeare loves using it. In every one of his plays, this clash of opposing ideas is what provides the dramatic spark to make the play come to life.

But in *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare makes frequent use of a particular type of antithesis: the oxymoron. This is when two conflicting ideas are contained within a single phrase, maybe in just two words. We use oxymorons in everyday speech:

‘Act naturally’, ‘organised chaos...’

Romeo uses many of them:

‘Cold fire, sick health...’

Later, Juliet joins in:

‘Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical...’
But this play has many more oxymorons that any other Shakespeare play. Why does he choose this literary technique for *Romeo and Juliet*?

For me, it’s the perfect way of capturing how you feel when you’re young. The extremes of new and worrying feelings and the fact that you can flip from one emotion to the opposite in a heartbeat.

How can you in one moment having carefree and happy conversation with your parents, brother or sister or friend and then because of a look or a comment, you are filled with anger and hatred for people you know that you love. Although it was a long time ago, this is exactly how I remember being as a teenager. And an oxymoron is just that – two extremes expressed in a second. Adults tend to qualify, quantify, and have more shades of grey. Perhaps they grow out of having feelings like this. But for some young people, this is how life is experienced.

Romeo shares this last viewpoint. When the Friar tells Romeo to see the positives in his banishment, Romeo attacks him, saying, ‘thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel’. And why doesn’t the Friar feel this way? Because he’s old, says Romeo. ‘wert thou as young as I...then mightst thou speak.’

The type of love and hate that Shakespeare is depicting in this play belongs to young people, and oxymorons are the way to show it. Of course, some of the older characters feel their version of these emotions (Lord Capulet and Lord Montague join the brawl in the first scene) but Shakespeare’s focus is on the younger generation.

But are love and hate really opposites?

Even though Shakespeare sometimes places them in opposition, maybe they are not as different as we might think. In the play, there seem to be a lot of similarities between people when they are full of love, and when they are full of hate.

Romeo’s describes the hate he feels when Tybalt kills his friend Mercutio as a fire raging inside him, ‘Fire-eyed fury be my conduct now’ he says. The Prince is similar, ordering the families to ‘quench the fire of your pernicious rage.’

But Romeo uses similar imagery when burning with passion for Juliet. ‘She doth teach the torches to burn bright’, he says, ‘Juliet is the sun’, a ‘bright angel’. Juliet also expresses her love in the same way: Romeo is her ‘day in night.’

The author Elie Wiesel once said that ‘the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference’. Despite all the opposites and contrasts in this play, maybe Shakespeare thinks the same.

What do you think?

**FINIS.**

Chris Nayak  
Learning Consultant, Education Department, Shakespeare’s Globe
Georgia: Romeo and Juliet is often described as a romantic and tragic love story. What do you feel?
Michael: We always have to remember that Shakespeare works in opposites. Therefore I see the play through the prisms of love and hate and how one cannot exist without the other – so I guess it’s both romantic and tragic and many more things beside!
Part of the tragedy is the time frame in which it takes place. Shakespeare shortens the nine month time frame of the source text to four days. What impact does that have?
Shakespeare is clearly reflecting on the fleetingness of time in the play. Virtually every character has to act quickly. The Prince has to make life and death judgements instantly. The Friar doesn’t have much time to marry Romeo and Juliet. The play’s action is constantly narrowing too, for instance Lord Capulet moves the date of Juliet’s wedding forward by a day, creating a ticking time bomb. I guess the play asks us to look at how characters respond to time and events but circumstances are against them both, forcing both Romeo and Juliet to become more desperate and spontaneous. There’s no time for anyone to ask themselves if they’re making the right decision – it’s all increasingly ‘in the moment’ as the action progresses.
The play is set in Verona. What sort of city are you going to create for your production?
Verona is a walled city so everything is shut within its confines which makes it a hot bed of emotion. It contains an hierarchical system in which violence is precipitated, interestingly, by the older generation. The senior Montagues and Capulets are wealthy, older people who generate hate, violence and prejudice. Their politics and personal views infiltrate, and ultimately have the capacity to destroy, society as a whole. I think the opening of this play is one of the most effective and brilliant openings of any Shakespeare play. You begin with the servants, then move to members of the family, then the head of the family, then the head of state, all in a few minutes. We see how far the hate and violence is rooted in everyone and how this effects everybody’s daily lives. Shakespeare is inviting us to look at the rottenness of a society influenced by the older, the rich and the powerful. I think that is what Verona is: a perturbed place with powerful people running the show.
There are three families in this play. What’s your perception of the house of Escalus?
The house of Escalus is the highest ranking family in Verona. We must remember that characters from that household are on both sides of the Montague / Capulet feud. Mercutio is the Prince’s cousin, as such he’s really good friends with the Capulets (he gets an invite to their party) and, of course, is also best friends with Romeo Montague. Paris is also related to the Prince which indicates that by marrying him Juliet (and therefore the Capulets) would be elevated in society. With such close connections, it’s inevitable that a third family becomes involved in the feud. The church, too, is impartial to the fighting – Friar Laurence is not only Romeo’s confessor but Juliet’s as well which personally connects him with both warring families, albeit separately.
How does the character of Lord Capulet develop through the play?
Capulet has one of the biggest journeys in the play. At the beginning he is a relatively benign figure; an eloquent, attentive host who is the peacemaker when Romeo crashes the party. The change when he doesn’t get his way later in the play is terrifying. It’s important that we recognise how impactful Juliet defying his authority is; such disobedience is very rare in a 16th Century context. Juliet is his only child and heir to
everything he has worked for and maintaining lineage and social status is of paramount importance to Capulet. His reaction to what he sees as her rebellion is intense and his language shows his capacity for using brute force to combat the problem, ‘My fingers itch.’ His development at the end of the play is the most important part of his journey, though.

In my opinion staging a production of Romeo and Juliet without a sense that the Capulets and Montagues can be reconciled is pointless. The families learn through their ultimate tragedy – the death of their children. They hit rock bottom, and surely this has to change them. Shakespeare is arguably saying that people in a position of influence have to put aside their differences and work together for the good of their communities. In today’s society I feel there is an increasing divide between the younger and older generations. The younger generation is asking what sort of society they want for the future but the shots are being called by the older generation who I think are at risk of letting the young down. I think this play shines a light on this and suggests a need for change in times such as these.

What is your opinion of the mother figures in the play? Juliet’s natural mother and her surrogate mother, the Nurse?

Shakespeare writes a rather brilliant scene to introduce us to Juliet, her Mother and Nurse and – another example of opposites at work! You get the sense that Lady Capulet is nervous to be alone with her child; it feels forced and distant. The linguistic exchanges between the Nurse and Juliet tell a different story, one of much warmth and intimacy. The dialogue Shakespeare writes for them actually echoes elements of the relationship that develops between Romeo and Juliet. When Romeo and Juliet meet each other they are very attracted to each other – but ultimately it’s a meeting of two minds. They manage to create a perfect sonnet together – thrilling! They speak with the same voice, the same soul. A love of language and word play connects Juliet and the Nurse too. Romeo also does the same with Mercutio and Benvolio. This is a society that loves banter, where relationships are established and enriched through words. I think that’s what makes Juliet’s betrayal by the Nurse the most devastating moment in the play for me. It’s an incredible scene. Juliet’s Father tells her to ‘beg, starve, die in the streets’ so she appeals to her Mother who tells her, ‘I have done with thee’ and finally she turns to the person whom she loves the most – the nurse – who also rejects her, much less harshly, but ultimately more painfully.
The language in these scenes is so wonderful for actors to explore because the syntax and rhythms provide real clarity not only on how to play the characters, but how to play the relationships – it’s stunning.

**What part does Friar Laurence, the play’s other Father figure, play in Romeo and Juliet’s demise?**

I think the key line for the Friar is, ‘for this alliance might so happy prove, to turn your household’s rancour to pure love.’ This is the motivation for all his actions. He’s naturally a man of great faith, and his faith in the sanctity of marriage gives him hope that Romeo and Juliet can alter the fate of their families. He wants peace – the ultimate good for society. He’s almost too idealistic; he thinks about the end result but the path to it isn’t as clear cut as he hopes. He certainly doesn’t think that both Romeo and Juliet will be dead within a couple of days. But we have to remember that this play doesn’t end when Juliet kills herself – afterwards Friar Laurence has a very long speech where he explains what’s happened. It’s not a speech explaining events to the audience (we already know), it’s for the benefit of the other characters, and through it the Friar actually achieves the reconciliation between the two families. It’s significant that Shakespeare makes him a Franciscan. The Franciscan order tend to be more liberal thinking, they work with the poor, and help the homeless, they work within society, that’s very important in the audience’s understanding of his motives.

Many students will have seen iconic films such as those by Luhrmann and Zeffirelli. Did you draw anything from these interpretations and what’s the difference between watching a film or a theatre production?

Baz Luhrmann’s film came out when I was 14 and I was actually studying the play at school at that time. It had a huge impact; I love what it did in helping to blow the cobwebs off of Shakespeare and some of the imagery in the film is wonderful, but I think the Zeffirelli film is even better! It’s very violent, passionate and visceral. Even though it’s in Italian Renaissance clothing it doesn’t feel stuffy or dated. Film versions of the play are fascinating because they clearly show how Romeo and Juliet are reinterpreted for the time in which they’re made. For instance, in the 1936 Hollywood film we first see Norma Shearer’s Juliet in a beautiful Italian garden where she’s feeding a doe! I think we’re a long way from that in Claire Dane’s striking first appearance submerged in water. In our production the audience will see a 50/50 gender split in casting, better reflecting gender balance in our own world. Our Tybalt and Benvolio will both be women and this will bring another dimension and interpretation to the play. As for film versus live theatre versions of the play I think what’s so wonderful about live theatre is that it’s tangible; the actors are real 3D people rather than behind a screen. You’re literally breathing the same air as the characters and this creates a much more immediate experience. Essentially I would urge people to watch as many different recorded and live versions of the play as they can. That’s the joy of Shakespeare – it’s reinvented for the time it’s in. After all, if Romeo and Juliet doesn’t have anything to say in 2019 why do it at all?

Watch the full interview on [2019.playingshakespeare.org](http://2019.playingshakespeare.org)

**FINIS.**
TIMELINE OF EVENTS*

What happens when, to whom and why.

SUNDAY DAY.
Romeo loves Rosaline (hopelessly). The Montagues and the Capulets fight (fiercely).

MONDAY DAY.
Friar Laurence marries Romeo and Juliet. Tybalt kills Mercutio in a duel. Romeo kills Tybalt and is banished.

TUESDAY DAY.
Romeo leaves. Juliet is told she'll marry Paris on Thursday. Juliet decides to fake her own death rather than marry Paris.

WEDNESDAY.
The Capulets find Juliet 'dead'. Romeo learns of this and plans return to Verona.

SUNDAY EVE.
Love at first sight for Romeo and Juliet. They swear devotion despite being from rival families.

MONDAY EVE.
Romeo and Juliet's wedding night.

TUESDAY EVE.
Juliet and Paris' wedding is moved to Wednesday. Juliet takes the Friar's fake poison and 'dies'.

THURSDAY MORN.

‘WISELY AND SLOW, THEY STUMBLE THAT RUN FAST.’

*Serious spoiler alert!
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