



ROMEO JULIET
by William Shakespeare

Education Pack

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Introduction

This pack has been designed to support your visit to The Watermill to watch our production of *Romeo + Juliet*.



This is a digital pack; where you see this arrow there is a link that you can click on to view other material online.

Your feedback is most welcome, please email outreach@watermill.org.uk or call me on 01635 570934.

Don't forget that we offer workshops on most aspects of drama, and visit many schools in the surrounding area to work with students and teachers. For an education brochure, please visit the Outreach pages on our website, or contact us.



For our schools brochure please [click here](#).

We hope you find the pack useful.

Emma Bradbury
Outreach Assistant

Email: emma@watermill.org.uk | Tel: 01635 570934
The Watermill Theatre
Bagnor, Newbury, Berks RG20 8AE
www.watermill.org.uk



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This pack was written and designed by Emma Bradbury and Heidi Bird with contributions from Beth Flintoff, Lixi Chivas and Poppy Jermaine.

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Rehearsal and production photos by Philip Tull.

Section 1: Shakespeare and the Original *Romeo and Juliet*

William Shakespeare 1564 - 1616

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon to John Shakespeare, a glove maker and wool merchant, and Elizabeth Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer and landowner. It is believed that he was educated locally at King Edward VI Grammar School.

During the 1550s there was a growing trend for nobles to patronise travelling companies who would visit Shakespeare's hometown to perform at the Grammar School while on tour: there are records of more than 30 visits between 1568 and 1597. Shakespeare was four years old when these records started and his father is likely to have been responsible for his first exposure to theatre. John Shakespeare became a central figure in Stratford-upon-Avon when he was appointed as the town Bailiff. One of his responsibilities was to license the performances of these travelling companies by watching previews to check they were appropriate for public viewing. It is likely that William would have attended these previews.

The next surviving record is his marriage to 26 year-old Anne Hathaway at the age of 18 in 1582. Their daughter, Susannah, was born 6 months after their wedding. Two years later, Anne gave birth to twins, Judith and Hamnet, but Hamnet died at the age of 11.

Records of his movements are unclear in the eight years following, but during this time he left his family in Stratford to begin establishing himself in the world of theatre in London. The reason for these 'lost years' is uncertain; but playwriting was not a respected form of literature so authors chose not to put their names to plays, and it may be that Shakespeare was writing during this time but without putting a name to his work. In 1592 his name reappears in a sour judgement made by dramatist Robert Greene on his deathbed, calling him 'an upstart crow,

beautified with our feathers' in reference to his lack of university education which made him an impostor among the more qualified playwrights of the time.

The Queen's Men, Queen Elizabeth I's travelling company, had been set up in 1583 and caused a decline in other playing companies because it brought together the country's leading actors. But an attempt was made to redress this in 1594 with a major reshuffle of actors, forming a duopoly of the Lord Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the latter of which Shakespeare became a member. The Chamberlain's Men were the resident company at a venue simply called 'The Theatre' in Shoreditch, and by August 1597 Shakespeare had become a sharer in the business together with Richard Burbage and others. This new role afforded him the second largest house in Stratford – New Place.

In 1599 The Theatre's lease ran out and the structure was dismantled and moved across the River Thames to Southwark, where it became The Globe Theatre. The Globe opened with one of Shakespeare's plays, most likely *Henry V* or *As You Like It*, and Shakespeare's works continued to bring success and profit to the theatre, enjoyed by thousands. The Globe was one of only three theatres granted the privilege of licensing its own plays and the company's success awarded them a patent from James I following his accession to the throne in 1603, when they became known as The King's Men. The company took on a 21-year-lease of The Blackfriars, an indoor theatre that opened in 1610 with another of Shakespeare's plays: *The Tempest*.

Two years later, Shakespeare returned to Stratford, retiring from theatre to live out his remaining years with his family in the comfort of New Place, until he died in 1616. The cause

of his death is a mystery, but it seems he drank away his last hours in the company of his fellow writers, Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton. The vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon noted in his diary that they 'had a merry meeting and it seems drank too hard for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted'. He was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-on-Avon on April 25 1616.

Many people consider him the world's greatest playwright, but he was also a skilled poet and actor. In 1623 his works were published as a collection, known as 'The First Folio.' Among them are a number of plays regarded as the greatest works in the English language. From histories, to comedies, to tragedies, the plays reflected the concerns and widespread social and cultural change in the period. Shakespeare played a key role in the rise of theatre-going in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and as a result – theatre and performance culture as we know it today.

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most widely known and studied plays, a legendary love story, exploring the transition from childhood to adulthood. An expression of youthful passion, sexual love and the tragedy of oppressive social expectations, it is a prime example of Shakespeare's responsive nature as a playwright. It has succeeded in being both timely and timeless, a play that speaks to and mirrors the world of its audiences.

POPPY JERMAINE

Sources

The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642 by Andrew Gurr
Shakespeare Survey, Volume 60: Theatres for Shakespeare by J. R. Mulryne
The Oxford Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet
Oxford World Classics



Left: *The Nurse* (Lauryn Redding). Top Right: *Juliet* (Lucy Keirl). Bottom Right: *Friar Laurence* (Rebecca Lee).

Elizabethan and Jacobean Theatre

Beth Flintoff takes a look at the theatrical world in which Shakespeare was writing.

At the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, 'theatre' consisted of ordinary people enjoying plays about the Bible, performed by actors who travelled across the country with their props and costumes in a wagon. Although the plays were enjoyed, travelling 'players' were generally treated with great suspicion – they were no better than 'rogues and vagabonds.' At the time, working men always had a master - if a poor man did not have a master it meant he was, effectively, a beggar. Actors would have seemed dangerously free of all masters. There was even an Act of Parliament called the 'Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds'.

But the perception of theatre was, gradually, changing. Rich and powerful people were beginning to enjoy the feeling of providing entertainment to their friends, and plays were a great way of doing this. They were, basically, showing off – when people visited, the host could impress them by having a play performed. For example, King Henry VII's household of servants included twelve trumpeters and a small group of actors who were able to sing and dance as well as perform plays. This was a time of constant rivalry over who should be King, and who was the most influential. So professional actors, hired by these rich and powerful men, were paid to demonstrate to rivals just how important their family was. It must have been a bit of a relief for these actors to have some support and a more stable way of earning a living.

Up until now, most drama in Britain had been performed in the open air, sometimes in courtyards in front of inns. But now, enterprising actors began to make theatre buildings and to set up companies of fellow actors to perform in them. The first person to

do this was an actor who was also a carpenter, called James Burbage. His two sons, Richard and Cuthbert Burbage, took on the family tradition after he died. Theatre was becoming extremely popular by now, but some important people were still very suspicious of the whole thing. Religious men, upset that plays were so much more popular than going to Church, described them as 'beastly' and 'filthy'. Plays were often banned or got into trouble for making comments that were seen as subversive – writing in a negative way about the monarchy in the time of Queen Elizabeth I or James I was an extremely dangerous thing to do and it was common for artists to get into trouble or performances be shut down.

The Burbage brothers were running a theatre in London when they had an argument with the authorities. In the end the argument got so bad that they took the whole theatre apart in the middle of the night and carried it, piece by piece, across a bridge to the other side of the Thames. Once over the river, they were safely outside the law of the London authorities, and could carry on without their permission. This theatre was the Globe, where the most famous playwright of them all worked: William Shakespeare.

We don't know all that much for certain about William Shakespeare, but we do know that he was married to a woman called Ann Hathaway who lived in Stratford-upon-Avon where he grew up, and he had three children. He spent most of his time not with his wife but in London, and he wrote at least 37 plays – though we're still not sure exactly who wrote some of the plays that have been attributed to him. Some scholars argue that he didn't actually write any of the plays at all.

What makes Shakespeare and his work different to that of other playwrights? As a member of the acting company, Shakespeare would have been writing specifically for his fellow actors – they were probably his friends. He must have had great faith in their ability because his plays are not written for one starring actor with supporting cast, but for lots of actors who could all understand intense and complicated characterisation.

There would have been no women in the cast – the female roles were all played by boys. This didn't seem to bother Shakespeare in the slightest and he wrote plenty of great female parts – so he must have thought the boys were very good.

If he had written in an obvious way about the politics of the time, he would have got into trouble, so he wrote about historical events or fictional characters in such a way that the audience could have easily guessed what he was talking about.

They needed to make enough money at the theatre, making it important that his plays were popular, so he couldn't just write tragedies or comedies – he wrote both.

And he mostly wrote his plays in verse – not rhyming poetry, but a sequence of lines with a distinct rhythm, which helps the audience to follow what's being said and adds an extra layer of magic, a feeling of *specialness* to what we are hearing. Like this, when Othello dies:

*I kissed thee ere I killed thee: no way but this,
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.*
[V.ii.356-7]

These are some of the things that made the plays of Shakespeare so remarkable. He created characters that we can still understand today, and he gave them things to say that still, when we hear them now, can seem astonishingly beautiful one moment, hilarious the next. He created characters that are warm, funny, complicated, cruel, romantic, obsessed - you name it, he wrote it ... For example, *Romeo and Juliet* has really

changed the way we view romantic love today – the idea of people performing extravagant gestures, of sacrificing everything they have, and even dying for their love, these ideas had never been so clearly set down before, and probably haven't since.

Nowadays, Shakespeare is taught in schools not just in England but all around the world, and performed in hundreds of different languages. Many of the everyday words and phrases we use now, such as 'advertise' and 'lonely' were invented by him.

There were, of course, other plays and playwrights working at the same time as Shakespeare. In fact the playwright Christopher Marlowe, who wrote plays such as *Doctor Faustus* and *Edward II*, was much better known at the time. Faustus is a scholar who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for having whatever he wants for twenty five years. He says the famous line: 'Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?' when he meets the beautiful Helen of Troy for the first time. As the twenty five years comes to an end, of course, he begins to regret his pact, and the play ends with him being tragically carried away to hell.

Christopher Marlowe is thought to have been a spy for Francis Walsingham, the head of Queen Elizabeth's secret service. He was killed in a fight in a pub, but many suspect that this was actually a cover-up for an assassination. His room-mate was the unfortunate playwright Thomas Kyd, who was arrested and tortured by the authorities for information about Marlowe.

It was a dark time for these playwrights and their plays reflected that darkness. Thomas Kyd wrote the first 'Revenge Tragedy', called *The Spanish Tragedy*. Revenge Tragedies were dramas in which a terrible injustice happens at the start of the play, and the hero has to get revenge. In these plays, violent and frightening things happen to the characters and the events are often pretty gory. For example, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, by Thomas Middleton, begins with the hero standing on

stage holding the skull of his poisoned girlfriend. He revenges himself on the murderer, a Duke, by dressing up the skull in a coat, putting poison on the skull's lips, and pretending that she is a woman the Duke would like to kiss. The Duke does indeed kiss the skull, and he dies.

These stories seem extraordinarily gruesome until you realise that similar stories are still being written today and are extremely

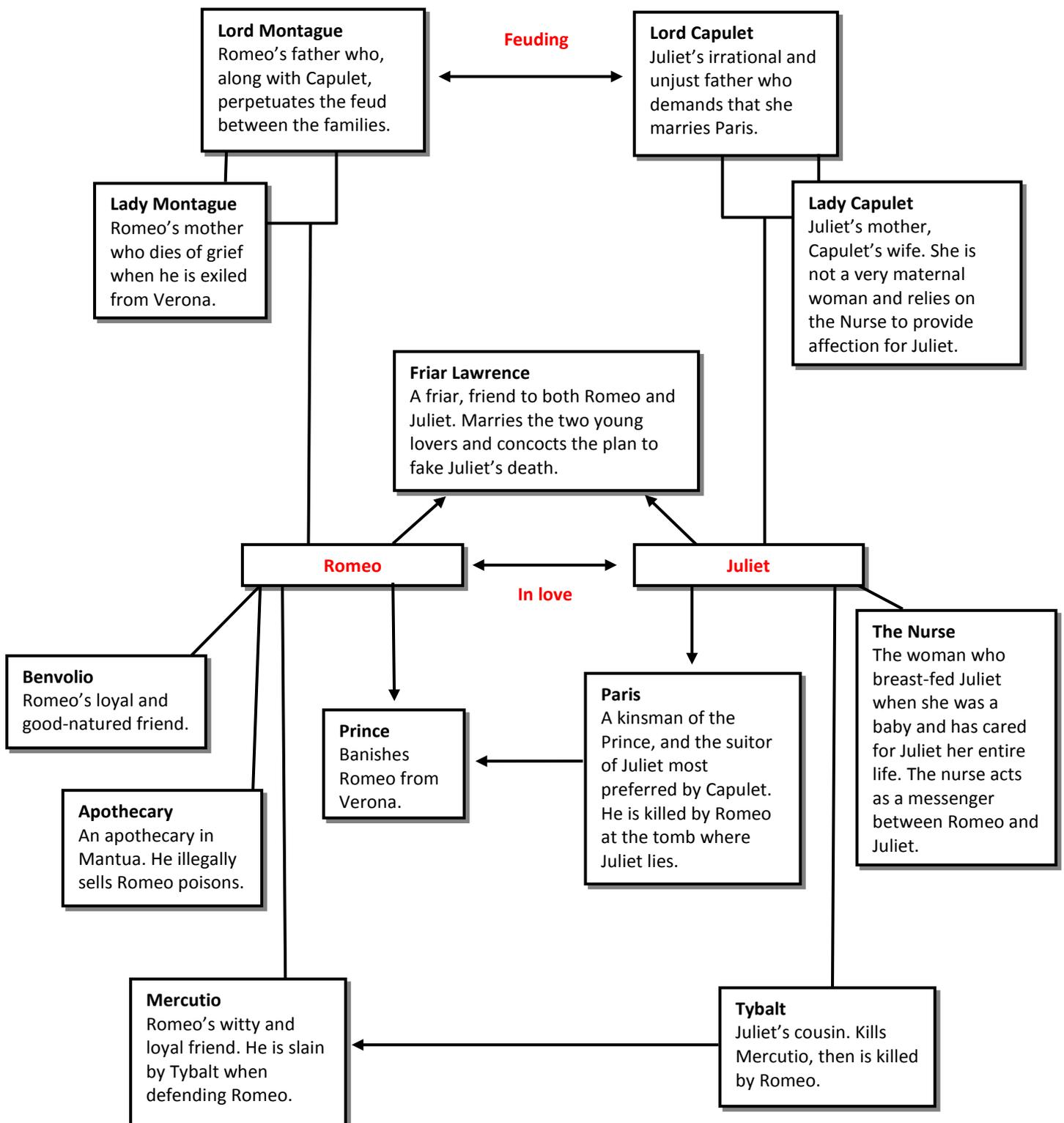
popular: films like Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*, or Mel Gibson's *Ransom*, and many horror films are in the revenge style, first written over four hundred years ago. Difficult, turbulent and dangerous times they may have been for actors and writers, but that didn't stop them from creating some extraordinary works of art.

BETH FLINTOFF



Left: Benvolio (Victoria Blunt) Centre: Romeo (Stuart Wilde) and Juliet (Lucy Keirl) Right: Tybalt (Rupert Lazarus) and Benvolio (Victoria Blunt)

Character Map



Task
Can you identify any other characters in *Romeo & Juliet*? Where do they fit within this map and what's their role in the play?

Playing Juliet and Romeo

If you were an actress, how would you play Juliet? And if you were an actor, how would you portray Romeo? And if you had to direct *Romeo and Juliet*, what sort of decisions would you take about the setting, the location and time period? These are questions that have been considered by actors, actresses, and directors, both professional and amateur, through the centuries.

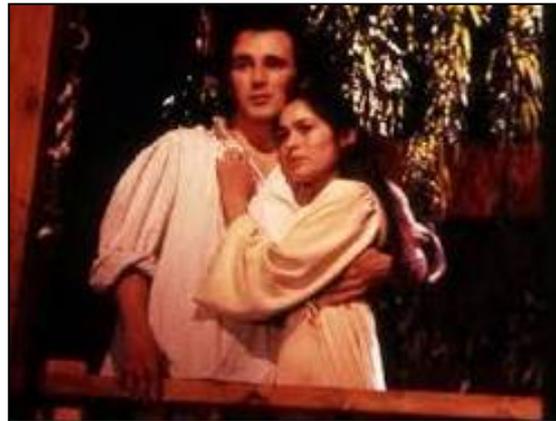
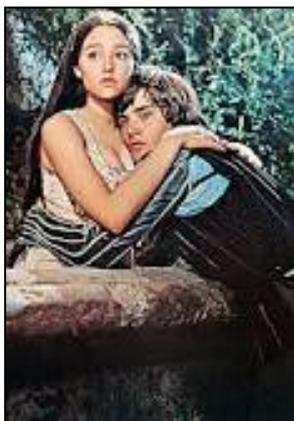
One of the joys of Shakespeare is that his plays often translate well to different settings and updating it to the contemporary world can be hugely effective for an audience, while performing it in traditional costume continues to be equally popular.

Here are some different interpretations throughout the years. What would you do?



Top:
Two early Juliets: Fanny Kemble in 1829 (far left) and Peggy Ashcroft in 1935 (near left).

Below:
Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting in the hugely popular film by Franco Zeffirelli in 1968 (below left).
Mark Rylance and Georgia Slowe at the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1989 (below right).



The story of feuding teenagers has adapted itself neatly to current concerns. The split between Montagues and Capulets can be used to explore issues of racism and immigration. The musical *West Side Story* updated the story to focus on rival New York gangs with brilliant success in 1957, in which a group of disaffected white Americans fought against Puerto Rican immigrants.



More recently in 2013, The National Theatre produced a 'family friendly' version in which the Montagues were largely black, and the Capulets Asian. This made clear sense of the attempt to make Juliet marry Paris; it was a modern arranged marriage staying within traditional racial boundaries.



Left: Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio, directed by Baz Luhrmann in 1996.

Middle: Adetomiwa Edun and Ellie Kendrick, directed by Dominic Dromgoole at The Globe in 2009.

Right: Sam Troughton and Mariah Gale, directed by Rupert Gould in 2010 for the RSC.

Rhythm in *Romeo and Juliet*

Iambic Pentameter

Most of *Romeo and Juliet* is written in Iambic Pentameter, a common form of metre that Shakespeare used as the basis for all his plays.

'Iam' means an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. It sounds like this: 'de-DUM'.

'Pentameter' means that there are five of them to each line.

So a line of Iambic Pentameter sounds like this:

'de-DUM / de-DUM / de-DUM / de-DUM / de-DUM'

Here is a neat section of Iambic Pentameter, with the stressed syllables highlighted in bold:

'Two **house-/**holds **both /** alike / in **dig-/**nity,
In **fair /** Vero-/na, **where /** we **lay /** our **scene,**
From **an-/**cient **grudge /** break **to /**new **mu-/**tiny,
Where **ci-/**vil **blood /** makes **ci-/**vil **hands /** unclean.'
[*Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue]

Sometimes the lines don't fall out so neatly, and this is when Shakespeare becomes particularly clever. Sometimes, for example, there is a deliberately placed extra beat at the end of the line:

To **be,** / or **not /** to **be:** / that **is /** the **quest /-** ion
[*Hamlet* III.1]

This eleven beat line is called a 'feminine' ending, and in this case it is used to leave the emphasis on 'question' – it literally dangles off the end of the line, a question hanging in the air. It's as if Shakespeare is trying to tell us something extra: perhaps that Hamlet is asking the question, but the audience should be asking it too.

Language and Character

So Shakespeare used rhythm in speech very deliberately. If the rhythm has become messy or irregular it is often a sign of disturbance within the character's mental state.

In *Othello*, for example, the main character Othello becomes so distressed at the thought that his wife has been unfaithful to him that his speech is increasingly erratic. At times, he falls out of verse altogether, and his speech becomes prose (everyday language that isn't written in verse). And eventually he comes out with a collection of words that don't really make sense:

Pish! Noses, ears and lips. Is't possible? Confess! handkerchief! O devil!
(*Othello* IV.1.42).

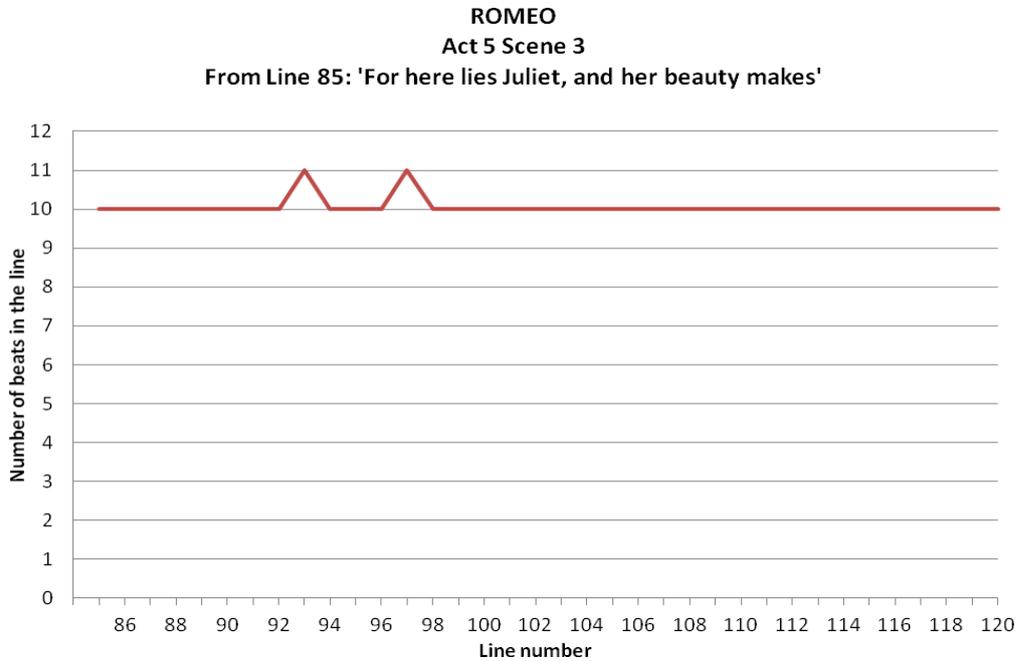
Why would Othello speak like this? Because he is under immense emotional strain, so he has lost the power of fluent speech. We see this happen in real life all the time – it's that moment when someone becomes so stressed they throw something, rather than explain their feelings.

Language and Character in *Romeo and Juliet*

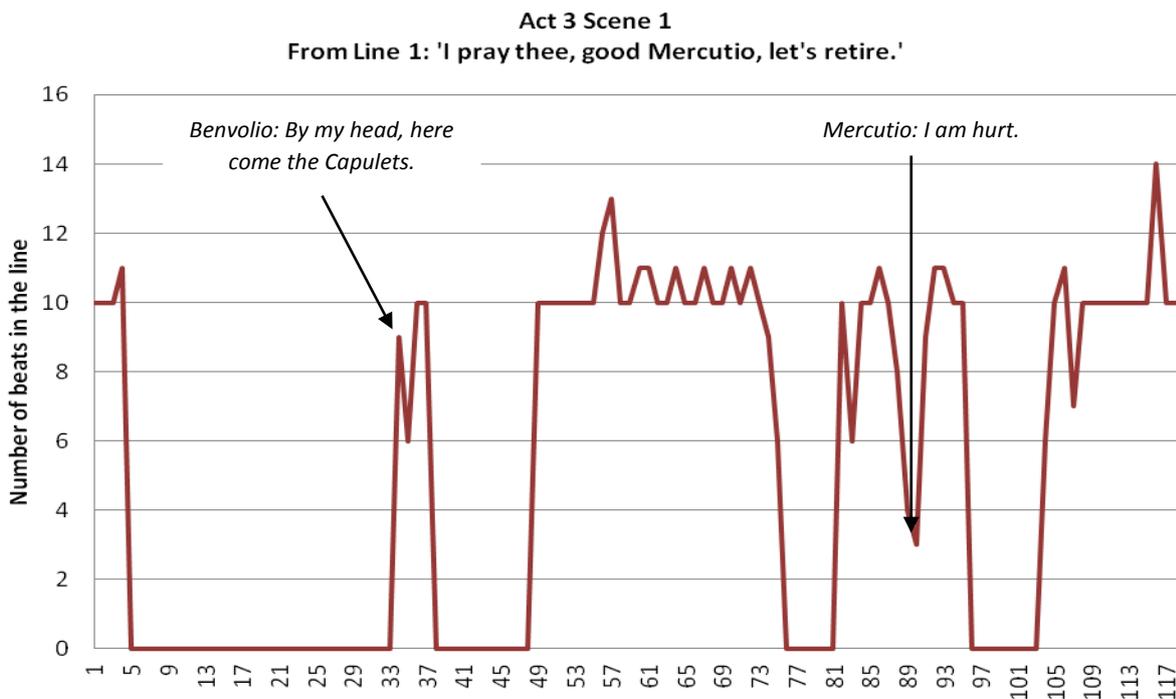
This is particularly useful when you are thinking about *Romeo and Juliet*. Both Romeo and Juliet tend to speak in regular, rhythmic, even patterns of neat iambic pentameter, with the occasional jerk for emphasis.

beats (we hope!), but the words hang slightly in the air, like Hamlet's 'question', playing on the audience's subconscious.

There are plenty of other, even more regular, speeches by Romeo and Juliet. Here is a Cardiogram of Romeo's speech when he discovers Juliet's inert body at the tomb. Even at a moment of extreme distress, his speech patterns are regular and rhythmical. In fact, it looks fittingly like a heartbeat on a hospital heart monitor:



By contrast, here is the Cardiogram for the fight scene in Act 3 Scene 1. I have used a score of 0 to show where the speech is in prose.



As the feud between the families goes so disastrously wrong, the regular rhythm of language collapses. Mercutio speaks mostly in prose (given a score of 0 in the graph), but even when he does manage to speak in verse, it is irregular. Lines are cut short by fighting, or silent fury, or both. The teenagers cannot communicate with each other now except with their fists, so their language reflects that.

The only ones who attempt some sort of iambic rhythm are Romeo and Benvolio, both attempting to calm the situation. But their rhythms are strained and the stresses inverted. A case in point is when Romeo desperately tries to get his friends to stop fighting. In these lines the emphasis strains awkwardly away from the regular iambic, even though they are ten or eleven beats long. I have highlighted the syllables that an actor might naturally want to stress:

ROMEO **Draw**, Benvolio, beat **down** their **weapons**.
 Gentlemen, for **shame** forbear this **outrage**.
 Tybalt, Mercutio, the **Prince** expressly **hath**
 Forbid this **bandyng** in Verona's **streets**.
 Hold, **Tybalt!** **Good** Mercutio!
 Tybalt stabs Mercutio under Romeo's arm.
 [R&J, III.1.84-9]

Romeo is trying to help, but his actions are doomed, and the rhythm tells us this *before* the action does. For Shakespeare, **language and character are one and the same thing**. The way a person speaks tells us everything we need to know about who they are and how they are feeling at that moment. This is one of the (many) ways in which Shakespeare's work is so brilliant.



Romeo (Stuart Wilde), Juliet (Lucy Keirl) and The Chorus: Victoria Blunt, Rupert Lazarus, Rebecca Lee, Peter Mooney, Samantha Pearl, Lauryn Redding, Ned Rudkins-Stow, Mike Slader.

Section 2: The Watermill's Production of *Romeo + Juliet*

Synopsis

In a grimy bar in Verona, the Chorus take their places, and their hoodies, to tell the story of the love that killed the feud between the Montagues and Capulets.

SUNDAY

A brawl between the two sides kicks off when one of the Montagues bites his thumb at a Capulet, the ultimate insult. Benvolio, cousin of the absent Romeo, pleads for peace with the rash Capulet, Tybalt, cousin to the bar's house singer Juliet. The Prince of Verona, livid at this third fight, decrees that anyone found fighting again will be executed.

With the fighters dispersed, Romeo's parents ask Benvolio to check on him; he's not himself. Out of his parents' earshot Romeo confides in her that he's lovesick for a girl named Rosaline who's ignoring him.

Meanwhile, amid the sound checks for the night's entertainment, singer Juliet's mother, Lady Capulet, and her manager, known as the Nurse, are floating the idea of her marrying the pin-up, Paris.

Juliet's father, Capulet, owner of the bar, arranges a VIP party to introduce Paris and Juliet. He sends a servant out with the guest list, but this 'servant' is none other than Mercutio, best friend of Romeo and general scamp, who decides they should gatecrash the party. Benvolio persuades morose Romeo to come because Rosaline will be there.

The party is in full swing when Capulet vents his short temper on his wife. As Juliet helps her mother up, her eyes meet Romeo's. She's not the only Capulet

who's spotted this Montague, though. Tybalt recognises him with fury and is only held back from bloodshed by his uncle.

The lovers are each as gutted to learn from the Nurse that they are from the house of their enemy. But as the guests leave the party, Romeo can't help sneaking to Juliet's balcony. They confess their love for each other.

MONDAY

The next morning, Romeo visits Friar Lawrence who agrees to marry the pair in secret that afternoon. The Nurse plays messenger and attends the secret wedding.

An hour later, Romeo is giddy with an excitement he can't tell anyone about when he, Benvolio and Mercutio run into Tybalt, still fuming from last night and looking for vengeance. Romeo refuses to fight which infuriates Mercutio: he will dual Tybalt instead. Romeo tries to stop him but Tybalt stabs Mercutio and he dies from what at first seemed like a superficial wound. Romeo takes revenge on Tybalt and kills him.

When the Prince discovers the multiple murders, she sees that this cycle won't end with more death. Instead of execution, she sentences Romeo to banishment: if he is seen in Verona again, he will die.

News travels fast: Juliet is torn between the loss of her cousin and loyalty and love for her new husband. Romeo can't imagine a life worth living without being with Juliet; banishment is worse than death. Friar Lawrence and the Nurse pick both back up and encourage hope.

Romeo and Juliet will have at least this one honeymoon night together and then they'll work something out for the future.

But Capulet has his own future planned for Juliet: a marriage to Paris which, to cheer her up from her grief for Tybalt, he now steps up a gear. The wedding will be on Thursday.

TUESDAY

Romeo leaves Juliet for Mantua, just moments before Lady Capulet barges into Juliet's room to announce Capulet's plans. Juliet is distraught at the idea of marrying Paris and looks to the Nurse for support. Nurse suggests that being banished, Romeo is as-good-as dead and that maybe Paris could make an even better husband.

Juliet goes to Friar Lawrence threatening suicide if she doesn't help her. Seeing how desperate Juliet is, she offers an alternative: a potion that will give Juliet all the appearance of death. By the time the effects wear off, Friar Lawrence plans, she'll be able to sneak Juliet out of Verona to be with Romeo.

Juliet returns home and plays the dutiful daughter having had a change of heart and now keen to marry Paris. Capulet is so convinced he brings the wedding forward a day, to tomorrow. That night Juliet drinks her potion.

WEDNESDAY

The Nurse discovers Juliet 'dead' and the wedding becomes a funeral. Juliet is taken to the Capulet tomb. Meanwhile, in Mantua, a letter that Friar Lawrence wrote to Romeo, with all the details of the potion plot, has never arrived. Benvolio arrives to tell Romeo about Juliet's death. This breaks Romeo: he won't go on with his wife. Romeo knows an Apothecary who has illegal,

lethal drugs for sale for the right price. Poison purchased for all that Romeo had, he heads back to Verona with Benvolio to be with Juliet one last time.

At the Capulet tomb, Paris is laying flowers at his fiancée's grave. When the murderer of her cousin arrives what should Paris think but that Romeo has come to desecrate the tomb? He tries to defend the Capulet honour, not listening to Romeo's protestations. By now a desperate man, Romeo silences Paris permanently.

Romeo takes his last look, hold and kiss of Juliet and swallowing the poison feels the liquid do its work quickly.

Friar Lawrence, having learnt that her letter went astray, arrives at the tomb to look after Juliet who should be coming round. She is dismayed to discover the bodies of Paris and Romeo. Juliet is groggy when she wakes and refuses to come with Friar Lawrence who takes fright and runs away.

Juliet doesn't have time to fully understand how or why her husband should be dead and warm beside her; she hears people approaching and acts quickly against herself, stabbing herself with Romeo's dagger.

The commotion Juliet had heard is the crowd of people wanting to know the truth of rumours that Romeo has been spotted at the tomb. Friar Lawrence explains the last three days' events and shocked out of their animosity by the price their children have paid, Montague and Capulet call an end to their war.

The Chorus retire their hoodies amid the carnage of true love vanquished by fate.

A Note from the Director

For my first production as the new artistic director here I wanted to take a new approach to Shakespeare and in true Watermill spirit; make something that feels truly original. We've cast some the play with leading young actors from across the country in collaboration with the National Youth Theatre and leading drama colleges.

This seemed to me to be a way of exploring this great play about youth and love. Music has been a crucial part of the process and we've experimented with using different styles to depict the central dichotomy of the play; the battle between violence and love.



To listen to a full audio interview with Paul Hart, please click [here](#).

Meet the Cast



Victoria Blunt | **Benvolio**

Victoria graduated from the Oxford School of Drama in 2015.

Credits whilst in training: Susan in *Ratchet* (Soho Theatre); Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* (North Wall); Masha and *Three Sisters*. This is Victoria's professional stage debut.

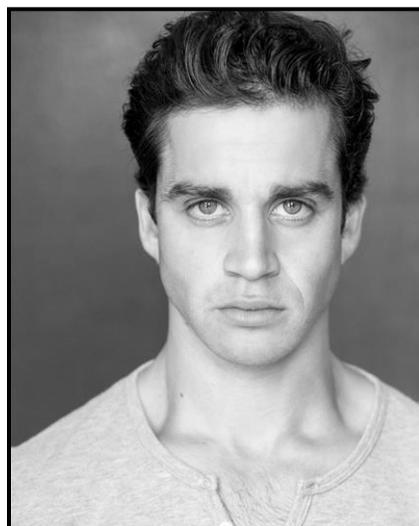


Lucy Keirl | **Juliet**

Lucy is originally from Nottingham. She studied at Rose Bruford College, graduating with a BA (Hons) in Actor-Musicianship.

Whilst at Rose Bruford, Lucy played Lily in *Punk Rock*, Annie in *All My Sons*, Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, Peggy in *Today*, Woman 1 in *Songs for a New* and Catherine in *Britain Ltd.* with Theatre Ad Infinitum.

Lucy is thrilled to be making her professional debut playing Juliet at The Watermill.



Rupert Lazarus | **Tybalt**

Rupert trained at RADA.

Theatre credits includes: *As You Like It*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *New Labour*, *Pericles*, *The Changeling*, *August Osage County*, *Twelfth Night*, *Phaedra's Love* (RADA).



Rebecca Lee | Friar

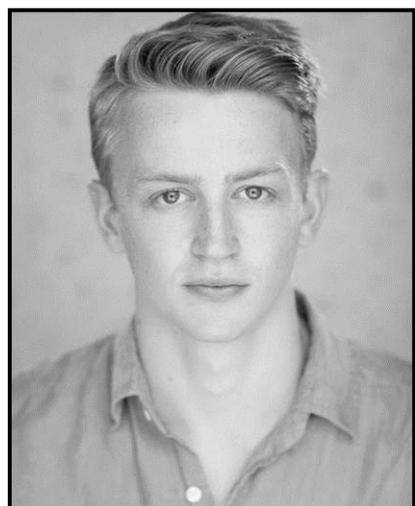
Rebecca graduated from the guildhall School of Music and Drama in July where she played roles including Celia Cain in *Her Naked Skin*, Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Ranevskaya in *The Cherry Orchard*. She has previously worked for Punchdrunk Theatre Company on productions including *It Felt Like a Kiss* at the Manchester International Festival. Rebecca recently made her professional debut at the Jermyn Street Theatre in *the First Man* by Eugene O'Neill.

She is thrilled to be making her debut at The Watermill among this company of such exciting talent.



Peter Mooney | Mercutio

Peter is a Dublin-born actor musician and has just finished a Christmas show at the Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre, playing the lead role of a reindeer! Before that, he spent a year in the cast of *The Commitments*, in the West End. This was his first job after graduating from the Actor Musician course at Rose Bruford in 2014. He is ecstatic to be playing Mercutio, as it is by far his favourite Shakespeare role to date. He is also thrilled just to be part of this new and exciting take on the age old story of *Romeo and Juliet*.



Ned Rudkins-Stow | Paris

Ned graduated from Rose Bruford in 2015.

He has recently completed work on *Jack and the Beanstalk* at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre.

Theatre credits whilst training include: *Three Wise Monkeys* ((collaboration with The Bush Theatre); Man 1 in *Songs for a New World*, Morton Gross in *The Water Engine*, Orgilus in *The Broken Heart* and Brick Pollitt in *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*.



Samantha Pearl | Lady Capulet

Samantha trained at The Oxford School of Drama.

Theatre includes: *Brave New World* (Northampton Royal and Derngate & UK tour); *St Joan* (Pascal Theatre Co. International Tour); *The Seagull and Other Birds* (Pan Pan, Project Arts Centre & International tour); *Brendan at the Chelsea* (Lyric Belfast, Theatre Row NYC); *Venus/Mars* (Old Red Lion); *Clean* (Traverse Theatre/ Oran Mor); *Scarberia* (York Theatre Royal); *The Two Worlds of Charlie F* (West End & UK Tour); *Sixty Six Books* (Bush Theatre); *Dream Pill* (Soho Theatre); *Dancing Bears* (Soho Theatre); *How To Be An Other Woman* (Gate Theatre); *Twelfth Night* (National Theatre).

TV includes: *Peep Show* (Channel Four); *Lee Nelson's Well Funny People* (BBC 3); *What Shall We Do Today?* (Disney Channel); *Snuggletime* (Disney Channel).

Film includes: *Legend* (Working Title Pictures).

Lauryn Redding | Nurse



Lauryn trained at Rose Bruford College.

Theatre credits: *Dreamers* (Oldham Coliseum); *The Winter's Tale*, *She Stoops To Conquer*, *An August Bank Holiday Lark* (Northern Broadsides); *Alice's Adventures Underground* (Les Enfants Terribles, Waterloo Vaults); *Horrible Histories* (Garrick Theatre-West end, UK Tour, Sydney Opera House, Australian and Asian tour); *The Enough Project* (Slunglow/The Lowry); *Wind in the Willows* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Six* (SevenArts, Leeds); *Numb* (Arcola); *Shhh* (Theatre503); *King Lear*, *Different Buttons* (Red Rose Chain) *Tall Tales* (Theatr Clywd); *All in All- Fragments of Shakespeare* (The Pleasance, Het Rozentheater- Amsterdam).

Television credits: *Emmerdale* (ITV); *Lee Nelson's Well Good Show* (BBC Three); *Regulars* (Channel 4) and *Somewhere Between The News Clippings* (BBC).

Lauryn has also worked on a number of short film and radio productions, including representing Rose Bruford at the BBC Radio 4 Carlton Hobbs competition.



Mike Slader | Capulet

Mike trained at the Rose Bruford College and graduated with a BA (Hons) in Actor/Musicianship.

Theatre credits include: *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood* (City Varieties Music Hall); *Dreamboats & Miniskirts* (UK Tour); *Delirium Show 6* (Workshop, St James Theatre); *Dick Whittington* (City Varieties, Leeds); *Carnaby Street in Concert* (UK Tour); *Tiny Tempest* (Brighton Dome); *Dave in Carnaby Street* (UK Tour); *Derek in Dreamboats & Petticoats* (UK Tour); *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Pleasance Dome); *On the Third Day* (The Mill Studios); *Close* (The Cockpit Theatre); *Grimethorpe Race* (The Arcola Theatre); *Twelfth Night* (UK Tour); *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Dr Faustus* (Chichester Festival Theatre).

Other work includes: *Cruzier* (Short Film), *HTC Online Phone* (Commercial) and *Who Is In Control* (Photography Stills).



Stuart Wilde | Romeo

Stuart Wilde was part of the National Youth Theatre repertory company in 2013/14.

Theatre credits include: *Shakespeare in Love* (Noel Coward Theatre, West End); *Long Story Short* (Squint); *A Real Man's Guide To Sainthood* (Milk Presents); *Catching Father Christmas* (Gomito Productions); *Flor de Muerto* (Gomito Productions).

Theatre credits for NYT include: *Private Peaceful* (Best Leading Actor nomination), *Selfie*, *Macbeth*, *Grown Up*, *The Class*, *White Boy*.

Television credits include: *Kerching!* (BBC TV); *Whatever!* (Monkey Kingdom).

Interview with the Actors



How did you become an actor?

Lucy: When I was younger I tried to get involved with as many local productions as possible. I was mostly onstage, but sometimes backstage, ushering or even in the lighting box. Then I auditioned for drama school and was lucky enough

to get a place at Rose Bruford. It all led on from there!

Samantha: I acted as a child at school and in a stage school at the weekend. I then studied Drama and English at University before attending drama school.

Victoria: I performed in local amateur groups when I was younger and then went on to study performing arts at University. I performed for a while in small fringe shows, before training at drama school.

Mike: I studied at Rose Bruford and got signed with an agent when I graduated.

Stuart: I wasn't able to be a Dragon, so guess being an actor is the next best thing. I also joined National Youth Theatre.



If you could play any role, what would it be?

Lucy: Juliet is a bit of a dream role! There are lots of other Shakespeare's I'd like to have a go at. I also love the work of classic American playwrights like Odets and Tennessee Williams, so I'd love to try my hand at those.

Peter: I'd like to play Ray in *In Bruges* or Ray in *The*



Beauty Queen of Leenane. Both of these plays are written by Martin Macdonagh, he writes very good plays!

Samantha: Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lisa in *Girl, Interrupted* and Hedda Gabler in *Hedda Gabler*.

Rebecca: Nancy from *Oliver!*

Victoria: Iago in *Othello* or Nina in *The Seagull*.

Lauryn: Nancy in *Oliver!* or *Joan of Arc*.

Mike: Fred in *Drop Dead Fred* because Rick Mayal was my comedy hero and a big idol of mine.

Rupert: Oliver Read, Hamlet or Wolverine!

Stuart: Romeo!



*Top: Mercutio (Peter Mooney). Bottom:
Friar Laurence (Rebecca Lee).*

What advice would you give to aspiring actors?

Lucy: Acting (and actor training) is hard work, so although talent is important, a good attitude and passion for what you do can be even more so.

Peter: Don't stress out too much, just keep enjoying yourself!

Samantha: Learn the industry by watching plays, listening to the radio, watching TV and films. Get to know yourself very well and find your niche.

Rebecca: Trust yourself completely and nurture your talent and taste.

Victoria: Read loads of plays and books about theatre. Also, travel to get life experience and have confidence in yourself.

Lauryn: Be yourself.

Mike: Work hard and watch as much theatre as you can. Make bold, extreme choices with your characters (you can always work backwards and tone it down). Believe in yourself, you have to in order for other people to believe you.

Rupert: Have persistence, work hard and have faith.

Stuart: Be bold, brave and don't take rejection personally.

What has been your favourite moment at The Watermill so far?

Lucy: Our tour around the theatre on the first day – it's such a beautiful place and I was so excited to imagine performing on the stage!

Peter: Putting together the music and underscore for the show has been very exciting!

Samantha: Turning mine and Mike's fight scene into a drunken dance (and when Paul brought in a Banoffee pie - YUM!)

Rebecca: I've enjoyed learning the fights and working as a chorus.

Victoria: When I was working on a scene with Rebecca who plays Lady Montague and we couldn't stop laughing!

Lauryn: Working on the movement with Tom Jackson Greaves.

Mike: I have loved working with our movement director, Tom. Physical Theatre is new to me, so it's great to be challenged and learn new things.

Rupert: Celebrating my birthday.

Stuart: Shaving Pete's head!

Rehearsal Diary

Assistant Director, Mona Khalili, gives us an insight into the rehearsal room.

Week one

Rehearsals started with a meet and greet. This is an opportunity for all the staff at The Watermill to welcome the new cast and creative team. We drank tea, introduced ourselves and then dove straight into the world of the play with a design presentation from designer, Katie Lias. Katie talked through the design process and explained the choices that herself and Paul had made. Unusually, the model box presentation started with us listening to a song by The Vaccines, which can be heard [here](#).

As well as music, a lot of Katie's inspiration came from travelling. In particular, she took pictures of quirky places with neon lighting that became a significant part of the design for the Capulet's bar. The model box stirred excitement within the company and the actors couldn't wait to get stuck in!

On day two, Paul wasted no time in getting the actors on their feet. We began by working on the opening prologue and building the chorus. In this version, everyone in the cast plays a chorus member. Paul explained that Verona was not a safe city, especially with the gang rivalry of the Montagues and Capulets, so he wanted the members of the Chorus to be in a constant state of high alert.

After lunch we started to tackle the last scene of the play. Working on the final scene on day two is something that I hadn't previously experienced. It seemed that by tackling the last scene, the actors were fearless to attack the rest of the play.

Throughout the week we focused on the concept of the play and explored the use of the chorus. The chorus are in a constant state of telling, and re-telling the story until they 'get it right' to prevent the tragedy at the end. We created a backstory for each chorus member and worked on their motivations.

All of the live music is being played by the actors. They're an incredibly talented bunch - they have no problem with picking up songs on guitar, piano, banjo, drum; you name it, they can probably play it! One evening a week we have music call where the cast spend time working out the arrangement, harmonies and adaptation of the song they're working on. They've created a band together and the music sounds absolutely beautiful!

During the week I ran a workshop with the company looking at the relationship between the Montagues and Capulets, whilst discussing the values of each gang. To explore this, the cast answered the following questions:

1. What would be the Montagues and Capulets ten commandments?
2. What quote would define what it means to be a Montague/Capulet?

3. Which political party would each gang be affiliated with and why?
4. What companies would each family own (e.g Pret, KFC, Asda, Harrods, etc.)?



The last question provided more heated discussion than I had anticipated. The actors battled out, *Apprentice* style, to decide which gang owned what. Some members of the company clearly had a particular knack for negotiating! It was great fun; one cast member told me that she couldn't shop in Boots that weekend as her gang didn't own it!

We ended week one with a chronological run of everything we'd worked on that week. This allowed the actors to physically embody the journey of their characters, highlighting the shifts they have from their character into the chorus.

Week Two

Throughout week two Paul asked me to research various material for rehearsals. The most fascinating was looking into the famous 'thumb biting' moment, "*Do you bite your thumb at me sir?*" (Act 1, Scene 1). I found out the following:

History of thumb biting:

- It was used in 13th Century Medieval England, 300 years before Shakespeare wrote it into *Romeo and Juliet*.
- The slur relates to wars from Southern Europe in the Middle ages. Prisoners taken by local armies would be offered the chance to earn their freedom by eating a fig from a mule's anus. As the captors taunted their captive, offering them this degrading method of escape, they would bite their thumbs. The gesture implies cowardice, someone who would 'take the fig'.

Meaning in modern context:

- A highly offensive gesture to the recipient.
- The equivalent to swearing at someone today.
- The gesture is also a traditional Sicilian insult meaning 'to hell with you'.

In the middle of the week we had our first fight session with the Fight Director, Ian McCracken. The fights look so brutal that you forget that they're not real - I certainly gasped a couple of times! Tybalt's death is particularly ferocious and Paris' death is just savage!

By the end of the week we had done every scene in the play. One of the great things about rehearsals is that it's so collaborative. The company come up with brilliant ideas and Paul is great at incorporating everyone's suggestions. Even though we were working at lighting speed, Paul is incredibly detailed and no moment is lost!

A Note from The Designer

The Watermill is a truly individual theatre and presents many interesting and challenging quirks for a designer. It's not a space where you can simply place a set that's been created independently without due consideration for the building's unique architecture. For this new version of *Romeo and Juliet*, director, Paul Hart, and I were keen to create an original and modern production, with a sense of youth and love at its heart. As music features heavily, we developed the concept of setting the action in an underground bar / music venue where the young lovers and their confidants would feel most alive and energized. The whole theatre has now been transformed into a new venue: 'Capulet's' - a theme that's introduced from the moment the audience enters, their hands stamped with the bar's logo, before taking a stool at the



Top: Juliet (Lucy Keirl), The Nurse (Lauryn Redding) and Capulet (Mike Slader).
Bottom: Lady Capulet (Samantha Pearl).

Setting the play in an underground bar also creates a tomb-like quality: the stage on which the lovers perform opens up to act as their grave, constantly reminding us of the close proximity between life and death. We also wanted to create an atmosphere where the threat of violence is always a possibility, with alcohol constantly visible and available as fuel for anarchy and graffiti on the walls hinting at bubbling social unrest.

Choosing to set the play in the round created yet another challenge and we felt this configuration would be crucial in creating a sense of intimacy, as well as heightening the audiences' awareness of the cyclical nature of events within the play. We liked the idea of the audience being exposed, to a degree, as it raises questions about how complicit they might be in the action. I didn't want to create something very neat which would be easy for the actors to navigate: instead they skirt audience members, climb a triangular truss and scale a suspended metal cross, bringing the action as close as possible and creating an element of danger.

I knew that lighting would be integral to our piece, not only because of the play's constant references to light and dark, but also to help us define locations in what might otherwise be a static bar setting. The lighting designer, Tom White, and I worked closely together to explore interesting ways of shifting between locations using practical lighting that might be present in a bar. I looked at images of

neon crosses that might be at home in a quirky music venue but would also work to create the Friar's domain when lit; light boxes that could create celestial stained glass windows; and bulk heads that, when brought in to play, would be more suggestive of an exterior setting.

With *Romeo and Juliet*, I've thoroughly enjoyed creating something site-specific, exploring and blurring the boundaries between what already exists in the space and what has been created especially for our show. See you at Capulet's soon?



Left: Friar Laurence (Rebecca Lee), Romeo (Stuart Wilde) and Juliet (Lucy Keirl). Top Right: The Nurse (Lauryn Redding). Bottom Right: Juliet (Lucy Keirl), Capulet (Mike Slader) and Lady Capulet (Samantha Pearl).

The Set

The set is what we put onstage to help create the world of the play. The set designer would make a model box of the set to show the production department, director and actors what they want the set to look like.

Research

The design process begins with the designer, in this case Katie Lias, researching an idea for the play.

Designers often collect pictures to give them inspiration. They might create a scrap book of ideas including materials, styles and shapes.

The designer will look at the size of the stage and work with the director to make sure that their design fits with the Director's overall vision.



White Card

Once the designer has an idea, they make a 'white card' model box.

This gives a clear idea of what the final design will look like, but without being painted.

The white card design is sent to the production team who check that the design will work in the space and is possible with the money that we have.

This is a white card model box for a previous Watermill show.



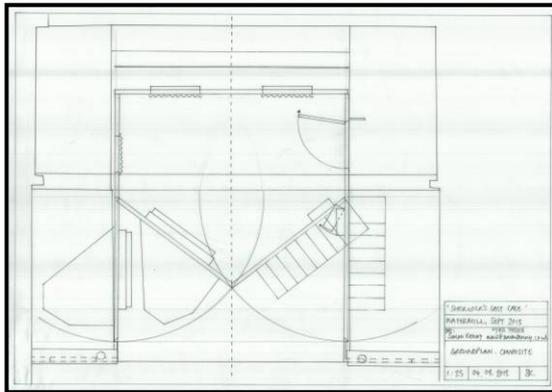
Model Box

The designer creates a model box. The model box is a scale model, exactly twenty-five times smaller, of the final set.

The production team use the model to see what the set is going to look like and to help them build the final set.

The Watermill has transformed into the round to host this innovative modernisation of Shakespeare's classic.

The model box for *Romeo + Juliet*.



Ground plans

Creating the drawings

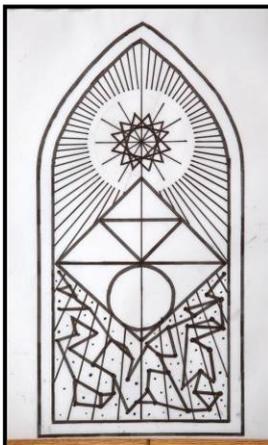
The designer draws a ground plan of the model box to the same scale.

This gives the carpenters the exact size of the set so they can start building it.

The ground plan to the left is from a previous Watermill show.

Building the Set

The carpenter then starts to make the set. At The Watermill the set is built off-site in a large barn and then brought to the theatre and put together during the weekend before the show opens.



Scenic finishes

Once the set's been built, there are a number of scenic finishes that have to be achieved by the designer. Because The Watermill is so small and intimate, we focus on getting every detail right.

The designer will source images or created drawings, making sure that every last corner is thought about.

Katie Lias' drawing for the stain glass windows in *Romeo + Juliet*.



The Final Set

The set is fitted into the theatre. During this time the designer will work with the production team to make sure that all the final details are perfected before the show opens.

The Costumes

To highlight the difference between the Montagues and The Capulets, each family has been given a distinct and contrasting style. Below are images of the two feuding families:



From Left to Right: Romeo (Stuart Wilde), Benvolio (Victoria Blunt), Mercutio (Peter Mooney), Lady Montague (Rebecca Lee).



From Left to Right: Tybalt (Rupert Lazarus), Lady Capulet (Samantha Pearl), Juliet (Lucy Keirl), The Nurse (Laurn Redding), Capulet (Mike Slader) and Paris (Ned Rudkins-Stow).

Task:

Where would you set your version of *Romeo + Juliet* and what design choices would you make to convey this to an audience?

Rehearsal Reports

Organisation is the chief element of any stage manager's role. After each day of rehearsals, our Deputy Stage Manager, Ceire Hoey, types up the notes she has made during the day and sends them to all the staff at The Watermill involved in making the show. Here is an example of her daily report from *Romeo + Juliet*.

<p>Romeo and Juliet</p> <p>Watermill Theatre</p> <p>Rehearsal Notes #16</p> <p>Thursday 11th February</p>
<p><u>General</u></p> <p>1. No notes</p>
<p><u>Design</u></p> <p>1. Please see Stage Manager notes 1, 4, 5, 6</p> <p>2. In scene 4.3, what is Juliet wearing on her feet? She thinks she may be barefoot and has asked if possible, if she can wear soft shoes such as ballet pumps or slippers?</p> <p>3. Mr Hart wondered if the Friar's coat would be more protective? Possibly with some padding? Can you discuss with Mr Hart?</p> <p>4. Please see Wardrobe note 2. Thank you</p>
<p><u>Wardrobe</u></p> <p>1. Friar Laurence will need a pocket for the vial / bottle of poison she gives to Juliet.</p> <p>2. Can the Friar's coat be broken down and dirtied? Thank you</p>
<p><u>Sound</u></p> <p>1. Is it possible to get a new kick pedal for the drum? Thank you</p>
<p><u>Lighting</u></p> <p>1. In scenes 2.2 and 2.3 they refer to the sun while looking DSR. Is it possible for the 'sun' to also become much brighter at one point? Thank you</p>
<p><u>Production/ Technical</u></p> <p>1. No notes</p>
<p><u>Stage Management/ Props</u></p> <p>1. In scene 1.5 when Juliet is asking the Nurse who Benvolio, Mercutio and Romeo are, Nurse is flicking through pages on her clipboard. Is it possible for these pages to be dating profiles of all the people on the guest list and possibly other Italian named people?</p> <p>2. We will need a guitar stand in the dock and a stand in the wheel store for the mandolin.</p> <p>3. Is it possible to have 3 guitars at one point in the Band area?</p> <p>4. Can the Friar's new bag be broken down?</p> <p>5. The Friar's syringe in 2.3 will no longer be used to pierce the flower, therefore can it be blunt so she does not need anything to protect the tip?</p> <p>6. In 2.3, Romeo will no longer drink out of a medicine bottle. Is it possible to research what kind of bottle pure ethanol would come in? The drink the Friar has in her bag should be a homemade spirit she has concocted, and look chemical. Please see Ceire for details. Thank you</p>
<p>Many thanks Ceire Hoey - DSM</p>

Section 3: Teaching & Rehearsal Exercises

Character Mapping

The whole room becomes the 'heart' of the play. Put Romeo and Juliet, played by students, in the centre of the room. Add the other characters one by one into the space. They should stand near or far away from the central character and the other characters, depending on how they feel about them.

Start off with the positions for the beginning of the play. Then move to key moments in the play and ask them if they want to move. There may be some conflicts, for example if one character likes the other but the feeling is not reciprocated.

Points:

1. You can hopefully use all the students if you use every character in the play, including the servants.
2. This exercise makes for a gentle way into hot seating. You can ask them individually why they're standing where they are, and how they are feeling about other characters.
3. If they don't know the plot of the play very well, this can be an interactive way into them finding out the story. Tell them the main points of the story and ask them how they're feeling now that this new development has happened. They can move in response to what you tell them.
4. Alternatively, this can be a more advanced character exercise. 'Cast' the students in advance, and get them to write down quotes demonstrating how their character feels about other characters at key plot moments. Then, when they are moving around the character map, they can back up their new position with their quotations.

FOLLOW UP EXERCISES

1. **DIARY:** Imagine you're the character you played in the mapping exercise, and write a diary, with entries for each key moment.
2. **FREEZE FRAMES:** This is a natural way into 'sculpting' frozen pictures of key moments in the play, e.g. Juliet being told she must marry Paris.

Emotional Corridor

The students line up in two rows, facing each other. Give each student about half a line to say, perhaps an oath or a curse, from the play. It's fine to use each curse two or three times if you don't have enough.

Get them to repeat it a few times to the person opposite them, all at the same time, using lots of anger and venom.

Then, one by one, each student walks down the line, with everyone repeatedly saying their curse at the person walking. Afterwards, discuss how it feels to be the object of such dislike.

This exercise is particularly useful for invoking empathy in students.

Although you might want to start with something straightforward like curses, you can also move into more complex emotions for any play (this exercise is very useful for encouraging students to empathise with Shylock, for example, in *The Merchant of Venice*).

It can also be used to examine awkward relationships: for example, if you're working on *Romeo and Juliet*, you could fill the 'corridor' with some of the many conflicting things that are said to Juliet during the course of the play – comparing the loving words of Romeo with her father's much crueller words. Then ask the boys in the class to say them, while the girls take it in turns to walk through (or vice versa, of course!). Afterwards, each group can discuss how they felt, either repeating such things, or hearing them.

Credits

Romeo + Juliet

By William Shakespeare

Director Paul Hart

Designer Katie Lias

Lighting Designer Tom White

Sound Designer David Gregory

Movement Director Tom Jackson Greaves

With music by Jonny Flynn

Fight Director Ian McCracken

Assistant Director Mona Khalili

Cast List in alphabetical order:

Benvolio Victoria Blunt

Juliet Lucy Keirl

Tybalt Rupert Lazarus

Friar Laurence Rebecca Lee

Mercutio Peter Mooney

Lady Capulet Samantha Pearl

Paris Ned Rudkins-Stow

Nurse Lauryn Redding

Capulet Mike Slader

Romeo Stuart Wilde

Production Manager Lawrence T. Doyle

Company Stage Manager Sara Shardlow

Assistant Production Manager Nelly Chauvet

Theatre Technician Harry Armytage

Deputy Stage Manager Ceire Hoey

Assistant Stage Managers Ellen Lewis & Claire Payton

Trainee Stage Management and Production Assistant Lee Slater

Sound Operator Nick Lodge

Wardrobe Supervisor Amanda Dooley

Wardrobe Assistant Eloise Short

Set Construction Belgrade Production Services

Production Photographer Philip Tull

National Press and Publicity Clair Horwood