

***Romeo and Juliet* PERFORMANCE**
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Season: 9 May – 6 June
Venue: Wharf 2, Sydney Theatre Company
Performance Duration 90 minutes

We respectfully ask that you discuss theatre etiquette with your students prior to coming to the performance.

Running Late?

Please contact Sydney Theatre Company's main switch on 9250 1700 and a message will be passed to Front of House.

Booking Queries

Please contact Marietta Hargreaves on 02 9250 1778 or mhargreaves@sydneytheatre.com.au

General Education Queries

Please contact Helen Hristofski, Education Manager, on 02 9250 1726 or hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au

Sydney Theatre Company Education 2008 present



Image: Sophie Ross and Isaac Drandich. Photographer Grant Sparkes-Carroll

Romeo and Juliet

by William Shakespeare
Directed by Wayne Blair

Teacher's Resource Kit

Written and compiled by Robyn Edwards and Samantha Kosky

PLOT – bringing the play to life

Rehearsal Workshop:

Resources:

- concise scene/act/plot summary of the play
- character name tags
- key props
- key/symbolic items of costume

The teacher introduces costumes, props and tags etc. Students interpret through group discussion, what each says about each character. The teacher reads the play synopsis one line/sentence at a time.

Students, in role, jump into the “arena” stage created and act out the action described. Teacher calls “scene” once the action is complete and continues reading. In reading, the teacher should leave gaps/pauses in which students insert contemporary dialogue. For example: The Friar is caught and describes what happens [pause] student contributes lines of dialogue.

Post-rehearsal writing task:

List 8 events/complications you remember happening in play.

PLOT – keeping track of the characters

Rehearsal Workshop:

Resources: *Shakespeare For Dummies* Scorecard, by John Doyle, IDG Books, 1999 Chapter 12 p124

Fill in the score card while you read the play or while you are watching a film version. Fill in each character’s box for each scene, with the appropriate symbol, indicating what the character did in the scene. If a character doesn’t appear, leave the box blank. Table 12-1 from *Shakespeare For Dummies*, lists all the symbols that might be useful to use in completing the score card. You might like to create different symbols or invent new ones.

PLOT – what makes us want to watch?

Post-Production Analysis:

Consider a contemporary audience’s experience of *Romeo and Juliet*. We know the fate of the characters before the play begins. What makes us want to watch?

- What has Blair’s production done to make the audience want to see the play, despite knowing the plot and the ending?
- Compare the STC production to other films/productions you have seen of *Romeo and Juliet* - how did the STC production make us want to watch, interpret and respond to the end?
- What makes the tale of *Romeo and Juliet* of contemporary relevance?
- How well has Wayne Blair, the director, succeeded in captivating you as a contemporary audience?

TRAGEDY – the tradition of catharsis ...

Pre-Production workshop:

Choose one scene for each of the following 3 moments:

- one where you think the action is great,
- one in which the tragic character is heroic, and
- one where the effect is of majestic sadness

Rehearse and stage your 3 chosen scenes. Discuss the choices you made to communicate their essence.

Post-Performance Analysis:

How does Blair's production present the tragic ending to share hope and to explore the traditions of Aristotle's definition of Tragedy?

Identify and analyse one majestic moment from the STC production.

Where does pleasure of tragedy lie in this production? Was it in the blood? Was its action great in this staging? Do Blair's Romeo and Juliet resonate for you as tragic heroes? How were they portrayed?

When in the production as an audience, did you feel emotional release? At what dramatic moment?

CHARACTER – choose a word and find a movement ...

Actors' Exploration:

Choose several key duologues and assign them to student pairs. Students begin by working individually, as their character, with text in hand, moving through the space, experimenting with blocking, gesture and emotion. The aim is to reduce each of their lines to one key word, which encapsulates the emotion, idea and action of the line and their character.

Once all lines have been reduced and words chosen, students improvise ways of using their whole body and movement to convey the word – challenge students to move beyond clichéd imagery and gesture and to explore more abstract, whole body physicality.

Students then find their partner and work in pairs to present duologue with one word per line only and movement as abstract as it may seem. Students perform for the class.

Revisit the full dialogue in a further rehearsal, allowing the above exploration to inform their interpretation of their character's emotion and action and the integrity of their understanding.

CHALLENGE: What happens if scene is performed without dialogue and just movement?

Post-Production Task:

From the STC production, recall a dramatic moment where stage action and connection between the characters was powerful and dynamic in its movement and brought the dramatic moment to life. Discuss why the scene engaged you and how it assisted in your understanding of the play and its characters.

THEMES - fate and freewill

Creative Writing Task:

How do the characters respond to and deal with fate in *Romeo and Juliet*?

Write a diary entry as a character in response to a defining moment of tension and conflict served up by opportunity or fate in the play.

Post-Production discussion:

How did Wayne Blair, the director, manipulate mood and atmosphere in the STC production to portray your chosen character's moment?

How does mood and atmosphere contribute to us, as an audience, being captivated by the tragic downfall of the play, even if the characters can pre-empt their impending doom?

THEMES - love at first sight

I think we are witnessing that moment when you meet someone, fall in love and, just before the honeymoon period, where your heart flutters. You feel like walking home in the rain, jumping up in the air and hitting the leaves of trees. We are actually witnessing that moment in this play, which is very special. It's so fresh and beautiful. It's just pure and I love that. Primarily, it is an honest love story.

[Blair's director's notes]

Rehearsal Workshop:

This task challenges you to explore contemporary ways of expressing love at first sight. Students work in small groups to create a variety of tableaux.

Brainstorm situations in public, in crowds etc where two people might fall in love at first sight.

Students create these scenes through moved improvisations, using the concepts of offer and yield and without talking. The students should attempt to show the moment before, the moment of falling, and the moment after.

Choose one tableau as starting point for further improvisation. Make use of focus, levels, space and movement. Develop the "moment before" in groups focusing on the dramatic/staged impact of the ensemble. Next define and stage the moment of falling between the two characters that the "ensemble" characters don't see and then create the 3rd and 4th frame in which the "ensemble" notice and comment on "the fall".

Post-Rehearsal discussion:

Discuss the dramatic tension and intensity that you were able to create. How did you do this? What performance techniques did you use?

Post-Production discussion:

In Blair's production, how is the moment of "falling" for Romeo and Juliet staged as a basic human experience? What was the impact on the audience? On a scale of 1 -10 of intensity, how convincing was the scene and why? Compare to famous moments, in other productions/interpretations, such as Di Caprio and Danes in Lurman's version. Watch and analyse how the filmic and/or production elements of these versions contribute to the impact of the moment?

Imaginative writing:

Your boyfriend/girlfriend/first love has been expelled from school/sent away. Your parents have forbidden you to follow. Brainstorm the emotions you have and responses that you contemplate before writing.

Write a journal entry or formal letter to an authority figure or a monologue, in which you reveal a plan, and ask for assistance, to reunite you with your lover.

Ensure you are factual, logical and persuasive. Think carefully about the appropriate language and register for your chosen audience, such as a friend or nanny.

THEMES - family feud and death

Post-Production Reflection:

Shakespeare's language gives no clue as to what the feud is about. How is this ancient feuding created and developed in the play? How is the feud revealed in the STC production? What clues or choices were made in production?

What do you think is suggested through Blair's production choices and casting about the feud to intensify its relevance to contemporary Australian audiences? Are the choices successful or not? Justify your answer.

At end of the play as the feud is resolved, what social and political resonance does Blair suggest you should walk away with? Justify your response with examples.

THEMES - light and dark

Rehearsal Workshop:

The teacher establishes a safe environment in which students can move around the space in the dark. Students improvise and explore, lead by side coaching from the teacher, different ways of moving in the dark. Repeat the exercise with the lights on, encouraging the students to notice the impact of lights on the way they move in a space and respond emotionally, subconsciously to their environment.

Compare the freedoms and restrictions of moving in the two states. What physical choices would you make as actor in the dark/night time scenes, such as the on the balcony, in the tomb? Improvise moving in these spaces. For example, when it is dark, the scenes are intimate, when light comes, the scenes and action become more public.

Movement and design workshop:

Find 5 references to light in the play. Put them into sequence to tell a story. Find 5 about dark, and add them to the sequence. Stage and light these moments as an exercise as naturalistically or abstractly as you choose.

Post-Production Reflection:

How were these lines explored/treated/staged/created by Wayne Blair in the STC production? How were the ideas explored through lighting, sound, design, blocking choices and movement? What tension does the light bring?

CHALLENGE: Visit The Globe Theatre website and/or watch extracts from the film, *Shakespeare in Love* to gain an understanding of the intimacy, energy and dynamics of the stage for which Shakespeare was writing. Block, rehearse and perform various night and day scenes for The Globe stage, taking into consideration what you have discovered in the rehearsal workshops. You may choose to design and operate lighting for these scenes to support your interpretation.

LANGUAGE - The story teller ...

Rehearsal workshop:

Shakespeare is a master “story teller”. What is the function of the Friar’s speech in Act 5 Sc 3? What dramatic purpose does it serve? How necessary is it? As a contemporary director would you edit this?

Actor’s Exploration:

In our contemporary world, who would you go to for advice, support and counsel, in place of a friar or religious leader? If you were directing a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, how would you direct/design/devise a concept for this?

Post-Production Analysis:

What choices did Blair make in interpreting the character and role of the Friar? If and how, did this change the role of the Friar as a character? What was his social status in Blair’s production? How is he different to the chorus that presents the Prologue?

Where is the Friar’s cell in the STC production? What is implied about secrecy, confidentiality and the tension of his dark, safe, hidden place? How is this done?

LANGUAGE – time and urgency ...

Design workshop:

Juliet is impatient and longs for Romeo ... “Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds leap to these arms ...” Act 3, Scene 2

Identify language in her monologue that creates a sense of urgency of speed and impatient desire. Express Juliet’s emotions visually as an artwork - draw her impatience on A3 using large coloured crayons.

Rehearsal Workshop:

Two students playing Romeo & Juliet sit back to back and say their lines with the other repeating/echoing the words that relate to time, urgency, the coming of dawn etc using the “more light and light it grows, more dark and dark our woes” scene.

LANGUAGE – talking out loud ...

Actor's workshop:

What is the dramatic function of a soliloquy?

Warm up: Students stand in the space, text in hand. Read Juliet's monologue around the room; changing reader at each punctuation break. Assign lines and block the students as a chorus in various open or intimate configurations or ask students to move while they speak their phrase.

Students work individually to rehearse and deliver Juliet's monologue (and other monologues) to different audiences. Try choosing one sentence and one focus point for different deliveries. Your audience may be another imaginary character, an absent character, a god, even an object.

Workshop reflection: What choices for audience worked best and why?

Post-Production Reflection:

How is Juliet's monologue interpreted in the STC production? Are we included as audience? What connection did you feel?

Creative Writing Task:

As result of one actor's performance in the STC production of *Romeo and Juliet*, which minor character did you find most engaging/entertaining? Using your developed understanding of the soliloquy, allow this character to be the voice for a monologue you write and perform, exposing their feelings reactions/thoughts to a significant moment eg Romeo's banishment, Mercutio's death, Juliet's "death".

Post-Task Reflection:

How hard is it to write a soliloquy? Why?

CHALLENGE: Rewrite the chorus' Prologue in contemporary Australian dialogue as one of the other characters.

LANGUAGE – of love ...

Pre-Reading Rehearsal Workshop:

Students engage with the text as a group for this exercise. Provide the group with a "chopped up" sonnet, the lines in random order.

Using their knowledge of sonnets but perhaps not having read the text, students order the lines and turn their version of the sonnet into a group/chorus/ensemble performance poetry piece. Encourage students to use interpretive and chorus movement to perform.

Workshop Reflection:

What can we learn about situation, tension and mood from this interpretation? How did this exercise develop your understanding of Shakespeare's craft and the mechanics of sonnets?

Post-Production Reflection:

How is the sonnet presented in the STC production to bring the play's ideas and love poetry to life?

DRAMATIC ACTION AND STAGING – tick, tock, tick, tock ...

Rehearsal Workshop:

The dramatic action and tension of the play is dependent on the contracted time period of 4 days, which forces character growth.

Warmup: Play a game of “tag” with the class. Each student has a strip of coloured fabric tucked into the back of his or her belt/trousers/uniform. The aim is to grab the slips of as many other players as possible without losing your own. The winner is the student who has the most strips in his/her belt.

Block one of the fight scenes using the concept of action and reaction. For example: Tybalt and Benvolio, or Mercutio and Romeo. Before you begin, determine a fighting convention that will influence the energy, dynamics and pace of the scene and depending on setting and context of your production e.g. Kung Fu, swords, boxing, guns. Stage the scene with this intention (but obviously not the weapons!)

CHALLENGE: The actors are only allowed to move when speaking a line of dialogue.

Post-Rehearsal reflection:

What are the challenges of staging fights and creating dramatic tension through physical action?

DRAMATIC ACTION AND STAGING – don’t do as I do, do as I say...

Actor’s Workshop:

Many of Shakespeare’s implied stage directions are imbedded in his text or are explicit in his language.

Identify the use of this technique in dialogue from the nurse for example. Take the “stage directions” only from her speech with Juliet upon her return and turn them into a movement sequence, physicalising the emotions and energy in your interpretation of the nurse. Now rehearse the duologue with Juliet incorporating the dialogue.

CHALLENGE: Play the scene using a rubber dyna-band or length of rope. The two actors hold an end each and push/pull/ connect and explore the dynamic and objectives of the characters of the Nurse and Juliet through the tension in the band/rope.

Post-Workshop Reflection:

Does the action need to come before or after the line to make sense of it? How did you find and develop the comedy, tension and engagement of the scene? How does the action hasten the pace and tragedy in Act 2 sc 5?

DRAMATIC ACTION AND STAGING – the chorus ...

Pre-Rehearsal Analysis:

Who is the chorus? What was Shakespeare's intention/interpretation of its function? What would be the impact of removing the prologue and the beginning of Act 2?

Rehearsal Workshop:

Give a copy of the Prologue to students without its punctuation. Students apply their understanding of iambic pentameter (5 stressed syllables in each line) to divide/structure it into verse lines for performance or a moved reading.

CHALLENGE: Students could be challenged to use percussion instruments to create rhythm or Suzuki performance conventions or appropriate performance style such as physical theatre or Greek mask to stylise their ideas.

Post-Production Discussion:

How has Blair used/interpreted the chorus? Compare his portrayal to the creation of the chorus in other productions such as Baz Lurman's newsreaders.

DESIGN - do you see what I see? ...

Costume design workshop:

Select one of following design concepts and visually express costumes for 4 of the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*:

- light vs dark
- in contemporary world
- old vs young
- wise vs naïve
- public vs private
- male vs female
- hot vs cold

Post-Production Analysis:

How was the realm of the different families and generations been represented through costume in Blair's production? Discuss the effectiveness of these design choices in interpreting the play for a contemporary audience.

DIRECTORIAL CHOICES – our social, political and cultural contexts

Pre-Production Discussion:

What political/social/cultural context could be presented through a production interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* for a contemporary audience? (For example: Palestine, South Africa, Aboriginal Australia, or Northern Ireland)

Research Exercise:

Using The Globe Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company and Bell Shakespeare websites examine the directorial concepts of other productions.

Discuss the mindset of one of the first audiences at The Globe Theatre. How would their experience differ as a groundling compared to your experience reading the text in class and your experience at STC Wharf on Sydney Harbour. How might this compare to the experience of an audience seeing the production in Alice Springs?

Post-Production Analysis:

What is context is presented or implied by the STC production? What effect does Blair's choice have on the relevance of the production to an Australian audience? What effect do his choices have on your engagement and understanding of the tragedy and conflict in the play? Select his most effective choice and provide reasons why.

DIRECTORIAL CHOICES – men are from Mars, women are from Venus ...

Pre-Production Discussion:

How is gender important in *Romeo and Juliet*?

Actor's Workshop:

Two students play Romeo and Juliet during the balcony scene. The rest of the group stands between the 2 actors who are trying to speak to each other. With a more confident, trusting group, one ½ grasp onto one character, the other ½ grasp onto the second character. The aim is to hold the actors playing Romeo and Juliet back from each other, increasing the resistance as the tension and desire of the balcony scene unfolds. Romeo and Juliet's objective is to reach each other and make physical contact. Try this with other scenes between the two characters.

How do Romeo and Juliet react differently to the resistance? Whom did they imagine the resistance to be coming from?

Post-Production Discussion:

As audience to Blair's production, how are we positioned in relation to these two families - is it gender or cultural lines? What would be the effect and implications if an Indigenous woman played Juliet?

How is the Montague family portrayed? Consider casting, costuming, lighting, music, setting and the delivery/pace/accents of the dialogue. Consider the same for the Capulets.

Consider the famous romantic scene on balcony and its original portrayal by 2 male actors. You may like to view different interpretations. In Blair's contemporary interpretation how has the tension been successfully portrayed?

Romeo and Juliet


















Legend







♥	Falls in love	➔	Sent to penalty box: Banished	⊗	Own goal: Commits suicide
⬠	Home run: Marries	X	Ejected from game: Dies	.	Appears in scene
!	Consummates a marriage	T	Plays a trick: Fakes own death	”	Famous quote

Characters, in order of appearance



		Act	1					2						3					4					5		
		Scene	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
Capulets	1	Sampson, a servant																								
	2	Gregory, a servant																								
	3	Tybalt, nephew of wife of Capulet																								
	4	Old Capulet																								
	5	Wife of Capulet																								
	6	Count Paris, kinsman of the Prince																								
	7	Nurse to Juliet																								
	8	Juliet, daughter of Capulet																								
Montagues	9	Abram, servant to Montague																								
	10	Benvolio, nephew of Montague																								
	11	Old Montague																								
	12	Wife of Montague																								
	13	Romeo, son of Montague																								
	14	Mercutio, friend of Romeo																								
	15	Escalus, Prince of Verona																								
	16	Friar Laurence																								

Table 12-1 (continued)

Symbol	Description
	Falls in love
	Falls in love with the wrong person
	Falls out of love
	Sent to penalty box: Banished
	Returns to game: Returns from banishment
F	Foul: Attacks someone
S	Sacked: Victim of an attack
X	Ejected from game: Dies
	Commits suicide
A	Arrested
	Pardoned
+	Reunited with long-lost kin
R	Rescues or saves someone's life
	Defeated in battle
	Victorious in battle
	Crowned king or queen
	Deposed
M	Goes mad
	Visited by supernatural beings
C	Involved in a conspiracy
	Gets lost
?	Mistaken for someone else
T	Plays a trick (fakes own death, for example)
TT	Plays a counter-trick
	Uses a potion or poison
	Dons a disguise
	Removes a disguise
	Challenges to a duel
B	Betrays a friend or country
J	Jealous rage

Symbol	Description
	Heals a sick person
	Sends a letter or message
	Receives a letter or message
P	Makes a prophecy or prediction
	Seeks help
	Rejects help
	Shipwrecked

If an event takes place offstage but is described by someone onstage, you can put the symbol in parentheses. Sometimes, a director will choose to show these events. If the events are on the scorecard, you can follow them as they happen onstage. The parentheses tell you not to expect to see them.

On a scorecard, each character has a number, which you can use to denote actions that involve other characters. For example, when Romeo marries Juliet, you can mark Romeo's symbol as 8, where Juliet is number 8. Similarly, mark Juliet's symbol as 13, because Romeo is number 13.