



INDIANA
REPERTORY
THEATRE

William
Shakespeare's
**Romeo and
Juliet**

January 20 –
March 3, 2018

on the IRT's
OneAmerica
Mainstage

STUDY GUIDE

edited by Richard J Roberts, Resident Dramaturg

with contributions by Janet Allen • Henry Woronicz
Eric Barker • Courtney Foxworthy • Linda Pisano
Michael Jackson • Randy Pease

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Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

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www.irtlive.com

SEASON SPONSOR

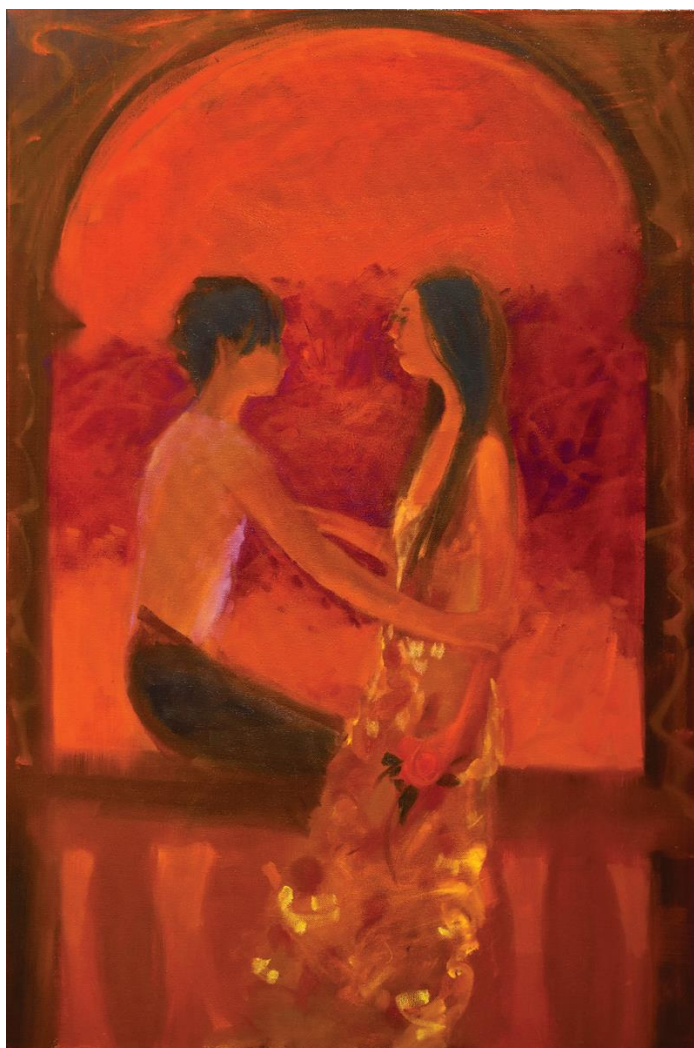


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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *ROMEO AND JULIET*

A timeless and timely tale of young love struggling to survive amid old hatreds. Shakespeare's most beloved play is as vibrant and lively as ever, speaking boldly across the centuries to the divided world we live in today.

Teachers spoke, and IRT has listened. The Bard returns to IRT's stage with a new Young Audiences production that will be the perfect companion to your classroom study. Students will hear Shakespeare's words come to life and see the drama unfold live, as it was meant to be. *Romeo and Juliet* has been presented and adapted countless times, so join us as we seek to recount their tragic love story in a new way for a new generation of students.

STUDENT MATINEES 10:30 AM on January 23, 24, 25, 29, and February 5, 12
9:45 AM and 12:00 PM on January 26, 30, 31 and February 1, 2, 6-9, 13-16, 20-23

ESTIMATED LENGTH Approximately 95 minutes

AGE RANGE Recommended for grades 7-12

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cover art by Kyle Ragsdale

EDUCATION SALES

Randy D. Pease • 317-916-4842
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OUTREACH PROGRAMS

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THE STORY OF *ROMEO AND JULIET*

Romeo and Juliet is perhaps Shakespeare's most familiar play. Its tale of forbidden love translates into all cultures and has inspired music, operas, ballets, and films. Even people who have never read or seen the play know lines from it, so pervasive is its influence in world culture.

Since Shakespeare wrote the play in 1596, nearly every generation has felt its resonance. In recent decades, Franco Zeffirelli's lush 1968 film *Romeo and Juliet*, starring teenage actors, spoke to the turbulent sixties. Baz Luhrmann's 1996 *Romeo + Juliet*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, used rapid-cutting film techniques to capture the play for the MTV generation. The musical *West Side Story* (stage 1957, film 1961) updated the story by portraying the feuding Capulets and Montagues as rival street gangs in New York City.

The original Italian story of Romeo and Juliet dates back to medieval times, but Shakespeare gave it his own twists and turns. After a brawl between the two rival families, Romeo, a Montague, confesses to his cousin Benvolio that he loves Rosaline. Benvolio and Mercutio convince Romeo to crash a party at the enemy Capulets, where he meets and falls in love with their daughter, Juliet. Hiding from his friends after the party, he overhears Juliet profess her feelings for him. They share words of love and plan to marry in the famous balcony scene.

The next afternoon, with the help of Juliet's nurse (or nanny), Romeo and Juliet are secretly married by Friar Laurence, Romeo's friend and advisor, who believes that he might heal the war between the two families by uniting their children. Soon after, Romeo and Mercutio encounter Juliet's temperamental cousin Tybalt, who provokes a fight. As Romeo attempts to part them, Tybalt kills Mercutio. Romeo, in grief and anger, kills Tybalt. The families blame each other for this new violence, and the Prince banishes Romeo from the city.

The Friar arranges for Romeo to live in nearby Mantua until he can arrange to reunite the couple, who spend one brief night together. Meanwhile, Juliet's parents decide to marry her to Paris. She goes for counsel to Friar Laurence, who devises yet another plan: Juliet is to take a drug which will put her into a death-like trance until Romeo can take her away with him. Believing her dead, Juliet's family places her body in their mausoleum. But the Friar's message to Romeo goes astray, and Romeo, too, believes that Juliet is dead. This confusion leads inevitably to the play's tragic conclusion.



The company of the IRT's 2018 production of Romeo and Juliet. Photo by Zach Rosing.

THE “OTHER”

BY JANET ALLEN, EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

One need look no farther than the headlines of any current news source to know that teen suicide is again on the climb, making *Romeo and Juliet* a relevant and necessary piece of theatrical literature in our time. Why do young people take their own lives? Often this has to do with a fundamental misunderstanding, as it does in this play. Romeo and Juliet’s misunderstanding springs from a letter that goes undelivered, but it is emblematic of so many misunderstandings that plague our young people today: the letter could easily be substituted for a text or tweet or email gone wrong. It is too easy to find contemporary resonance in this ancient play.

We know that what leads to Romeo and Juliet’s collective demise is a feud between their families. The play doesn’t iterate how this feud came to pass or who started it—only that when members of the families meet, it soon turns to bloodshed. Here Shakespeare signifies how human division becomes so easily ingrained: whether it is differences of race, or socio-economics, or class, or religion, humans are very good at identifying the “other” and assuming the worst of anyone who is or seems to be part of that “other” group. Americans are particularly good at this division at present, and have further refined the lines of supposed “otherness” to include those who are differently educated or those who live differently. In our own state, the divisions are as much urban or rural, city or small town, college educated or not, as they are racial or economic. We are at no loss to find differences from people who, for one reason or another, we deem to threaten our way of life. That we do so keeps us from understanding individuals for themselves; rather we see them as emblems of their group identity.

Romeo and Juliet look past those “other” stigmas in an instant: they see each other as individuals, unique beings, not as members of a rival family or group. Love blinds them to differences. It also, in Shakespeare’s hands, makes them poets. Their love literally ennoble their speech, lifting it to dizzying heights of metaphor and wisdom. Their love also leads them to higher purpose: they want to mend their warring families through their love, to teach healing and forgiveness. This is why they are so moving to us more than 400 years after Shakespeare created them: they are wiser than their elders and have deeper wells of compassion and forgiveness. They are wiser than us.

None of this is to suggest that Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is to be seen merely as a sociological tract; of course not. It exists as a great flight of poetry, with some of Shakespeare’s best wrought characters and most breathtaking plot. Consequently, it is a play that we need to see several times in our lives: first when we are perhaps even younger than the doomed lovers; then at their age, when the play can sweep us off our feet; then as young adults reflecting on the loss of innocence that we, too, needed in order to grow; then as parents who bear the terrible burden of overlooking our children’s heart struggles; then as elders whose wisdom should be leading our communities out of the narrow confines of teaching hate to our children. We each fall on this continuum somewhere. *Romeo and Juliet* reminds us that we must take responsibility for teaching our children to value life and understanding over hate and division. Only then, perhaps, can we keep from losing our children to death at their own hands.

LOVE IN A DISTRACTED WORLD

BY HENRY WORONICZ, DIRECTOR

Discovering love, in all its complication and confusion, is a large part of growing up. These days especially, it seems that this emotion intrudes on our young at an ever earlier age: the young do not stay young for very long anymore. Perhaps more than any other of Shakespeare's plays, *Romeo and Juliet* speaks to the young, and thus any production of the play cannot ignore the turmoil and exhilaration, the despair and joy, the beating pulse of what it means to be young and falling in love.

We have taken our cue for this production from the world we live in now: driven, distracted, and somewhat left to its own devices. We've discovered in the play a world too caught up in its own status, so busy with its own likes and dislikes and the pursuit of a single-minded happiness, that it becomes all too easy to dismiss, or even hate, the "other" in our midst. In the middle of this tumult, the play presents two young people, a little awkward, a little shy, not yet sure how to negotiate this rushing world. And we watch them stumble, however unexpectedly, toward that rarest of things: true love (and at first sight, no less). It comes to them in the dark, in a star-lit courtyard, but surrounded by fear and the unknown. They touch its glittering surface for a moment, and then spend the rest of their short lives struggling to regain that effervescence. But their lives are wasted in the attempt, in no small part because they receive precious little guidance on their journey.

For ultimately, *Romeo and Juliet* is a social tragedy, and it is their families and friends who let these lovers down, and ultimately bear the heavy burden of their community's loss. Writing of the play, the critic J. A. Bryant Jr. once said, "no one has described more poignantly [than Shakespeare] the beauty of young love ... and no one has portrayed more honestly than he the destructiveness of any love which ignores the mortality of those who make it." He concludes by telling us that Romeo and

Juliet both have "a legitimate claim to our respect ... and the youth of both relieves them of our ultimate censure, which falls not on the stars, but on all those whose thoughtlessness denied them the time they so desperately needed."

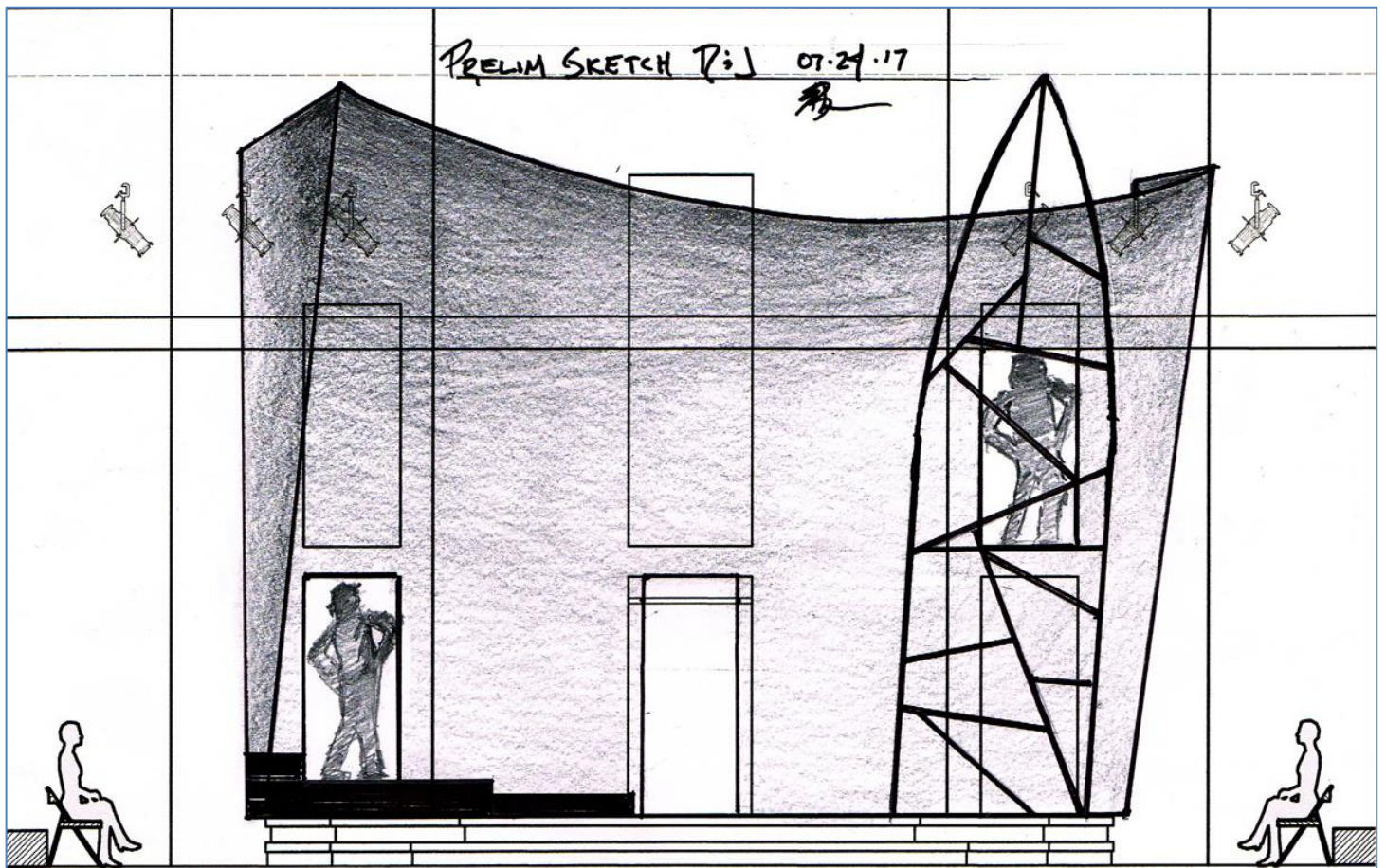


Sophia Macías as Juliet and Aaron Kirby as Romeo in the IRT's 2018 production of Romeo and Juliet. Photo by Zach Rosing.

DESIGNER NOTES: YOUR NEIGHBORS, THE CAPULETS & THE MONTEGUES

ERIC BARKER SCENIC DESIGNER

When director Henry Woronicz proposed his contemporary vision of *Romeo and Juliet*, we discussed how the Montagues and the Capulets could be represented in the world today, rich versus poor, urban versus country, and how first love can be messy. I set forth exploring how I could present these ideas visually through the use of contrasting building materials. There is the stark, cold sensation of the stainless steel wall against the warmth of the wood tones in the panelized floor, with endless bands of this cold steel constantly dividing the panels. As the actors utilize the space and bring it to life, the audience is afforded the opportunity to gather their own personal and emotional responses to these very contrasting scenic elements and how each represents the families.



Preliminary sketch by scenic designer Eric Barker.

COURTNEY FOXWORTHY & LINDA PISANO CO-COSTUME DESIGNERS

The costumes for *Romeo and Juliet* are from the present day. We hope that audience members will find pieces of themselves in these characters, and that a viewer could say, “Hey, I know that person.” By making these characters familiar, their tragic story has the potential to be more relatable to young audiences. The research and inspiration for this production came primarily through people watching, looking at current trends, and many hours of binge watching teen dramas such as *The Vampire Diaries*. Many of these characters come from money, and it is important that status

is shown through the clothing they wear. Although a majority of these costumes could be considered off-the-rack, together they convey an overall moody theatrical feeling that is true to the characters and relatable to audiences.

Preliminary costume sketches for Romeo and Juliet by co-designer Courtney Foxworthy



MICHAEL JACKSON LIGHTING DESIGNER

This production of *Romeo and Juliet* is grounded in a contemporary context. It is a world that is familiar to the audience, a Verona where the characters seem to be people who are like us. Accordingly, the lighting helps to reinforce that world using a cinematic approach, a vocabulary inspired by our own mediated culture. My goal for this production is to help reveal that even though the darkness is always just under the surface, this is a world where the possibility of love seems real and recognizable. The lighting provides each location its own unique energy in a simple, theatrical way; and as the play moves quickly from scene to scene, it helps to drive the story forward. I hope that this approach helps to provide a fresh path into this story that we all know so well.



SHAKESPEARE ENDURES

by Richard J Roberts, Dramaturg

Although William Shakespeare is generally considered the greatest dramatist in the English language, few facts are known about his life. Only a handful of legal documents verify his existence. Tradition has it that he was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, a small market town, on April 23, 1564. His father was a glove-maker who became High Bailiff of Stratford, a position similar to our mayor.

As the son of a leading citizen, Shakespeare would have gone to Stratford's highly regarded grammar school. Class was in session year round for nine hours a day. The curriculum consisted almost entirely of Latin: grammar, reading, writing, and recitation. By the time Shakespeare was a youth, many traveling theatre companies of significance had visited Stratford, so it is fair to guess that he saw some of them and admired their art.

At age 18, Shakespeare married 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. Six months later, their daughter Susanna was born; two years later came twins, Hamnet and Judith. We know nothing of the circumstances by which Shakespeare left Stratford and his family to become an actor and playwright in London; but by 1594 Shakespeare was established at the center of theatrical activity, for he is recorded as a shareholder in the Globe Theatre.

Over the next fifteen years, Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, several narrative poems, and more than 150 sonnets. He became the most popular playwright in London's highly competitive theatrical world. He was granted a coat of arms, thus officially making him a gentleman, and he bought sizeable pieces of real estate in and around Stratford with his earnings.

Shakespeare wrote for an open stage that thrust into the center of a teeming circle of commoners and aristocrats representing all layers of British society. His actors wore cast-offs from their aristocratic patrons: whether senators of ancient Rome, courtiers of English kings, or fairies in Illyria, his characters wore the same clothes as their audience. No plywood cut-out trees or cardboard castle walls cluttered his stage; it was words alone that created smoky caves, open fields, moonlit forests, or glittering palaces in his audiences' eyes. Lighting was provided by the afternoon sun, shining through the theatre's open roof.

Shakespeare's plays exhibit not only a fine sense of poetry and stagecraft, but also an excellent awareness of the political and literary atmosphere in which he lived. These were tempestuous times socially and politically, and Shakespeare used his plays metaphorically to suggest how, in a changing society, order could be made out of chaos. The very name of his home theatre, the Globe, acknowledged not only Columbus's earth-changing geographical discovery of barely one hundred years earlier, but also the universal meaning of the stories acted out on the stage at its core.

That universality has not diminished in the 400 years since. Shakespeare coined hundreds of words and dozens of phrases we use every day. His plays are performed not only in English-speaking countries but around the world. In America he is consistently the most frequently performed playwright, and there are several companies devoted primarily to his plays. The Internet Movie Data Base lists 1,338 film projects based on his works, including 47 released in 2017 alone.

Shakespeare died in 1616 and was buried in Stratford. In 1623, two of his fellow actors and a London printer published a collected edition of his plays. This kind of publication was rare in its day, as plays were valued for their commercial appeal on the stage, with little thought of them as literature to be preserved. No doubt some of the texts were reconstructed from memory or from a stage manager's promptbook. Nonetheless, this First Folio preserved for posterity some of the greatest writing in the English language, allowing us to study and perform Shakespeare's plays more than 400 years later and for generations to come.

Why do we still pay attention?
Shakespeare's characters speak a poetry that is strange to our ears and sends us tripping over outdated vocabulary. But the stories they enact are as fresh as tomorrow's headlines. The ideas in the plays are so powerful that they burst through, despite the presence of a few unfamiliar words. Expend a little effort to really, really listen, and the poetry provides immense rewards. Shakespeare transformed the stuff of life into art, and through his art we see our own lives more clearly than before.

This painting discovered in 2006 by the Cobbe family in Dublin is thought to be the only portrait of William Shakespeare painted during his lifetime.



SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATRE

In Shakespeare's day, playgoing was enormously popular for all classes of people, and new theatres were springing up across London. None was more popular than Shakespeare's home theatre. The Globe functioned in many ways as a metaphor for contemporary concepts of society, civilization, and the universe at large. The name of the theatre itself—the Globe—suggested that the events portrayed on its stage were symbolic of events happening in the world. The building's shape, an octagon, suggested the round shape of the world itself.

The Globe was located on the south bank of the River Thames in a disreputable part of London. Built in 1599, the wood-and-plaster building held more than 2,000 spectators, and popular plays often sold out. The public entered through a narrow door located at the base of a small tower. Inside, the building was open to the sky, and performances took place in the afternoon sun.

The audience surrounding the stage was arranged to reflect society at large. Standing on the ground around the stage itself, in the area known as the Pit, were the penny groundlings—those of the lowest classes who paid the least for admittance. Three surrounding levels of balconies rose above them, with correspondingly rising admission prices; Elizabethan society, from top to bottom, was clearly divided and arranged for all to see. Thus an audience member at the Globe could not help but feel his or her place in the world order.

The stage itself jutted out into the center of the yard. On each side of the stage, two tall columns, known as the Pillars of Hercules, were carved and brightly painted. Underneath the roof, the "heavens" were painted sky blue and decorated with starry signs of the Zodiac. Tucked under that ceiling was a small balcony where the theatre's musicians played "the Music of the Spheres." At the rear of the stage, on each side, were doors to the backstage area, known as the tiring house, through which the players made their entrances and exits. Between the doors, a brightly painted curtain hid a small alcove, the "discovery" area; above was an often-used balcony.

There was very little scenery. Most of the company's expense went into costumes. Audiences loved noise and spectacle, so the plays had lots of action and violence. Thunder was created by rolling a cannonball across the wooden floor above the stage. Ghosts and other spirits could be raised from below the stage through trap doors or lowered from the "heavens" by a small crane.

At the center of the Globe was the actor. Men played all the parts, since it was against the law for women to act on the stage; young teenage boys played the female roles. The groundlings crowded close to the stage, and the actor-audience relationship was an intimate one.

Shakespeare wrote for an audience who was largely illiterate; most people obtained their news, religious instruction, and entertainment by ear. Without modern stage and lighting effects, location, time, and atmosphere, as well as emotions and ideas, had to be communicated through dialogue.

Shakespeare's plays were very popular, appealing to a wide spectrum of society. Yet his use of language clearly shows that he expected his audience to understand and appreciate puns, paradoxes, and nuances of meaning, complex metaphors, and innovative vocabulary. It may be a bit more challenging in our highly visual age to tune in our ears, but theatregoers of all ages still thrill to Shakespeare's eloquent exploration of the human condition.

Shakespeare's Globe, a recreation of the Globe Theatre built on the site of the original in London.



RESOURCES FOR THE TEACHER

BOOKS FOR YOUR GENERAL BACKGROUND IN SHAKESPEARE

Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare by Stephen Greenblatt

A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599 by James Shapiro

Evoking Shakespeare by Peter Brook

Shakespeare Our Contemporary by Jan Kott

Where Queen Elizabeth Slept & What the Butler Saw by David N. Durant

The Riverside Shakespeare, Second Edition

GOOD REFERENCE TEXTS IN TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

All the Words on Stage: A Complete Pronunciation Dictionary for the Plays of William Shakespeare
by Louis Scheeder & Shane Ann Younts

Brush Up Your Shakespeare! by Michael Macrone

Essential Shakespeare Handbook by Leslie Dunton-Downer & Alan Riding

Shakespeare A to Z by Charles Boyce

Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion by David & Ben Crystal

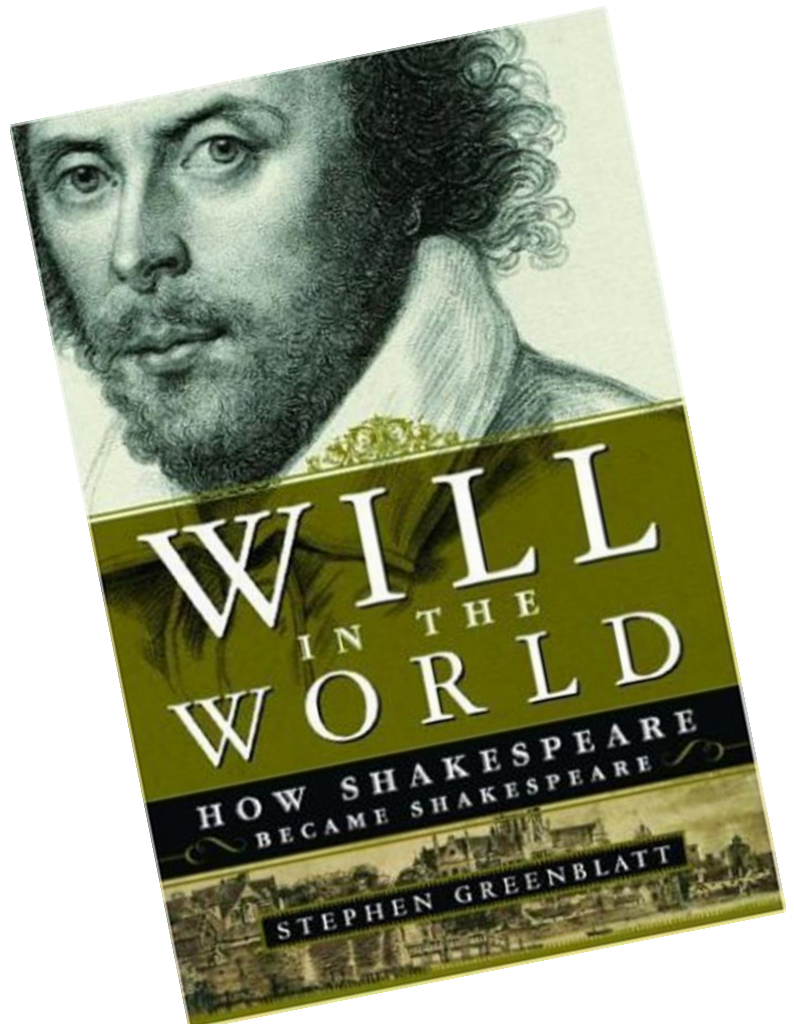
Key Shakespeare: English and Drama Activities for Teaching Shakespeare to 14-16 Year Olds, Book 2 by Judith Ackroyd, Jonothan Neelands, Michael Supple, & Jo Trowsdale

*Stepping into Shakespeare: Practical Ways
of Teaching Shakespeare to Younger
Learners* (Cambridge School
Shakespeare) by Rex Gibson

*Practical Approaches to Teaching
Shakespeare* (Oxford School
Shakespeare) by Peter Reynolds

Acting in Shakespeare by Robert Cohen

*Coined by Shakespeare: Words and
Meanings First Penned by the Bard* by
Stanley Malless, Jeffrey McQuain, & R.
O. Blechman



RESOURCES TO AID YOU IN TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

Clues to Acting Shakespeare by Wesley Van Tassel

Discovering Shakespeare's Language (Cambridge School Shakespeare) by Rex Gibson & Janet Field-Pickering

Teaching Shakespeare: A Handbook for Teachers (Cambridge School Shakespeare) by Rex Gibson

Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth & Midsummer Night's Dream (The Folger Library) edited by Peggy O'Brien

WATCH THESE DVDS

Life of Shakespeare (1978) w/ Tim Curry

Playing Shakespeare w/John Barton (1982)

Shakespeare Retold (2007)

BBC Shakespeare Comedies DVD Giftbox

Dead Poets Society (1989)

Me and Orson Welles (2008) w/Zach Efron

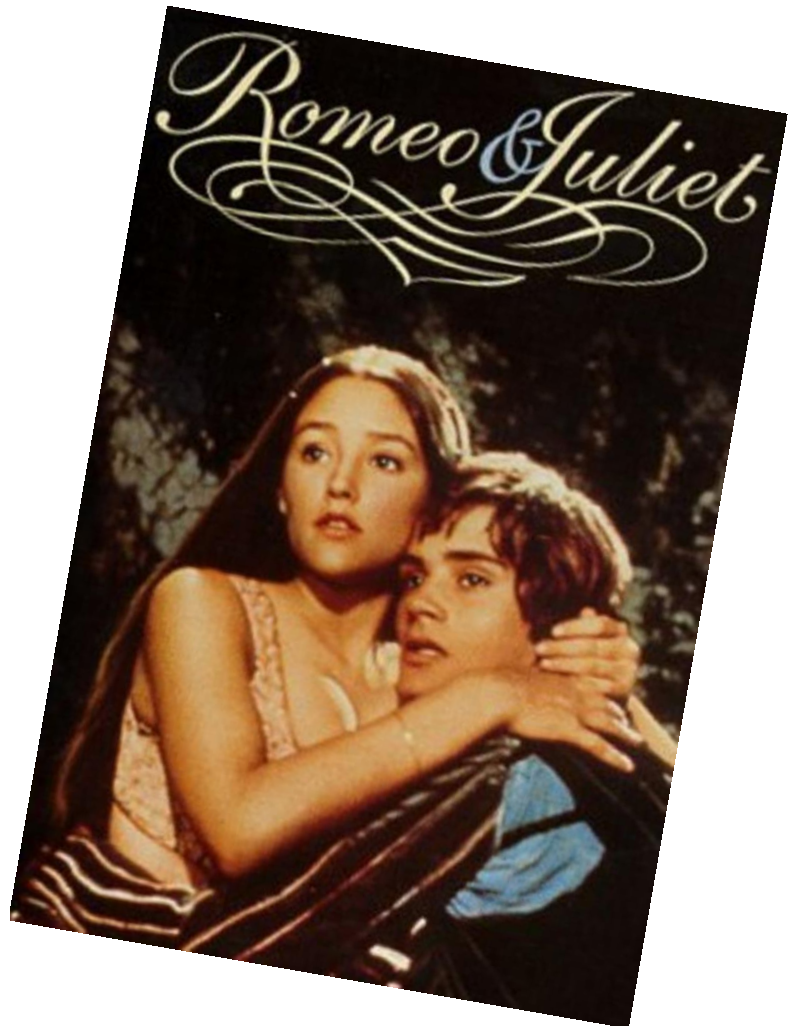
Shakespeare in Love (1998)

Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)

Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996)

West Side Story (1961)

Shakespeare Uncovered



VISIT THESE WEBSITES

<http://www.folger.edu>

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com>

<http://www.shakespeare-online.com>

<http://www.bardweb.net/>

<http://www.kn.att.com/wired/fil/pages/listshakespeka2.html>

<http://www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org/education>

<http://www.folger.edu/Content/Teach-and-Learn/Teaching-Resources/Play-by-Play/>

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS GRADES 9-12

CHECK OUT THESE BOOKS

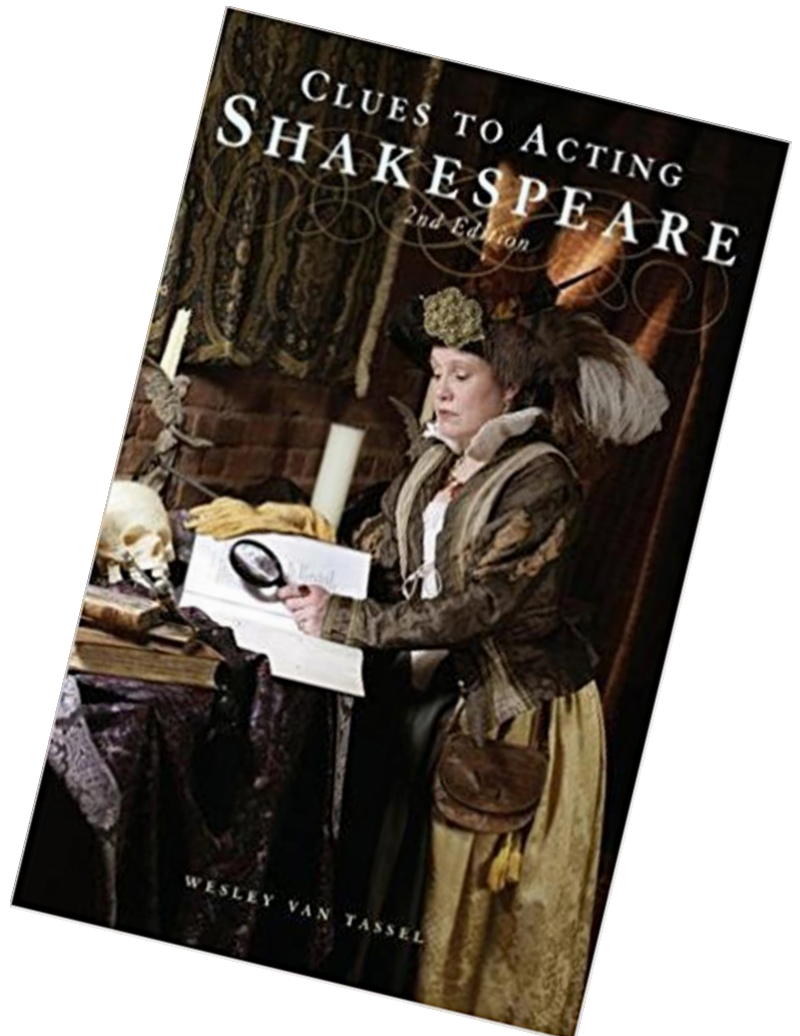
The Friendly Shakespeare: A Thoroughly Painless Guide to the Best of the Bard by Norrie Epstein
Essential Shakespeare Handbook by Leslie Dunton-Downer & Alan Riding
Shakespeare A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Plays, His Poems, His Life and Times, and More by Charles Boyce
Clues to Acting Shakespeare by Wesley Van Tassel
Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion by David & Ben Crystal
Brush Up Your Shakespeare! by Michael Macrone
Coined by Shakespeare: Words and Meanings First Penned by the Bard by Stanley Malless, Jeffrey McQuain, & R. O. Blechman
Romeo and Juliet (Cambridge School Shakespeare)
Romeo and Juliet (Oxford School Shakespeare)

WATCH THESE DVDS

Shakespeare in Love (1998)
The Standard Deviants—Shakespeare series (2004)
Playing Shakespeare w/John Barton (1982)
Shakespeare Retold (2007)
Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)
Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996)
West Side Story (1961)

VISIT THESE WEBSITES

No Fear Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*
<http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/>
<http://www.folger.edu>
<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>
<http://www.shakespeare-online.com>
<http://www.bardweb.net/>



RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS GRADES 7-8

CHECK OUT THESE BOOKS

Eyewitness: Shakespeare by Peter Chrisp

The Usborne World of Shakespeare by Anna Claybourne and Rebecca Treays

Brush Up Your Shakespeare! by Michael Macrone

The Shakespeare Stealer by Gary Blackwood

Tales from Shakespeare by Tina Packard

Shakespeare Stories by Leon Garfield

Coined by Shakespeare: Words and Meanings First Penned by the Bard by Stanley Malless, Jeffrey McQuain, & R. O. Blechman

Romeo and Juliet (Cambridge School Shakespeare)

Romeo and Juliet (Oxford School Shakespeare)

WATCH THESE DVDS

The Standard Deviants—Shakespeare series (2004)

Shakespeare Retold (2007)

Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)

Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996)

West Side Story (1961)

VISIT THESE WEBSITES

<http://www.folger.edu/Content/Teach-and-Learn/Shakespeare-for-Kids/>

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

<http://www.shakespeare-online.com>

<http://www.bardweb.net/>



ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Seeing a performance at Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip would be:

READING – LITERATURE

- RL.1 – Read and comprehend a variety of literature independently and proficiently
- RL.2 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by analyzing, inferring, and drawing conclusions about literary elements, themes, and central ideas
 - Sample: 9-10.RL.2.2: *Analyze in detail the development of two or more themes or central ideas over the course of a work of literature, including how they emerge and are shaped and refined by specific details.*
- RL.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature, using knowledge of literary structure and point of view
 - Sample: 11-12.RL.3.2: *Analyze a work of literature in which the reader must distinguish between what is directly stated and what is intended (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement) in order to understand the point of view.*
- RL.4 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by connecting various literary works and analyzing how medium and interpretation impact meaning

READING – NONFICTION

- RN.2 – Extract and construct meaning from nonfiction texts using a range of comprehension skills
 - Sample: 8.RN.2.3: *Analyze how a text makes connections and distinctions among individuals, events, and ideas.*

READING – VOCABULARY

- RV.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
 - Sample: 9-10.RV.3.3: *Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.*



BEFORE SEEING *ROMEO AND JULIET*

DISCUSSION

If your class is not reading the play, review the story. This can be done by having your students read aloud the synopsis or assigning each group a section of the story to present back to the class. The act and scene breakdown in *Shakespeare A to Z* would help to facilitate this activity.

Discuss Shakespeare as not only a playwright, but also a poet. Before reading or seeing the play, read some poetry or nursery rhymes aloud with your students. Include rhyming, blank verse, free verse, and a sonnet. Lead the students in discussing the images, the rhythm, the meaning, point of view, and the voice of the poem. Here are a few links to help your students:

<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/>

<http://www.poets.org/index.php>

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs113/1102258086691/archive/1111119639923.html>

<http://disney.go.com/disneyjunior/a-poem-is>

Discuss:

- what makes a tragic figure.
- what makes a romantic figure.
- ways in which a play creates mood and tone.

Discuss what you envisioned in your head while reading the play. What historical or contemporary settings might be appropriate? How might the characters be dressed? How do different class members see the play differently? After seeing the IRT production, discuss how this interpretation affected your thoughts about the play. How has your understanding of the play deepened?

TEXT WORK

Review key literary devices and rhetoric with your students: metaphor, simile, personification, repetition, oxymoron, alliteration, hyperbole, lists, onomatopoeia, shared lines, rhymed couplets, antitheses, irony, etc. Send your students on a scavenger hunt through the text of *Romeo and Juliet* and find samples of all these literary devices.

A useful introduction to meter for your students does not need to be extensive. *Romeo and Juliet* contains examples of iambic pentameter, trochaic tetrameter, and prose. A number of the resources we recommend have suggestions on how to cover meter, and some even have worksheets. Look at *Teaching Shakespeare: Yes, You Can!* by Lorraine Hopping Egan and L. O. Egan.

AFTER SEEING *ROMEO AND JULIET*

DISCUSSION

What is fate? What other words might you use instead of fate to describe such forces? What is the role of fate in this play? Do you believe in fate? Why or why not?

Love is seen in many forms in this play. How is Romeo's love for Rosaline different from his love for Juliet? Compare and contrast the views of love stated by the Nurse and Lady Capulet. How does Capulet's love for his daughter relate to his anger when she refuses to marry Paris? If Romeo and Juliet were to live, do you think their love would last? Why or why not? How true is love at first sight?

Compare and contrast the roles of the Nurse and Mercutio and their relative relationships to Juliet and Romeo. What does each contribute to the play?

How does the play reflect or contradict contemporary attitudes and experiences concerning parent-child relationships? urban violence? love and marriage? religion? street gangs? teen suicide?

Why do you suppose Shakespeare gives no reason for the quarrel between the Capulets and the Montagues? Discuss this situation in relation to long-raging feuds between nations and cultures today.

What is the theatrical meaning of the word tragedy? What does the word mean in our world today? What does it mean to you? Consider the events of the play in light of the media's frequent use of the word tragedy.

Considering the risks, would you become involved in a relationship with someone whom the rest of your community would reject? Why or why not?

What is Friar Laurence's role in the events of the play? What motivates his actions? How does the outcome match his expectations?

What is the role of religion in *Romeo and Juliet*? In what ways do the characters of the play live by their professed religious beliefs, and in what ways do they ignore or overlook those beliefs? How does this behavior compare to that of your own community?

How do you feel about Romeo and Juliet's relationship? Is love at first sight truly possible? Why or why not?

Most of Shakespeare's plays mix comedy with tragedy. How does this play follow that general rule? How does the IRT's production make use of comedy? What is the effect of this combination of humor and sadness?

What do we learn about gender roles from the events and characters of the play? Think about not only what characters think about the opposite sex, but also what they think about their own sex. How do the characters in the play defy the standard roles? How do different generations react differently to society's expectations? How are such issues viewed today in comparison to your parents' teenage years?

How could the deaths of Romeo and Juliet have been avoided? Who and/or what is most at fault for these events? What about the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt? Does violence in film, music, and TV merely reflect the violence that already exists in the world, or does it encourage people to be even more violent? How?

ACTIVITIES

The majority of Shakespeare's plays have music of some sort. It was an accustomed theatrical practice of his time, and it still is in our time. Try your hand at sound-tracking the play. What might be your opening music to draw the audience into the world of the play? Which characters might have theme songs? What scenes might you want to enhance with sound or music? What kind of music would you use? Perhaps you can create some original compositions.

Create a film story board for *Romeo and Juliet* or choose one scene and film it. Choose locations and design costumes. You can even add special effects.

WRITING PROMPTS

Choose one of the principle images in the play: death, or light and dark, or time, or something else of your own choosing. Write a paper focusing on how that image permeates the play and how it affects the play's meaning.

There are at least three sonnets embedded in the text of *Romeo and Juliet*: the Prologues to Acts I and II, and the scene where Romeo and Juliet first meet and kiss (Act I, scene 5, lines 92-105). Have students study these and/or other sonnets by Shakespeare; numbers 18, 29, and 116 are among the most popular. Then have students write their own sonnets. These websites are helpful:

<https://letterpile.com/books/Three-Sonnets-in-Romeo-and-Juliet>

<http://www.startsateight.com/shakespeare-sonnets/>

<https://teachingshakespeareblog.folger.edu/2015/06/23/5-ways-to-teach-shakespeares-sonnets/>

Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your impressions of the script and the strength of the story and/or themes, as well as your opinions of the production and its theatrical aspects: scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting. What moments made an impact? How do the design elements work with the actors' performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? To share your reviews with others, send to: education.irt@gmail.com

THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

You, the audience are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.

