

CASTING CALL - "ROMEO AND JULIET" - by William Shakespeare

Play synopsis

*"Two households, both alike in dignity,
In this fair city, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean"*

Two powerful and violent "Underworld" families, the Capulets and the Montagues, operate their nefarious shady business on the streets of the City, divided by bitter hatred in their struggle to keep the upper hand. Unbeknownst to them, Romeo, Montague's son and Juliet, Capulet's daughter, have fallen hopelessly in love, contradicting their parent's wishes. When the venomous rivalry of these two clans erupts once too often, it sets off a tragic chain reaction of events, leading to fatal and heartbreaking consequences for their beloved children, and uniting the warring families in final and grief stricken peace. An abridged, 100 minute modern adaptation of the classic Shakespeare tragedy, of the famous "two star-crossed lovers", Romeo and Juliet. Presented by the Pump House Theatre Company, directed by Jo Emery.

Please note this production contains scenes of suicide, death, violence, scenes of a sexual nature and the use of flick knives. Recommended for ages 14+.

Director: Jo Emery

Email: jo@joemery.co.uk

Casting details: 12 actors with possible gender and colour blind casting.

Initial read through - Tuesday 14th November at the Pump House Theatre, Watford at 7.45pm.

Auditions to be held on Tuesday 21st and Thursday 23rd November at the Pump House Theatre, Watford at 7.45pm.

For those actors unable to attend auditions in person, recorded self tapes are acceptable. Please send via email to jo@joemery.co.uk by Thursday 30th November. Audition pieces are attached below.

NB - All actors should have a good understanding of and facility for Shakespearean verse and text and have good transport access to Watford.

PRODUCTION DATES AND LOCATION

Tuesday 16th to Saturday 20th April, 2024. With Saturday matinee on the 20th.

At the Pump House Theatre, 5 Local Board Road, Watford, Herts, WD17 2JP

Tel: 01923 241362

REHEARSALS

Initial rehearsals will start Tuesday 30th January 2024, with 2 rehearsals per week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, at the Pump House Theatre, Watford at 7.45pm. Dress rehearsal will be Monday 15th April.

CHARACTERS

1. Prince Escalus/Chorus

Playing age - 50+. Could be female. Any ethnicity.

The Prince of the City. A relative of Mercutio and Paris. As the person with all the political power, he/she is concerned about maintaining the public peace at all costs. / The Chorus is a narrator who opens the first scene through VoiceOver.

2. Lord Capulet

Playing age - 50+ Male. Any ethnicity.

The patriarch of the Capulet family, father of Juliet, husband of Lady Capulet, and enemy of Montague. He loves his daughter, though he is not well acquainted with Juliet's thoughts or feelings, and seems to think that what is best for her is a "good" match with Paris. Often prudent,

he commands respect and propriety, but he is liable to fly into a rage when either is lacking. He is united with Montague in grief at the end of the play.

3. Lord Montague /Apothecary

Playing age - 50+ Male. Any ethnicity.

Romeo's father, the patriarch of the Montague clan and bitter enemy of Capulet. At the beginning of the play, he is concerned about Romeo's melancholy behaviour. He is united with Capulet in grief at the end of the play. The Apothecary sells the fatal poison to Romeo.

4. Lady Capulet

Playing age - 40+ Female. Any ethnicity.

Juliet's mother, Capulet's wife. A woman who herself married when she was a young girl. She is eager to see her daughter marry Paris. She is an emotionally distant mother, relying on the Nurse for moral and pragmatic support.

5. Nurse

Playing age - 50+ Female. Any ethnicity

Juliet's nurse has cared for Juliet her entire life. Vulgar, long-winded, and sentimental, the Nurse provides comic relief with her frequently inappropriate remarks and speeches. She is Juliet's faithful confidante and loyal intermediary in Juliet's affair with Romeo. Her view of love is earthy and sexual - she wants Juliet to have a nice-looking and wealthy husband. She falls out with Juliet after she bad mouths Romeo.

6. Friar Laurence

Playing age - 40+. Could be female. Any ethnicity.

A Friar, friend to both Romeo and Juliet. Kind, civic-minded, in favour of moderation, and always ready with a plan, Friar Laurence secretly marries the impassioned lovers in hopes that the union might eventually bring peace to the City. As well as being a holy person, Friar Laurence is also an expert in the use of seemingly mystical potions, herbs and drugs.

7. Romeo

Playing age - 18-30. Male. Any ethnicity.

The Montagues' son and heir. Romeo is a handsome, intelligent, and sensitive young man. Though impulsive and immature, he is also idealistic and passionate. He lives in the middle of a violent feud between his family and the Capulets, but he is only interested in unrequited love. When he lays eyes on Juliet, he falls madly in love with her. He secretly marries Juliet, the daughter of his father's worst enemy; he happily takes abuse from Tybalt; and he would rather die than live without his beloved. Romeo is also an affectionate and devoted friend to his relative Benvolio, Mercutio, and Friar Lawrence. Romeo kills himself when he believes (mistakenly) that Juliet is dead.

8. Juliet

Playing age - 18-30. Female. Any ethnicity.

The only daughter of the Capulets. Juliet begins the play as a naïve young girl who grows up quickly upon falling in love with Romeo, the son of her family's great enemy. Because she is a young girl in an aristocratic family, she has no freedom to travel around the city. She trusts her entire life and future to Romeo, even refusing to believe the worst reports about him after he kills her cousin Tybalt. Her closest friend and confidant is her nurse, but she falls out with her after the Nurse turns against Romeo. She kills herself in grief when she finds Romeo dead.

9. Benvolio

Playing age - 18-30. Male. Any ethnicity.

Montague's nephew, Romeo's cousin and thoughtful friend. Benvolio makes a genuine effort to defuse violent scenes in public places. He is a go between when Romeo is banished from the City later in the play.

10. Mercutio / Abram

Playing age - 18-30. Male. Any ethnicity.

The Prince's relative and Romeo's close friend. Mercutio overflows with imagination, wit, and biting satire. He loves wordplay, especially sexual double entendres. He's hotheaded and finds Romeo's romanticized ideas about love tiresome. He tries to convince Romeo to view love as a simple matter of sexual appetite. He is killed by Tybalt in a duel. Abram is a servant of the Montagues, who fights with Sampson in the opening scene.

11. Tybalt / Servant

Playing age - 18-30. Male. Any ethnicity

A Capulet, Juliet's cousin on her mother's side. Vain, fashionable, extremely sensitive to the slightest insult, he becomes aggressive and violent when he feels his pride has been injured. Always itching to fight anyone from the hated house of Montagues. He kills Mercutio and is subsequently killed by Romeo. The servant takes the letter from Capulet about the Ball to Romeo for him to read.

12. Paris / Sampson

Playing age - 18-30. Male. Any ethnicity.

A relative of the Prince, and a suitor to Juliet. Once Capulet has promised him he can marry Juliet, he becomes very possessive toward her, as if they are already married. Sampson is a servant of the Capulets who fights with Abram in the opening scene.

AUDITION PIECES FOR LIVE AUDITION (OR SELF TAPE)

Romeo

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Or

O my love! my wife!
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.
Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;
And never from this place depart again.
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars

From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide! Here's to my love!

Juliet

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

Lord Capulet

God's bread! it makes me mad:
Day, night, hour, tide, time, work, play,
Alone, in company, still my care hath been
To have her match'd: and having now provided
A gentleman of noble parentage,
Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly train'd,
Stuff'd, as they say, with honourable parts,
Proportion'd as one's thought would wish a man;
And then to have a wretched puling fool,
A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,
To answer 'I'll not wed; I cannot love,
I am too young; I pray you, pardon me.'
But, as you will not wed, I'll pardon you:
Graze where you will you shall not house with me:
Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.
Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise:
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;
And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee.

Mercutio

O, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep;
Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
Her traces, of the smallest spider web;
Her collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams;
Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;

Her wagoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid;
Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.

Lady Capulet

What say you? can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast;
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
Examine every married lineament,
And see how one another lends content
And what obscured in this fair volume lies
Find written in the margent of his eyes.
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover:
The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
For fair without the fair within to hide:
That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;
So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him, making yourself no less

Nurse

Faith, here it is.
Romeo is banish'd; and all the world to nothing,
That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;
Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.
Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,
I think it best you married with the county.
O, he's a lovely gentleman!
Romeo's a dishclout to him: an eagle, madam,
Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye
As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,
I think you are happy in this second match,
For it excels your first: or if it did not,
Your first is dead; or 'twere as good he were,
As living here and you no use of him.

Friar Laurence

Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine
Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste!
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears;
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet:
If e'er thou wast thyself and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline:

Prince

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Will you not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins:
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your movèd prince.
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets,
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time, all the rest depart away:
You Capulet; shall go along with me:
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our further pleasure in this case.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.