

OCTOBER 1-
NOVEMBER 10, 2024

FOLGER
THEATRE

ROMEO + JULIET

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY RAYMOND O. CALDWELL



FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

A GUIDE TO A GREATER FOLGER EXPERIENCE

Folger Theatre wants this experience to be as engaging, comfortable, and accessible for as many people as possible. From the youngest to the eldest, from the farthest zip code to the closest, regardless of income or formal education level, whether it's your first show with us or the 100th: **You are welcome here.** We invite you to engage with us in the following ways:

Say hello! Get to know your neighbors before the show begins! Welcome each other to the good evening of theater you'll share. You never know—you might make a new theatergoing buddy.

Safety first! Our Visitor Experience team—from the moment you arrive until the moment you exit the building—will be here to help guide you in and out of the theater safely, help you with listening devices, and help you find our new bathrooms (check them out!). We'll have the show streaming for you in the lobby if you have to run to the restroom and we'll help you find the right moment to return to your seat safely!

Mask optional. We all have different circumstances. Please feel free to take any precautions you need. If you'd like a mask, just ask an usher.

Oohs and Aahs are encouraged!

During the show, our artists love to hear your responses—your oohs and aahs, sighs and claps, your tears and laughter as the moments inspire you. There are so many different ways we find connection during a show—as long as we are respectful of each other, we welcome it all!

No photos, videos, or cell phone use.

We kindly request you do not take photos or videos during the show—live theater is meant to be ephemeral. We ask you to silence your devices before the show begins. No matter how good you are at hiding that light, someone can see it!

R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Above all, please be kind and respectful to all of our staff and to each other, and we can ensure that it will be returned tenfold!

Enjoy the show! We're so glad you chose to spend your evening with the Folger.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Today, in the area now known as Washington, DC, thousands of Indigenous people from more than a dozen tribes live, work, and create their futures. Historically, this region at the confluence of two rivers served as a trading center for many tribes in the larger Chesapeake region. These communities suffered devastating harms—violence, disease, and displacement—in the wake of European settler colonialism from the 1600s on, which decimated the Indigenous population.

We acknowledge that the Folger sits on the ancestral lands of Indigenous tribes including the Nacotchtank people (also known as the Anacostans). The Folger is now engaged in a multi-year process of understanding, acknowledging, and engaging the history of the land on which we sit. Through this work we seek to build and sustain trust and continuing relationships with tribal communities, to acknowledge the harms of settler colonialism, to provide appropriate access to and promote research on materials that document Indigenous histories, and to support and amplify the work of Indigenous researchers and creators.

Karen Ann Daniels
Artistic Director

Beth Emelson
Director of Producing

ROMEO + JULIET

By **William Shakespeare** Directed by **Raymond O. Caldwell†**

Choreographer
Tiffany Quinn

Scenic Design
Jonathan Dahm Robertson*

Costume Design
Jeannette Christensen*

Lighting Design
Alberto Segarra*

Sound Design and
Composer
Matthew M. Nielson*

Projection Designer
Kelly Colburn*

Props Designer
Amy Kellett

Adaptor
Caleen Sinnette Jennings

Dramaturg
Carla Della Gatta

Translator and
Interpreter
Rosa Garay López

Fight Choreographer
Robb Hunter† **

Resident Intimacy
Director
Kaja Dunn†

New York Casting
Kate Murray CSA

Production Stage Manager
Tori Schuchmann**

Assistant Stage Manager
Ebony Gennes**

†Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

*Member of United Scenic Artists

**Member of Actors' Equity Association or working on an AEA contract

Folger Theatre gratefully acknowledges the kind support of the following:

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FOR FOLGER THEATRE

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Costume Manager	Cidney Forkpah
Artistic and Literary Associate	Michelle Lynch
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Pre-production Photography	SHAN Wallace
Production Photography	Erika Nizborski, Peggy Ryan
Production Videography	Jeffrey Ray

FOR ROMEO AND JULIET

Assistant Director	Savina Barini
Production Assistant	Madalyn Oliver, Jess Hagy
Fight Captain	Gabriel Alejandro
Dance Captain	Renee Elizabeth Wilson
Scenic Construction	Stone Dog, Inc.
Scenic Build	Stage Crew LLC
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Faedra Chatard Carpenter, Sabrina Lynne Sawyer.

The Staff of the Folger Shakespeare Library with a special acknowledgement to the Facilities, Operations, and Visitor Experience Departments (please see page 35).

Folger Docents, Volunteer Ushers, and the Junior League of Washington DC are vitally important to our success. Heartfelt thanks to these generous donors of time and talent.

Folger Theatre is a member of Blue Star Theaters, CultureCapital, Cultural Tourism DC, Theatre Washington, Shakespeare Theatre Association, and Theatre Communications Group, Inc.



Gabriel Alejandro	Paris
Brandon Carter*	Friar Lawrence
Giovanna Alcântara Drummond	Mercutio
John Floyd*	Benvolio
Alina Collins Maldonado*	Tybalt
Tony Nam*	Lord Montague
Luz Nicolas*	Nurse
Caro Rivera Reyes*	Juliet
Todd Scofield*	Lord Capulet
Deidra LaWan Starnes*	Prince/Chorus
Fran Tapia*	Lady Capulet
Cole Taylor*	Romeo
Renee Elizabeth Wilson	Lady Montague

UNDERSTUDIES

Jon Beal (Lord Capulet, Lord Montague, Friar Lawrence)	Enzo Leone (Romeo)
Axandre Oge (Benvolio, Paris)	O'Malley Steuermann (Tybalt, Mercutio)
Aliyah Emorai (Juliet)	Lauren Erica Jackson (Lady Montague, Prince/Chorus)
	María del Mar Rodriguez (Lady Capulet, Nurse)

DIGITAL MEDIA CAPTURE

Nicklas Aliff (Gregory)	Robert Bowen Smith (Sampson)
Raghad Makhlof (Abram)	O'Malley Steuerman (Apothecary)

Cast listed in alphabetical order

This production is performed with one 15-minute intermission.

Please refrain from using cell phones, cameras, or other recording devices during the performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.



*The Actors and Stage Managers in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theater as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 49,000 actors, singers, dancers, and stage managers working in hundreds of theaters across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theater as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit www.actorsequity.org.



New Hearing Loop Technology (Telecoil) Our theater is equipped with an Induction Hearing Loop for state-of-the-art assisted listening. If your hearing aid has a T-coil, please toggle to that setting to receive our audio signal directly without using the headset and only wearing the lariat.

OUR VIRTUAL CONNECTION



Carla Della Gatta

Shakespeare set his story of young love and familial divide in Verona, Italy, without much in his play to reinforce the locale. It's one of the reasons why *Romeo and Juliet* so easily transposes to other cultures and periods in performance. This production is rooted in place: an alternate version of Washington, DC. Landmarks, political platforms, and the constant reminder that violence can erupt in our own backyard at any moment make this space familiar. But it is the polarization of the political factions and the interwovenness of the live and the virtual in everyday life that together cultivate a setting specific to our current political moment.

Raymond O. Caldwell and the production team have created a metaverse where the pressures on both politicians and their children drive them to extreme measures, some of which are dangerous and even fatal. A metaverse is a virtual world that allows people, or rather their avatars, to interact

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with one another. As social media wavers on the precipice of the real/unreal, more people other than celebrities and politicians are thrust into a public-facing life and feel consistently scrutinized. In the world of this production, we see the breadth and the prevalence of available coping mechanisms to ease the tension of living under

watchful eyes. The mechanisms and substances the characters use to escape from these stressors cause as many problems as the issues they are supposed to help alleviate.

Romeo and Juliet experience the euphoria of instant connection but are unexperienced in how to express such feelings without social media as a facilitator. Although they are awkward in their first experiences of true love, or a chance meeting that they construe as love, they and many others in their world easily show their affection to friends, cousins, and family. This is the true division that drives the story. Although both houses are on opposite sides of the political spectrum, they apply a similar strategy to their communities: loyalty and affection to their own, disregard or enmity to those who oppose them. There is no in-between.

Technology has changed our relationship to the real world due to the onset of virtual interactions and fewer and fewer in-person experiences that lead to genuine connection. This production is about the state of our lives—from inherited political ideologies and racial, homophobic, and cultural biases within a diverse community to linguistic differences between the first and second-generation immigrants to the mainland. As the first show in the Folger Theatre's *Whose Democracy?* season, *Romeo and Juliet* begins to answer that very question, suggesting a nationwide debate over the crucial tenets of democracy itself. Those who wish to govern society face their own bitter rivalries on the political stage and elsewhere. And consequently, when it matters most, they do not recognize the burgeoning connections that have the power to bridge and heal.

Carla Della Gatta
Dramaturg

last name is "Della Gatta"

Citation: Della Gatta, Carla
"Dramaturg's Note," *Romeo and Juliet*,
Folger Theatre, September 2024.

SYNOPSIS

The prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* calls the title characters "star-crossed lovers"—and the stars do seem to conspire against these young lovers.

Romeo is a Montague, and Juliet a Capulet. Their families are enmeshed in a feud. But the moment Romeo and Juliet meet—when a disguised Romeo and his friends attend a party at Juliet's house—they fall in love and quickly decide to marry.

A friar secretly marries them, hoping to end the feud. Romeo and his companions almost immediately encounter Juliet's cousin Tybalt, who challenges Romeo. When Romeo refuses to fight, Romeo's friend Mercutio accepts the challenge and is killed. Romeo then kills Tybalt and is banished. He spends that night with Juliet and then leaves for Mantua.

Juliet's father forces her into a marriage with Paris. To avoid this marriage, Juliet takes a potion, which Friar Lawrence has given to her, that makes her appear dead. The friar will send Romeo word to be at Juliet's family tomb when she awakes. But the plan goes awry, and Romeo learns instead that she is dead. In the tomb, Romeo kills himself. Juliet wakes, sees his body, and commits suicide. Their deaths appear finally to end the feud.

*Adapted from the Folger
Shakespeare Library Edition*