

APRIL 2026

JULIET & ROMEO EDUCATION PACK

A man with a beard and long hair tied back, wearing a light-colored shirt, is holding a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue shirt and dark pants. They are in a dramatic, almost theatrical pose, with the man's arms around the woman. The background is a stage set with a wire mesh fence and some wooden furniture, including a small table and chairs.

CUN I EN IS

About this pack	3	Romeo and Juliet	11
Synopsis	4	Juliet & Romeo	12
Key Themes	5	What happens to your Romeo & Juliet?	13
Production	6	Explore Movement and the Voice	14
Tracklist	7	After the Show	15
Interview with Ben Duke	8-9	Additional Resources	16
Shakespeare	10	Enjoy the show	17



Through this pack we aim to offer teachers and students support and insight before and after watching *Juliet & Romeo*. It has been designed to help teachers and students find your way into the work and respond to it in a way that feels right to you. Within the pack you will find lots of background information on *Juliet & Romeo* including valuable insight from Ben himself into the creation process and tasks/prompts to deepen your understanding of the work.

SYNOPSIS



The production of Juliet and Romeo is a subverted version of the classic Shakespeare tale of Romeo and Juliet. In Shakespeare's tale, Romeo and Juliet were lovers whose relationship was doomed to fail as their lives were shaped by the antagonism between their two families, the Montagues, and the Capulets.

The couple die in a tragic misunderstanding, in this re-telling of the story, Juliet and Romeo did not die, they moved to Paris and had a child.

Now they are 40ish and are haunted by the pressures of being the poster couple for romantic love. They have decided to confront their current struggles by putting on a performance - about themselves. Their therapist has told them it is a terrible idea.

It explores whether our culture's celebration of youth creates unrealistic expectations around love, sex, and relationships.

KEY THEMES

- Love
- Loss
- Long-term relationships
- Expectations, fantasy & reality
- Our obsession with youth



PRODUCTION

Style and Conventions

- Contemporary dance
 - Dance theatre
 - Comedy
 - Duet
 - Direct dialogue to the audience (breaking the fourth wall)
-

Music and sound

The soundtrack for Juliet and Romeo works to connect the audience to memories they may have of Romeo and Juliet and evokes feelings of nostalgia with love found and lost. It includes Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, No 13 Dance of the Knights, Des'ree's Kissing You, Simon and Garfunkel's Sounds of Silence, then Ain't No Mountain High Enough and finally leaving the audience with Wild is the Wind.

Set Design

Simple setting with two armchairs, a ladder, small des, a pile of books and a dividing screen with two doors that lead to the 'outside'.



TRACKLIST

The Beatles, I Want You

Prokofiev, Romeo and Juliet

Scout Niblett, Your Beat Kicks Back Like Death

Des'ree, Kissing You

Simon & Garfunkel, Sound of Silence

Gaye & Terrell, Ain't no Mountain High Enough

Biber, Passaglia for Unaccompanied Violin

Frank Sinatra, That's Life

Arvo Part, Pari Intervallo, performed by Jereon van Veen & Sandra van Veen

Cat Power, Wild is the Wind



AN INTERVIEW WITH BEN DUKE



1. Juliet & Romeo s this the story of what might have happened had Romeo and Juliet lived?

Yes. When I watch Romeo and Juliet I am always hoping that their timings will be a little different and Juliet will wake up a few moments earlier. I know she never will but I can't help hoping for it. The idea for this piece came from allowing myself to imagine that alternate version. In this work they've been together about 25 years.

2. Are they happy and how do they feel about each other?

At the point that this piece is set they are in something of a marital crisis. Basically, they love each other and sometimes they wish the other one were dead. The bloom of teenage romance has faded but it haunts them.

3. What inspired you to make it?

A feeling that we aren't that honest about relationships in our culture and that too many stories focus on how relationships start rather than how they continue.

4. Had you seen stage/film versions of the original before you made your piece?

I have seen several versions. Baz Lurhman's film version came out at a time when I was particularly impressionable and is lodged in my memory.

5. Describe their characters

Romeo is in the middle of a mid-life crisis and so his character is trying to re-shape itself. He is trying to let go of the passionate, over the top teenager he was and become a Man. But he doesn't have any clear idea what that Man should look like so he is in limbo. Juliet is very attached to the extraordinary teenager she was and is finding the ordinariness of her current life a struggle.

6. Will the audience like them?

At times - if you had them round for dinner you would probably find them a little self-obsessed.

7. And what do you hope audiences will take away with them after seeing the work?

A sense of realistic optimism about the state of their relationships - past, present or future.



The world has changed significantly since 1564, the year Shakespeare was born. However, his plays have endured in the minds and hearts of people because his examination of the human condition is still relevant today – love, loss, death, families, and sex.

Over the years many theatre productions and films have retold his stories to the point that many of us would not be able to identify them as Shakespearean works. But while the tales may have changed the characters he created and thoughts he expressed have lived on through these adaptations.

The following activities are designed for students to explore the idea that Shakespeare's plays can be performed and interpreted in different ways. Through this exploration students will engage with some of the issues, themes and ideas in Shakespeare's plays and appreciate the way they remain relevant in the 21st century



ROMEO AND JULIET

A man with a beard and long hair tied back, wearing a light-colored shirt over a maroon t-shirt, is pointing at a book held by a woman with long brown hair wearing a blue button-down shirt. They are standing in front of a wooden door and a window with white frames.

Of all of Shakespeare's plays Romeo and Juliet is one that many people are familiar with. It is timeless and understood by adults and teenagers alike – concepts like miscommunication, taking a friend's advice instead of following your own gut feeling, making hasty rash decisions, and long-term disputes between families or gangs with the theme of forbidden love.

On a large piece of paper each group writes down everything they know about Romeo and Juliet including:

- the characters
- the settings
- different adaptations
- lines from the play
- any questions, comments, or things the group would like to know.

Groups pair with another group to share and discuss what they have recorded.

- What information did they already know?
- What do they want to find out about the tale?



JULIET & ROMEO

This interpretation of Romeo and Juliet for Juliet & Romeo is a story within a story. The idea for the adaptation came from Ben Duke, the director of Juliet and Romeo, and Artistic Director of Lost Dog. Duke never liked the ending of Romeo and Juliet.

He realised he was in the perfect position to re-write the death of the two characters that had frustrated him for so long. He wanted Romeo and Juliet to live and that was the starting point. However, he also realised that if the two cheated death he would need to decide:

- Where would they go?
- How would they live?

Ben Duke's Romeo and Juliet characters survive, escape to Paris, live in an apartment, have a child, and live in the 21st Century. Duke blends dance, theatre, and comedy to reveal the story. The performance opens with the two characters, talking directly to the audience and at times eliciting a response to their questions and the sharing of their personal details.

Students work in creative teams to develop a story within a story for their interpretation of Romeo and Juliet. The creative teams will decide:

- What the story within the story will be.
- What questions will lead to change the story.
- What elements of viewpoint will they include?
- Who is telling the story?
- How the story could end.
- What the back story of the character/ narrator is - goals, beliefs, hopes, fears, attitudes, and relationships of this character that exist as the story starts.
- What provides the motivation and reason?



**WHAT HAPPENS TO
YOUR ROMEO & JULIET?**

EXPLORE MOVEMENT AND THE VOICE

[Download our task sheet](#)



AFTER THE SHOW



- What did Juliet and Romeo make you wonder?
- What moment in the performance had the most impact on you? Describe.
- How did the music, costumes and set support the telling of the story?
- How did the performers integrate the dance with the storytelling?
- What had the most impact on the story, the dance movement, or the dialogue?
- What do you think Shakespeare would have thought of the interpretation of his work?
- Do you think Duke's work presented the audience with a typical middle-aged, heterosexual couple?
- What questions would you like to ask the director of the interpretation and performance?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[The Making of
Juliet & Romeo](#)

[Juliet & Romeo
Trailer](#)



[Review - The
Scotsman](#)

[Review - The
Guardian](#)

[Review - The
Independent](#)

ENJOY THE SHOW

