

Juliet + Romeo by Lost dog Dance Theatre

Pre show notes

Welcome to the pre-show notes for Lost Dog's Juliet + Romeo, a dance theatre re-telling of what truly happened to the world's most famous romance. I am Raquel and I will be Audio Describing the show on Friday 25 September at Bristol Old Vic Theatre. There will be a Touch Tour at 6pm.

These notes are 9 minutes long.

The Set

The set and world of our play is a version of Juliet & Romeo's apartment. The playing space is a square of white dance floor, 10m wide by 6m deep. In the front left corner is the furniture of a therapy room.

Towards the back of the white dance floor is a wall made of interlinking of mesh panels, they are just under a metre wide and are 2.5 half metres high. There are 7 mesh panels in total. They are like a metal fence, made up of many small squares. This means the performers can be behind the mesh wall, so outside the apartment, and we can still see them.

The mesh wall has two solid wooden doors - one on the left and one on the right - other than that there is no where to hide. The solid wooden doors lead to the outside world for the first half of the story. Once they land in their apartment, the door on the L leads to other rooms inside the flat and the door on the R door leads to the outside world. This logic is only reversed at the end of the story, when Romeo rewinds events.

The mesh panels have white wooden uprights between them, angled towards the audience to give the sense of the sloping roof of an attic apartment in a romantic city.

The furniture in the apartment is spare:

On the right side of the space, right of the door and up against the mesh wall is a kitchen table and two chairs. The kitchen table has a blue and white checked formica top and fold down sides. At the beginning of the show one of the chairs is up turned on top of the table as if someone has been sweeping. The chairs are wooden with a wipe clean cushioned seat (cheap and cheerful).

Closer to us on the right is a silver work ladder, around 3 m high, and next to this an old fashioned toy dog on wheels. The kind you might find at a flea market. It's tattered and well loved. At the front of the space on the right is a microphone on a stand, with a long cable.

The front left of the space is the therapy space. There are two purple chairs, cushioned and c shaped, so you can sink into them. The chairs are angled slightly towards one another, but mostly face out towards us. Romeo tends to hold onto the arms of his chair, perhaps steadying himself. Juliet is more at ease in the therapy space, crossing her legs with a sense of lounging. Between and just behind the chairs is a rubber plant in a pot. It's a quite convincing fake.

In front of the chairs is a low white table, cube shaped. On top of the table are two glasses of water and a box of tissues. On the lower shelf are DVD's and books, all versions of Romeo and Juliet - Baz Lurhman's, Zeferelli's - and different editions of the play. At one point Romeo will take a set of headphones and an MP3 player from this shelf of the table. Juliet will take a copy of the play. Other than this, the props are conjured rather than present: the potion Juliet holds, and

the bottle of poison Romeo deliberates over, are both mimed.

The Rules of the Space

At the start of the show, Juliet + Romeo explain that they want to use the stage as a space to re-live their memories. When they re-live a memory they will step into the middle of the stage, and conjure the memory by describing it to us and miming or 'playing out' the actions they describe. In this sense, some of the audio description is delivered by the performers. When they conjure a memory they sometimes also dance it.

In this conjuring of memory, they often mention other characters, but there is never anyone else physically on stage with the couple. This is true of their daughter Sophie, who they mention and have conversations with, but she is never physically there. Although there are traces of her:

for example, at one point Romeo comes home and hangs her wellington boots and coat next to the door.

The Lighting

The lighting moves between a harsh white open state and more intimate states.

The harsh white light covers the whole area of the white dance floor. It represents the cold light of day and the reality of their 40 something lives.

The memories hold more intimate lighting states: the deep red of the ballroom where they first danced; the soft amber of their apartment at dusk, shadows criss crossing the space; the spotlight of a confessional.

The Characters & Costumes

Juliet is played by Emily Terndrup

Emily is 5'7, she has blue/green eyes, and very long deep red/auburn hair that she wears loose for the show, and that moves like an extra limb when she's dancing. She's from the US and has a broad Midwestern accent that's softened as she's been living outside of the US a while.

She is in her late thirties and of slim build. She dances with a clarity of form, tracing shapes through space. She dances with ease and breadth. Her character likes to get into things with you: she will lean into Romeo's personal space, she's often on the edge of her seat, she has that kind of eager energy. She gestures with her hands a lot when she speaks, especially when she is holding court in the therapy space.

Juliet wears a pair of full length dark blue culottes, tight fitting and tapered at the waist and a sky blue blouse, with buttons down the front and no sleeves from the shoulder. She

begins the show with pointy light brown slip on shoes.

Romeo is played by John Kendall.

John is 6'2, he has blue/grey eyes, and shoulder length dirty blond hair which he normally wears up in a bun. He has a Newcastle accent and is of white heritage. He's in his late 30's, is of slim build and has a brown beard which he wears short. Romeo is the more evasive quality to Juliet's directness. His instinct is often to pull away. In the piece his dances often express states that have tension and frustration built in - the tension and unbearable pull of attraction, or frustration in the face of an immovable partner.

Romeo wears light grey jeans, a salmon pink t-shirt, a very pale pink denim shirt. Casual Wear. He begins the show wearing camel coloured boots.

Touch Tour

During the half hour touch tour we will invite you onto the stage to explore the set, and to meet the performers. I will describe some key spatial pathways and we will run a scene from the show with live AD on stage where you can be as close to the movement as you'd like be.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge that Audio Description is inherently subjective and I am choosing what to describe. The poet Kae Tempest wrote.

“We, the listeners, are crucial to the story. We are not impartial observers; we are a fundamental part of the circuitry; if we are not connected the charge will not be able to flow.”

I will do my best not to get in the way of the connection between you and the performers, although I am a part of the circuitry. By telling

you how the dance makes me feel, or by
allowing a poetic leap in the audio description, I
hope to help the flow of that circuitry.

We hope this is a useful introduction to the world
of the show,

Warm wishes,
the Lost Dog team