

BRITISH
YOUTH
MUSIC
THEATRE

DIRECTED BY
VICTORIA GARTNER

NEW MUSIC THEATRE

MUSIC BY
JUDE OBERMÜLLER

THE MUSICAL ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S

ROMEO & JULIET



TRP

Theatre Royal Plymouth

11 - 13
AUG

WELCOME

Welcome to BYMT's Summer Season. We have performed in Plymouth every year since 2005 (apart from 2020) and are delighted to be back again, sharing our own musical take on a much-loved tale, with the experience of teenagers at its heart. BYMT has a Young Company Panel who helped to shape the 2023 season and they set the theme of young people finding their voices and striving to make a difference to the troubled adult world around them. Having adored Victoria Gartner's inspiring interpretation of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** last year, the Panel felt that this new version of ***Romeo & Juliet*** would perfectly fit the 2023 programme.

At a time when performing arts are being taken out of regular school activity and access to creative opportunities denied, it is vital for charities such as BYMT to be listening to young people, engaging their creativity and giving them a platform. In our 2023 Young Company, more than quarter of the performers are from backgrounds currently underrepresented in UK society. We hope you hear what our Young Company want to say about Shakespeare's story and its relevance to now, as well as enjoying their glorious performances.

Emily Gray Creative Director

A NOTE FROM VICTORIA GARTNER

There is a reason why we keep telling the same stories. Some stories have such a deep-seated hold on our collective imagination that we cannot help but keep sharing them, seeking them and marvelling in them. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is undoubtedly one of those stories. Shakespeare himself was a great borrower, inspiring himself from a story he read in Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* (1554), which the Italian himself borrowed from another compatriot, Luigi da Porto. Indeed, almost all of the Bard's work has its origins in earlier tales or passages of history. After all, he had to cater to the voracious demands of Elizabethan theatre-goers, which meant he needed to write a lot of good material, and fast. But he made some consequent changes to the tale, for instance the lovers meeting and dying within a few days as opposed to several months, and the invention of the character of Mercutio – a nod, perhaps, to his contemporary Christopher Marlowe and a great life cut short. Our *Romeo and Juliet* musical honours this tradition. Retaining at its core the story and words of the Bard, the songs tell of young people's hopes and dreams for a better future, of leaving the world a better place than you found it. If there is one thing this story teaches us, one thing we must hear today, is that war will only ever lead to greater tragedies and that it is never too late to make peace. We owe it to future generations. We have set this tale here in Plymouth by the sea, in a colourful world that is urgent and harsh, where the cries of seagulls mix with those of feral youths in long summer days. So, welcome to our Verona. We hope you're here to stay.

ABOUT BRITISH YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE

British Youth Music Theatre (BYMT) is a national performing arts education charity and the largest commissioner of new musicals in the UK. Every year we engage around 2000 11-21 year olds in our auditions, workshops, Young Company and projects; BYMT helps young people and developing artists to navigate and further their training and careers in the arts. As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and National Youth Music Organisation, we ensure that youth voice is at the heart of everything we do. BYMT's mission is to create opportunities for young people and early career creatives from all backgrounds to develop theatre skills and enhance wellbeing, through the collaborative and inclusive process of making original music theatre.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

PUBLIC GRANTS

Supported using public funding by



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PRINCIPAL SPONSOR

NASUWT

The Teachers' Union

A long-time sponsor of BYMT, the union supports our work to engage young people in schools and give them opportunities beyond the classroom, with both funding and use of their fantastic Hillscourt conference centre in Birmingham. BYMT and NASUWT share a passion for supporting teachers and ensuring creativity in the curriculum.

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Jane Goodman Charitable Trust

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FRIENDS

Fern Stoner
Linda Nightingale
Sarah Double
Emma Shaw
Kate Suh
Jayne Griffiths
Tim Sawers
Helen Dayananda
Francesca Stuckey-Howard
Barry Anns
Simon Milson
Alastair Roberts

BOARD

Jimmy Jewell
Alastair Roberts
Aniela Shuckburgh
Lucy Stocks
Phillip Siddle
Francesca Unsworth
Roger Jones
Simon Millson (Chair)

ADVISORS TO THE TRUSTEES

Bridget Kalloushi (Finance)
Rachel Victor-Sampson (Inclusivity)

We would like to thank the following for their contribution to our work:

The Drum Theatre and Theatre Royal
Plymouth
Flavia Fraser-Cannon PR
ArtTouchesArt
Photographer Gem Smith
Our Creative Work Placements: Joshua
Jewkes, Izzy Gough & Isobel Connolly

ENJOYED THE SHOW? BECOME A FRIEND OF BYMT

For just £25 per month, your contribution will help support enthusiastic and underrepresented young performers and musicians through our bursary scheme, the commissioning of new music theatre and the training of emerging theatre artists. Plus, all our FRIENDS receive free admission* to one of our shows every year! To sign up please scan the QR code provided on the right or visit our website for more information: britishyouthmusictheatre.org/support-us



CREATIVES

VICTORIA GARTNER - WRITER & DIRECTOR

Victoria Gartner is an award-nominated writer and director, whose work has been produced in the UK, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands. Her latest project, *Bard in the Yard*, has been performed across the UK to great public and critical acclaim for the past few years, and has Dame Helen Mirren as patron. Other work by Victoria includes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (British Youth Music Theatre), *Will or Eight Lost Years of William Shakespeare's Life* (Rose Playhouse, European tour), *Verona* (Theatre tri-bühne, Stuttgart). She is currently Assistant Director on Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*, directed by Lucy Bailey, touring the UK until 2024. Previous Assistant Director credits include *The Comedy of Errors*, *Three Sisters*, *Twelfth Night*, and operas *Acis & Galatea*, *Teenage Bodies*, *Snow White* (Switzerland). Victoria has been teaching Shakespeare at LAMDA, East15 and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. She was born in Ukraine and grew up in the French-speaking part of Switzerland before moving to the UK. She has an MA in English literature with a specialisation in Shakespearean studies as well as a degree in Dramaturgy and Directing, and is the Artistic Director of Will & Co.

JUDE OBERMÜLLER - COMPOSER, ORCHESTRATOR & MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Jude Obermüller is a British musician, most often composing for Theatre and Recorded Media, living in New York. He was a full scholar at both London's Royal College of Music, and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. In 2021, he became a fellow of the Johnny Mercer Songwriters' Project. Jude's scores include: *Beauty & the Seven Beasts* (The Opera Story, London - Fedora Prize runner-up); *Julius Caesar* (Singapore Rep); *As You Like it & Farragut North* (Southwark Playhouse, Off West End); *Alice in Wonderland* (Storyhouse,

UK regional); *Underground* (59E59 Off Broadway); *UCAS & The Jabberwocky* (Edinburgh Festival); *I remember the ship* (Tête à Tête). Music for screen includes commercials for Vogue; musical sketches for Comedy Central; and various independent films, most recently the tap-dance led short *DATELEAP* (with director/choreographer Jack Evans and lyricist David Gomez), which is currently playing film festivals all over the world. Current musical works: *Miss Havisham's Wedding* (with David Gomez & Laura Barati); *Feet Keep Me Flyin'* (with Jack Evans & David Gomez) *Bardo: A Musical Webseries*.

DAVID GOMEZ - LYRICIST & SONGWRITER

David Gomez is a lyricist, librettist, and songwriter. With Jude Obermüller, David has collaborated on *The Blue Shoes*, *Miss Havisham's Wedding*, and *Feet Keep Me Flyin'*. The Stiles & Drewe "Best New Song" Prize honored their song, "Silver" in 2018, and they joined the Johnny Mercer Songwriting Workshop in 2021. David's theatre work has received support and recognition from The Dramatist Guild, American Playwriting Foundation, and the Musical Theatre Factory. As a proud Chicano, David is part of a long tradition of corridistas who used popular song forms to build community, create revolutions, and connect the past to the present.

KATHERINE MORAN - CHOREOGRAPHER

Katherine is a British-Irish actor, choreographer, writer and voiceover artist. She attended her first local dance class in Pinner aged four and went on to train on the prestigious BA Acting course at the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama. She combines her dance technique and acting experience within her movement and choreography work, most recently for productions at the Cockpit, Brighton Fringe and Holroyd Theatre. In acting, Katherine has

over a decade's experience across TV, film, UK and international theatre. Credits include: *Call The Midwife* (BBC), *The B@it* (Channel 4), *A Christmas Gift From Bob* (Lionsgate), *News Revue* (BBC/Canal Cafe Theatre). When she's not running around a rehearsal room, Katherine runs her voiceover business from her professional home studio. Recent projects include: *Cassette Beasts* (Xbox/Nintendo), commercials for Vrbo, Moonpig, House of Fraser, and voiceover for HSBC, Superdrug, and European Commission. Katherine's first play, *Ruthless*, is currently in development with Masterclass.

LU HERBERT - DESIGNER

Lu Herbert is a freelance Set and Costume Designer based in the North of England. They have a creative practice that embraces sustainability, vibrancy and play. Collaboration is a core facet of their design process. Lu has both a BA from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Set and Costume Design, and an MA in Collaborative Theatre Production and Design from Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Recent and upcoming works include *Romeo and Juliet* (Theatre Royal Plymouth), *The Whispering Jungle* (Mercury Theatre, UK Tour), *Why the Whales Came* (Theatre Royal Plymouth, Taunton Brewhouse), *Worlds Apart* (Northern Stage), *Maria de Buenos Aires* (Northern Opera), *Frida* (Northern Opera UK Premiere), *GLOW* (CAST Doncaster, UK Tour) and *TOXIC* (HOME, Manchester). Lu's work and more productions can be found at: www.luherbert.co.uk / @lherbertdesign

NATHAN BENJAMIN - LIGHTING DESIGNER

Nathan is a South-West based freelance lighting designer and technician working predominantly in theatre, dance, and musical theatre. Working also as the Technical Manager for the Marjon Arts Centre at Plymouth Marjon

University, Nathan has designed a variety of shows by emerging artists as well as many professional productions. He trained as an actor at The Actor's Wheel training company before moving into Technical Theatre, training in-the-industry at the Barbican Theatre, Plymouth. Nathan has worked for several years on previous BYMT productions in Plymouth and enjoys the challenge and ethos of the productions. Previous designs include *Medea* (The Wheel - Cygnet Theatre), *Legally Blonde* (The Actor's Wheel - Quad Theatre), *2000 Stories* (Beyond Face - Theatre Royal, Plymouth), *The City* (The Actor's Wheel - Quad Theatre) *The Snowbeast* (Scratchworks Theatre - National tour), *Why the Whales Came* (BYMT - Theatre Royal, Plymouth), *Krampus* (The Wheel - Barbican Theatre, Plymouth).

A&M PRODUCTIONS - SOUND DESIGN

A&M are an independent equipment rental and production company based in Northamptonshire. Although we offer a wide range in services such as Audio, Lighting, Sales, Installation & Power our speciality is with live theatre audio. A&M prides itself in providing industry standard - latest equipment prepared to the highest level, so that our customers and clients have nothing to worry about when hiring from us. Along side our equipment hire we are able to supply design and staffing for theatrical productions utilising staff and freelancers that work on many west end and regional touring professional productions, giving your performance that west end quality feel. A&M are thrilled to be partnering with British Youth Musical Theatre for their 2023 summer season of fantastic performances. Credit to our design & production team for 2023: Aidan Jones (Account Handler) - Joe Green (Harry & Greta / #50 Days), Sam Levy (Angry Salmon / Romeo & Juliet), Robert Brennan (Naughty Carriage on the Orphan Train).

**WE ARE AWARE THAT THIS SHOW DEALS WITH SENSITIVE TOPICS
INCLUDING SUICIDE, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE/HEALTH. IF
YOU ARE IN NEED OF ANY SUPPORT, PLEASE FOLLOW THE LINKS ON
THE NHS WEBSITE.**



CAST

Matt Beavan
Maisie Bircher
Eliana Blaxill
Tait Brennan
Lowen Brock
Ayla Chalmers
Ellen Cox
Tiana Doshi
Hannah Eden
Alex Evans
Alice Finnie
Grace Gauld
Maya Goswami
Gaby Jones
Sofia Lam
Aisling Leahy
Imogen Luker
Ben Marks
Phoebe Mason
Hana McDowell
Kendal Medlycott
Jasmine Myatt
Aoife Phelan
Sophie Rider
Zachary Roberts
Ash Rodgers
Alazne Sertutxa
Lauren Suh
William Swift
Eva Taylor
Astrid Tennyson
Alex Viveash
Leah Wingfield
Alexa Wolff
Eleanor Wyatt

MUSICIANS

Jude Obermüller KEYS 1/CONDUCTOR
Isobel Connolly KEYS 2/CELLO/AMD
Evie Atkins GUITAR
Blake Harding DRUMS
Lucy Scott FLUTE/SAXES
Lily George FLUTE/PICCOLO
Taran McNeil CLARINET

PATRONS

James Bourne, Jean Diamond, Peter Duncan,
Ed Sheeran MBE, Zoë Wanamaker CBE

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer & Director Victoria Gartner
Composer, Orchestrator
& Musical Director Jude Obermüller
Lyricist David Gomez
Choreographer Katherine Moran
Designer Lu Herbert
Lighting Designer Nathan Benjamin
Sam Levy for A & M
Productions
Sound Designer
Associate Director Louise Roberts
Production Manager Ewen Roberts
Stage Manager Cait Gerry
Deputy Stage Manager Ro West
Assistant Musical
Director & Additional
Orchestrations Isobel Connolly
Assistant Stage Manager Joshua Jewkes
Assistant Designer Izzy Gough

PASTORAL TEAM

Pastoral Lead Katy Johnson
Pastoral Member Zoe McDonald
Pastoral Member Katie Woolford
Pastoral Member Melissa Grace

OFFICE STAFF

Chief Executive & Creative Director Emily Gray
Development Director Alex Mastihi
Producer Milly Summer
Finance Director Clare Russell
Casting & Young Company
Manager Cerys Jones
Schools & Pastoral Manager Rosa Higgs
Digital Marketing Manager Linda Okachi
Marketing Assistant Rhiannon Dunn
Production Assistant Heather Macinnes
Office Assistant Savannah-Rae Gordon
Music Coordinator Jamie Todd

SPECIAL MENTIONS

'Song of the Summer': Lyrics by David
Gomez with input from Tiana Doshi, Lauren
Suh, Ash Rodgers, Sophie Rider, Alex
Viveash, Alice Finnie, Maisie Bircher, Alzane
Sertutxa & Leah Wingfield

Painted jackets created by Lowen Brock

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME AND COMPLETE OUR AUDIENCE SURVEY

THANK YOU!



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