



Saturday, December 6, 2014

Directed by Jeremy Ohringer

Additional text by Danielle Littman

Movement by Kelley Abell

Production / Stage Manger - Katie Langley

(with additional assistance from CYS alums: Jesse Granato, Athena Sarpy, and Cameron Speta)

Artistic Director - Manon Spadaro

Synopsis

Two feuding families: the Capulets and the Montagues. Two teenagers caught in the middle: Romeo (Montague) and Juliet (Capulet). They meet, fall in love at first sight, and the rest is... well, you know how the story ends.

CAST

Jessica Aquino (*Montague / Friar / Apothecary*) is very happy to be in her first CYS production. She would like to thank her parents and everyone who worked on the production.

Marshall Bell (*Mr. Capulet*) is excited to be back with CYS after playing Banquo last year in *Macbeth*. He is a junior at The British School of Chicago.

Ashley Benson (*Benvolio*) is thrilled to be in her first production with CYS. Previous productions include *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Company*. Ashley would like to thank her family and friends for their support and this crazy cast and crew for such a wonderful experience.

Sophia Carlin (*Mercutio*) is a junior at OPRF. This is her second stint with CYS, having played Celia in *As You Like It*. She discovered her passion in the summer of 2009 playing Snow White in *Into the Woods* and has been a part of 26 productions since then. She thanks her family for putting up with her and this cast for giving her so much joy every rehearsal.

Simon Cohen (*Prince/Paris*) has played the lute since 1597, but is thrilled to be now making his Shakespearean debut! He is exceptionally appreciative of the fresh and invigorating approach of everyone involved with the production.

Diata Coleman (*Tybalt / Friar*) Diata Coleman is a 17 year old Chicago native who is in his senior year at the Chicago High School For The Arts. He is proud to be in his second production at CYS. He hopes to attend California Institute Of The Arts.

Jolie Davidson (*Nurse*) is extremely excited to be in her first Shakespeare play! Her most recent roles include Scuttle in *The Little Mermaid* and Adelaide in *Guys and Dolls*. She wishes the cast and crew good luck, and would like to thank her family for being supportive during the craziness of rehearsals.

Karina Kohli (*Ms. Capulet*) makes her Chicago Youth Shakespeare debut in *Romeo and Juliet*. Her favorite roles include Goldie Short from *The Diviners* and Laura from the short play *Acting like Adults*. She would like to thank the cast and crew for letting her lose her mind on stage, and call it "acting".

Nina Sachs (*Romeo*) is so grateful and excited to be working on her second production with CYS! Her favorite roles include a Witch in *Macbeth*, Housewife in *Working*, and Maria in *The Sound of Music*. She would like to thank her family for their support, and the cast for the laughs.

Freya Trefonides (*Juliet*) is a junior at Oak Park River Forest High School. Previously, she played Rosalind in CYS's production of *As You Like It*. She is so grateful for the CYS crew and all they've done for her.

Some questions to think about...

1. Why do this play today? Why is this story important to tell again?
2. Do the issues of this play still resonate today? Are there still parents who mandate who their children hang out with? Do people still kill each other because they are from rival groups? Where else do you see connections?
3. What role do you think **time** plays in this tragedy? How many times do you hear "time" or "hour" mentioned?
4. How do movement and gesture impact our telling of this story? Are there any other words or ideas that you would have added gesture to?
5. Think about the role of the Chorus. Who do you think they were? Why were they there?
6. Did casting a girl in the role of Romeo change the story for you? How?
7. Why is it important to keep Shakespeare's works alive? What can we learn from him 400 years later?

*This is a play about
misunderstanding
frustration
consequence...
This is a story about
love
Young love
Death-mark'd love
Love from an old
world
This is a new story
Our story*

What is CYSE??

The Chicago Youth Shakespeare Ensemble program is open to high school students from all over the Chicago area. They audition to get in and then spend about 10 weeks training, rehearsing, and collaborating to create a Shakespeare production that is all their own. (FYI: CYS also has summer program. Check our website or join our mailing list for 2015 audition dates.)

What does the Youth Ensemble do in rehearsals?

We play ensemble games, we work with the text of the play and getting it on its feet, and we train. We especially rely on elements of these three acting techniques:

Suzuki - training originally from Japan centered around body control.

The Viewpoints - improvisational movement that is broken down into elements of time and space. If you like the movement and gesture in R+J you will probably like The Viewpoints.

Meisner - a technique that is all about listening, observing, reacting honestly, and taking it personally.

What's different about this *Romeo and Juliet*?

When we started the process our first question was: how can we understand and relate to this famous story right now? This conversation led us to the decision of casting a girl in the role of Romeo and creating additional, original text to frame the play. CYSE students worked with playwright, Danielle Littman to create this original text around the themes of disconnect, love, rebellion, and what it means to be a teenager. We also got excited about the way movement and gesture could help us tell this story, so we brought in actor and teaching artist, Kelley Abell to help!

For more information on the CYSE program and how you can help us reach new heights please visit chicagoyouthshakespeare.org.