Theatre Royal Plymouth

& Juliet Act 1

Audio described on  Sat. Oct 5th  2024 @ 2.30p.m.

Touch Tour 1.30p.m.

Audio Describer Pauline Raw

Hello and Welcome to the Theatre Royal Plymouth and this new musical production by Max Martin and Tim Headington of***&Juliet***from the book by David West Read and featuring the music of Max Martin; directed by Luke Sheppard and there is a six-piece orchestra led by Marcus Carter-Adams. My name is Pauline, your audio describer for Act 1 and my colleague Gwen will describe Act 2. My programme notes will start 10 minutes before the show commences and Gwen will start her programme notes approx. 8 minutes before the start of Act 2. We will be outlining, the sets, scenes, costumes and characters before the show and will be describing the action as it happens with the minimum of disruption. There are 12 scenes in Act 1 with 12 songs. 11 songs and 11 scenes are in Act 2.  Act 1 will run for 1 hour 14 minutes and the whole show will run for approx.. 2 hours with an interval of 20 minutes.

William Shakespeare ditches his play’s famous ending for a fresh beginning and a second chance for Juliet at life and love—her way. Created by the Emmy-winning writer from “Schitt’s Creek,” this hilarious new musical flips the script on the greatest love story ever told and asks, what would happen next if Juliet didn’t end it all over Romeo? After a phenomenal run in London’s West End, ***&Juliet*** is heading on a national tour. Picking up three Olivier Awards and six WhatsOnStage Awards. Juliet’s new story bursts to life through a playlist of pop anthems as iconic as her name, including Britney Spears, Baby One More Time, Katy Perry’s Roar and chart toppers Since U Been Gone, It’s My Life, I Want It That Way, and Can’t Stop the Feeling! — all from Max Martin, the genius songwriter/producer behind more  hits than any other artist this century, and his collaborators.

The theatre set is an explosion of colour with the large title &Juliet in flowing pink and blue decorative script at ground level on a metal grid and above are the words, London and Shoreditch in blues and reds.  Names of the London streets are interlaced, such as Brick Lane, Pancras, Whitechapel, Spital fields, Holborn, Oxford Street and Kings Cross and many more. The letters which did spell Romeo are scattered around the space. The floor is chequered black and white squares with a star shape in the centre. There is   a trolley on the right loaded with paint tubs and a jukebox on the left. Graffiti decorated cabinets are on both sides.  The lighting is muted and shadowy.

**There will be haze, smoke, flashes, flashing lights, expletive language, discreet sexual scenes and loud music.**

The musical comes to life with the characters milling around the stage waiting to perform Romeo and Juliet until William decides to rewrite the play. The players are chatting and laughing, waiting for Will’s direction. Theysing ***Larger than Life****.*They are in a mix of colourful, mismatched modern dress, almost hippy related with William Shakespeare and his wife, Anne Hathaway, in relaxed Elizabethan dress. William, whom I will refer to as Will, is in a baggy sleeve white shirt under a waistcoat over breeches and tights, Ann is in a full pink skirt with a puff sleeve blouse with a neck ruff under a tight corset revealing her bosom. They become the warring authors of the play and narrate at intervals between the action. Tall metal stairs are placed, and some letters are added to the title but not completed and the characters begin to dance in street style. The title is flown out and Will comes forward along with his wife Anne to explain his ideas and the characters sit around and listen, occasionally nodding. Anne sings***I Want It That Way.***

The word Shoreditch appears behind the characters and the action begins with Juliet sitting on the floor, in the Capulet Tomb, resting against Romeo’s stone coffin and it is all bathed in a blue light. She tells of her sorrow. She is in a long skirt with a purple bodice over a white vest and wearing sneakers. Her long dark hair is loose. She sings ***Baby, One More Time.***

It is Romeo’s funeral, and a bench is moved forward. Anne and Will carry white roses which they give to the mourners around the coffin. The background is a kaleidoscope of colours, the word Verona prominent before being replaced by star constellations. Juliet is confronted by Romeo’s previous three lovers, Rosaline, Portia and Helena.  ***Show Me the Meaning of Being Lonely*** is sung. They are all dressed in pseudo-Elizabethan style with Lady Capulet in a half long skirt over leggings, high stiff collar and peplum corset. She denounces Juliet and leaves Juliet heartbroken but is comforted by her nurse Angelique.

In the Capulet Castle and Juliet’s bedroom, which has a short cabinet stuffed with clothes, on the left, with a variety of boxes on the top and a central bed with a tall head and foot board, pink pillows, an elaborate cover. A long, padded bench is on the right. The backdrop has elaborate blue scrolls and a unicorn in the centre.

The boisterous and bawdy nurse, Angelique, is in attendance in a full-length skirt, full sleeved blouse under a bodice and wearing a mob cap. May is introduced by Will as Juliet’s best friend. They are ‘outside of the binary gender label’ according to the playwright. Dressed in a purple and white jump suit with a heavy belt and a mop of dark hair.  Anne joins in and assumes the name April, dressed in a green dress and appliqued waistcoat, as Juliet’s other best friend, much to Will’s annoyance. The group sing ***Domino.***

They all leave for Paris. Juliet, Angelique and May travel in a carriage which is a tuk-tuk drawn by a hobby horse mounted and driven by Will. They arrive in Paris and see a banner proclaiming**Renaissance Ball:Ce Soir.** They arrive at the Dubois Castle and are outside the castle ballroom and Lance and Francois Dubois, his son, are about to enter. An attendant stops them. Renaissance Ball is in large letters at the rear and Lance is in a long green waistcoat, leather trousers and an over-sized cod piece which Francois comments on. He is in a long blue waistcoat, dark trousers and a t shirt.

Inside the ballroom and a disc jockey is behind the deck with lights above him and people already dancing.

Juliet, now in a pink puff ball skirt and matching corset with her hair loose, is by the deck and swings from the chandelier before meeting May in the lady’s room. ***Blow*** is sung***.***

In the toilets, a gold framed mirror is on the right and a bench with a small fountain mounted on it on the left. An attendant queries May’s presence there but Juliet nudges them in. May sings***I’m Not A Girl, Not Yet A Woman***

Another room in the castle and a virginal is placed centrally where Francois is playing***Overprotected*** where Juliet meets him and she begins to talk of Romeo and he of his father’s ambitions for him. Speakers drop in on each side and there are tables and chairs dotted around with party goers chatting and drinking.

Juliet and Francois move to the Castle Garden where he sings ***Confident.*** Lance disturbs them only to find he knows Angelique.

It is the next morning in a lavish bedroom. Rich tapestries hang from a high curtain pole either side of an elaborate Headboard on a lavish bed. A dressing table with a stool stands on the left and coat stand on the right. A couple are in the bed. One of them sings ***Teenage Dream***.

Juliet finds Frankie asleep in the carriage.  A proposal makes her sing ***Oops! … I Did It Again.*** She is disturbed by her mother who has been alerted by Will. Anne joins them.

A cobblestone street is the next stop and three storey buildings with iron balconies are behind Francois where he meets May. Francois admits he has never kissed a girl and tentatively kisses May and sings***I Kissed a Girl***which prompts more kissing, watched by Will who now decides to change the plot of the play much to Anne’s annoyance.

Back at the Dubois Castle and chords from ***It’s My Life*** can be heard played on a guitar and an unexpected character adds the words. Will and Anne are watching one of Will’s changes to the plot which culminates with an unexpected twist for Juliet and where we leave her.

Cast

**Juliet.** Not a docile obedient girl but confident and independent………Gerardine Sardalan.

**William.** Handsome and famous, witty and mischievous…………………Matt Cardle

**Anne.** A strong willed wife to Will. She champions Juliet…………………Lara Denning.

**Angelique.**  A Boisterous, bawdy and sensual nurse to Juliet……………Sandra Marvin

**May.** Juliet’s best friend with no gender label……………………………… Jordan Broatch

**Francois**. A misunderstood inexperienced humorous French Musician…Kyle Cox.

**Lance.** Francois’ Father. A single parent who wants the best for his son..Ranj Singh

**Romeo.** A notorious womanizer, true romantic, who loves Juliet…………  Jack Danson

Word Total 1587

Time taken 10 minutes

**& Juliet Act 2 programme notes**

**Audio describer** Gwen Furniss

Welcome back to Act 2 of “And Juliet”. Before we start, a few programme notes to set the scene. My name is Gwen and I’ll be your audio describer for Act 2.

As we wait for Act 2 to start, the front cloth shows the pattern of a framework behind which is a collage, in pinks, blues and yellows, of Parisian buildings and street names. At the lower edge, blocks of colour rise and fall in time to the music, like the sound levels on a mixer desk.

Following his surprise return at the end of Act 1, Romeo now takes centre stage (for a while!). He is tall and slim, with a mop of dark curly hair. He wears a short black jacket layered over a loose dusky pink shirt and black t-shirt. Black leggings encase his slim legs. He is in his early 20s.

To reflect his return, the large cut-out letters centre stage now say the word “Romeo”. The letters light up as the act begins. The scene is set in a Parisian café/bar. To the right are two tables with chairs, and a jukebox. To the left is a large object covered with a white cloth. This is later revealed to be a bicycle-wheeled trolley for selling drinks, which the drinks vendor moves by pedalling.

Juliet appears, still shocked from Romeo’s return to life. She is now dressed in an outfit consisting of a striped cornflower-blue camisole with a peplum at the waist, and matching baggy harem pants tucked into black ankle boots. She wears a pendant on a gold chain round her neck.

The other characters mostly wear the same costumes as before, a modern interpretation of Elizabethan fashion, in pastel colours, with the occasional neon pink or green. However, Benvolio, Romeo’s friend, has pink curly hair topped with a black peaked cap, and wears a grey shirt and black waistcoat over pink shorts. Benvolio is played by a female cast member.

As the scene switches to the garden outside the DuBois chateau, the background is a misty representation of a three-storey house, strings of lights are draped across it and a ladder is propped up to the front. A pale blue bench seat is situated to the right of the stage.

We then have a scene where Romeo and Juliet tentatively discuss their future. A large crescent moon, studded with lights is lowered from the sky and they both sit on a seat at the front of it, securing themselves with a strap across their laps. To add to the fairground ambience of the scene, lights appear against the starry sky in the background, shaped like a Ferris wheel and a merry-go-round.

A room in the chateau features a large painting on a stand centre stage. The painting is of two lovers embracing behind a curtain. To either side of the painting are trolleys containing various props and a dressmaker’s dummy to the left has a silver jacket and cap draped on it. As the action switches to Juliet’s room, the painting is turned around two flower arrangements on high stands are lowered, one to each side. Juliet and Anne are in their petticoats, Juliet’s is a white strapless bodice and tiered white skirt. Anne’s is white muslin, sleeveless and V-necked. She wears a purple flower attached to a bracelet on her wrist. Francois, Will, Lance and Romeo burst into the scene, dressed identically in silver jackets and peaked caps, ready to perform as a boy band for the wedding guests in the chateau ballroom. The ballroom is decked with coloured lights.

Juliet’s wedding dress consists of a pale pink strapless bodice with a pink bow at the back, and a full cream-coloured long skirt with a white net overskirt. Tiny pink flowers are scattered across the skirt. Anne’s dress is a teal blue bodice with tightly laced front, and a knee length gathered white skirt. Angelique’s dress is a dark red bodice over a white blouse with full sleeves, and a cream skirt.

For the finale, Juliet has a very quick costume change, under cover of darkness on stage, and is revealed in a skimpy costume of glittering gold and purple.

There will be some strobe lighting in this act, in the boy band scene in the ballroom.

Time: 5 minutes