

William Shakespeare's

# ROMEO & JULIET

Abridged by  
Owen Horsley

The National Youth Theatre of Great Britain Teacher's Pack

Exclusive resources, interviews & classroom activities for Key Stages 3–5

Photography by Helen Maybanks & Helen Murray



### Romeo & Juliet

The enduring love story of Romeo and Juliet continues to be retold and re-imagined all over the world. The National Youth Theatre of Great Britain's latest adaptation brings you vendettas, violence and star crossed lovers to 1956, post war London. Teddy Girls mix with Teddy Boys, and as the vibrant society booms, rival gangs are drawing battle lines beneath the thick smog of the capital.

### Education Pack to support Key Stage 3, 4 & 5 students and teachers.

This pack was developed with teachers and theatre professionals to support schools' visits to the production. The pack is designed for Drama and English students who are studying the play, and includes production interviews, textual extracts, film extracts and classroom activities to inspire creative and analytical responses tied to the curriculum.

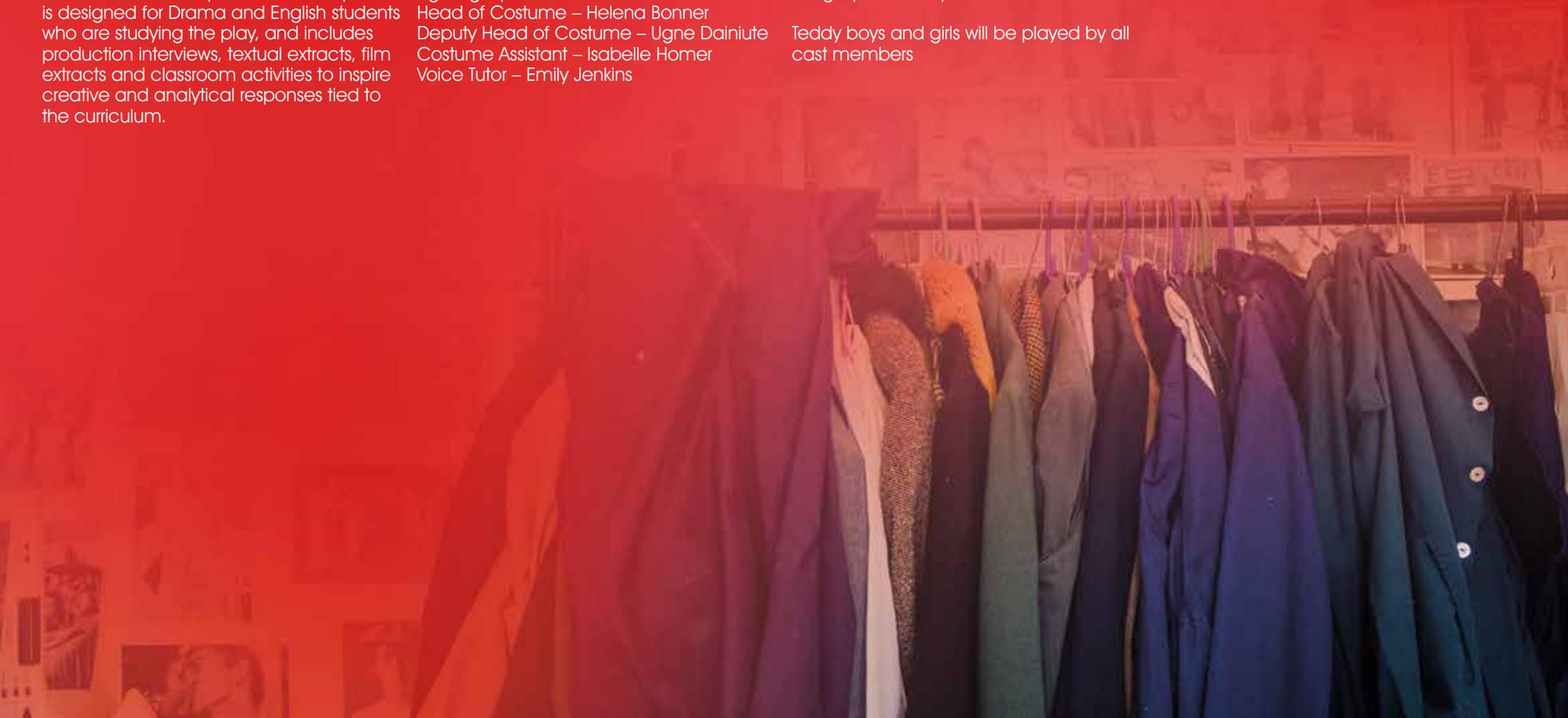
### Production Credits

Director – Kate Hewitt  
Designer – Cecilia Carey  
Lighting Designer – Elliot Griggs  
Assistant Director – Sean Hollands  
Production Manager – Jacqui George  
Assistant Production Manager – Beth Marston  
Technical Manager – Jackson Ingle  
Company Stage Manager – Linsey Hall  
Movement Director – Polly Bennett  
Music and Sound Design – Dom James and Tommy Antonio  
Fight Directors – Rachel Bown-Williams and Ruth Cooper-Brown of Rc-ANNIE Ltd  
Sound Operator – Daffyd Gough  
Lighting Operator – Gareth Weaver  
Head of Costume – Helena Bonner  
Deputy Head of Costume – Ugne Dainiute  
Costume Assistant – Isabelle Homer  
Voice Tutor – Emily Jenkins

### Cast

Romeo – James Mace  
Juliet – Shalisha James-Davis  
Lady Capulet – Natasha Heliotis  
Capulet – Felix Mackenzie-Barrow  
Nurse – Arianna Beadie  
Friar Laurence – Joshua Lyster-Downer  
Lady Montague – Catrin Walker-Booth  
Mercutio / Montague – Kwami Odoom  
Prince – Michael Kinsey  
Benvolio – Shiv Jalota  
Paris – Nathaniel Wade  
Sampson / Peter – Joe Pierson  
Abraham / Apothecary – Charlotte Law  
Balthasar – Daisy Fairclough  
Tybalt – Seraphina Beh  
Gregory – Chinenye Ezeudu

Teddy boys and girls will be played by all cast members



## We Are Proud of Our Young

A nation strives and struggles to find a new identity and place in the world. Hundreds of young people unite to celebrate sixty years of the world's first youth theatre and one of our members suffers racial hatred on our streets in 2016. There is work to be done.

But the solution is clear: a vital force in youth arts opportunity, the NYT at 60 has nurtured and supported thousands of young talented voices encouraging empathy, cohesion and communication in all its participants. These three important qualities were all too lacking in our supposed role models as they took to the political stage earlier this year. It's a living travesty that is in danger of alienating a generation and reversing the valuable work all arts communities stand by. Against all odds of too little government funding, and an increasingly expensive education system, the National Youth Theatre is strong and proud of its identity in celebrating the mis-fit and banning the bland. Whilst offering many their first job in our growing creative economy, we also believe in a second chance for those less fortunate in their first.

We reach out to those with no life-line, no confidence, and no hope. We also reach out to those who believe they are sitting comfortably in a world of opportunity but encourage them to go beyond their perceived comfort zone. The magnetic result is a creative powerhouse which celebrates the nation's diversity and ever evolving cultural heritage with some of the most relevant work on offer for young people today. We create a company of young voices that mixes the demographic of privilege and poverty, with the character of vulnerability and verve, and in doing so we all learn the best lessons from the best of each other.

At least two of our West End Season productions each year are chosen from the School curriculum to inspire those studying the plays in a way no other company of actors could. Our NYT REP season captures students' imagination, with a cast trained to professional standard but young enough to keep their attention, and award-winning playwrights and directors to produce great theatre in the heart of the West End.

I am immensely proud to be championing this life changing charity in its sixtieth year, which has encouraged those on the fringes of society to speak up and play their part to theatrical applause. We should and must be proud of our young, and be equally proud of their futures. But surely the growing question for us all now is will they still be proud of us? Investing in our company and our shared values is a good way to start.

Paul Roseby  
Artistic Director and Chief Executive



## Introduction

The National Youth Theatre of Great Britain is a world-leading youth arts organisation. We were established in 1956 as the first youth theatre in the world and have performed critically acclaimed productions over the past 60 years.

Our approach is unique because we believe that the best place for young performers to learn is in front of an audience. Our ensemble ethos means young people working with us learn as much about themselves as they do about acting and how to relate to an audience. Whilst some go on to be great actors, many others go on to be great lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs and CEOs. What they all have in common is that they stand out from the crowd.

We showcase young talent on West End stages, in stadiums worldwide and at iconic sites both at home and abroad. We commission brave and relevant new writing and reinterpret classic stories of our time.

The National Youth Theatre owe a great deal to fantastic teachers around the country. Every year teachers bring groups to see our productions or encourage their pupils to be a part of the organisation by championing our work and sharing our ambitions to deliver life-changing opportunities to young people.

Thank you.

As someone who went to university so couldn't afford Drama School fees, it was invaluable.

**Temi Wilkey, 2014 REP Company**



## The National Youth Theatre REP Company

The NYT REP Company launched in 2012 in response to the rise in tuition fees to offer an affordable alternative to expensive formal training.

Inspired by the traditional repertory theatre model, the NYT REP Company course offers free, practical, industry-based talent development in drama and performance over nine months to 16 NYT members. The course culminates in three months of performances in the West End.

Each REP member plays three roles in three different productions over a run of 43 performances at the Ambassadors Theatre in the heart of London's West End. Last year over 200 agents and casting directors attended, opening up industry opportunities to the cast. All the company members were signed by leading talent agents and the majority continue to work professionally in theatre, film and TV.

Every REP company member gains an NYT 'buddy' from the previous year's REP company, as well as an industry-based mentor to support their progress and work throughout the programme. This makes the course entirely unique and offers true foundations in the industry.

As good a way into the business  
of acting as any drama school  
**Ian McKellen**



### Directors Notes by Kate Hewitt

What a gift it is to work on a play about young people with a young company! We have been rehearsing to capture the high stakes of first time situations: of love; hate; life; death and rebellion. This young, talented, energetic company have had to draw upon their relatively recent experiences of first time lust, the deep almost tribe-like bond between young best friends, the danger and excitement of the very first moment you rebel against your parents, and how the extremity of love and hate sometimes needs a violent outlet.

Rehearsing during the outcome of the vote to leave the EU, where the young people of Britain will now live for a very long time with the consequences of our ageing society's decision, has brought to the fore the disparity between the old and the young in the play. To this end, we are crafting the older characters in the play to appear as the young characters perceive them to be - larger than life, desperately holding on to the old order of things. At times they are grotesque. Headlines of 1956 were filled with turmoil in the Middle East, racial violence in the United States and arguments about Britain's place in the world, not dissimilar to 2016.

I have been asking the company, and myself what does this era open up for us in relation to the play? The term teenager was coined in the fifties, rock and roll took hold in the UK and USA, violence was bubbling on the streets of London, immigration boomed and for first time in England a working class group defined a fashion trend – the Teddy. The Teddy became synonymous with violence and rebellion – these 'rebellious subjects' are our chorus.



### Historical Context

Director Kate Hewitt's production of Romeo and Juliet for the National Youth Theatre is set in mid-1950s post war Britain. Sir Anthony Eden had just succeeded Sir Winston Churchill as Prime Minister. Political tensions ran high with the onset of the Cold War and the Suez Crisis in the Middle East. However it was also a time of greater freedom and optimism.

The mid-1950's saw the birth of Rock 'n' Roll and the word 'teenager' was first used to describe the newly fashioned conscious youth. For the first time 'teenagers' were enjoying new freedoms, earning their own money to buy clothes and records, hanging out in coffee shops listening to the jukebox and attending dances. Music at the time was seen as radical and there was a sense of 'teen rebellion' emerging from the austerity of the preceding war years.

Gender roles were changing too, partly due to women taking traditionally male jobs during the Second World War. This was reflected in the fashion of the time with clothing for women becoming more androgynous.

This historical and social context of the mid-1950's has had a great influence on all aspects of the production; not just the set, costume and music.



## Synopsis

In Verona there is an ancient feud between the Capulets and the Montagues. In the street a Capulet bites his thumb at a Montague, an insult. A fight breaks out. Lord and Lady Capulet and Lord and Lady Montague appear. The Lords want to fight each other. But the Prince Escalus, the ruling Prince of Verona, declares that the next man to incite a brawl will be killed. Lady Montague is relieved that her son Romeo was not involved and asks Benvolio if he has seen his cousin who is depressed.

Romeo tells Benvolio how much he loves Rosaline, the niece of Lord Capulet. She has rejected Romeo and he is desperately unhappy.

An illiterate servant asks Romeo to read an invitation for him. Rosaline is invited to the Capulets' party that night. Benvolio challenges Romeo to go to the party and to see that the other girls are just as lovely as her.

Paris, a nobleman, wants to marry Juliet, the daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet. Paris approaches Lord Capulet who likes him but he is reluctant. Juliet is only thirteen. Lady Capulet is keener and talks to Juliet about marrying Paris soon.

Romeo, Benvolio and Mercutio go to the Capulets' party. Mercutio talks about Queen Mab who is the queen of sleep and dreams. Romeo has a strange feeling of doom about the evening. As soon as Romeo sees Juliet at the party and he is struck. He asks who she is. He watches her: 'Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! / For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.'

Tybalt, the nephew of Lady Capulet, spots Romeo and he prepares for a fight. Tybalt tells Lord Capulet that Romeo Montague is there. Lord Capulet has heard the boy has a good reputation. He forbids Tybalt to fight.

Romeo approaches Juliet. They talk briefly and in moments they fall in love. Juliet is called away. Romeo asks Juliet's nurse who is Juliet is. The nurse explains she is a Capulet Romeo Montague: 'My only love sprung from my only hate'. Juliet also quizzes her nurse, who Romeo is, she discovered he is a Montague.

Benvolio and Mercutio search for Romeo but he gives them the slip. He climbs over the high wall of the orchard to be near Juliet. She comes out of her room and stands on her balcony. She starts to speak about Romeo.

Romeo comes out of the shadows and they confess their love to each other and kiss. Juliet promised to send for him tomorrow, that they'll get married and she will give up her name to be with him. They are completely in love.

With the help of her nurse Juliet is married to Romeo the next day by Friar Laurence, a local Franciscan Friar and a confidant to Romeo. Tybalt approaches Mercutio, he wants to find Romeo. Mercutio challenges Tybalt who draws his sword and kills Mercutio. Romeo appears and is enraged and kills Tybalt. Romeo is sent into exile. Romeo spends one wedding night with Juliet. Then he runs away to Mantua.

Meanwhile Lord and Lady Capulet are set on Juliet marrying Paris. Juliet is terrified and goes to Friar Laurence for help. He has a plan. Juliet must drink a potion that makes her look as though she has died. She will be laid out in the family's burial vault. But she will revive. Then Friar Laurence will reunite her with Romeo and they can run far away and be together as man and wife.

Juliet is fearful but agrees. She panics about the potion. What if it misfires? What if she really dies? And how will it be waking up amongst graves? But she takes the potion and goes into a death like faint.

Friar Laurence writes to Romeo to tell him of the plan but the letter does not reach him. Juliet is laid to rest. Romeo is told that Juliet has died. He buys poison to kill himself and goes to Verona to see her body. Paris is at the grave and challenges Romeo who kills him.

Romeo sees Juliet's lifeless body. He drinks the poison. Friar Laurence arrives but it is too late. Juliet wakes up from her stupor and sees Romeo's dead body. Inconsolable she joins him. She kisses his poisoned lips then takes his dagger and kills herself.

The families see the bodies entwined together and feel remorse and regret at their hate campaign having taken these young innocent lives. They vow to end their feud.

### Romeo

The son and heir of Montague and Lady Montague. A young man of about sixteen, Romeo is handsome, intelligent, and sensitive. Though impulsive and immature, his idealism and passion make him an extremely likable character.

### Juliet

The daughter of Capulet and Lady Capulet. A beautiful thirteen-year-old girl, Juliet begins the play as a naïve child who has thought little about love and marriage, but she grows up quickly upon falling in love with Romeo, the son of her family's great enemy.

### Friar Lawrence

A Franciscan friar, friend to both Romeo and Juliet. Kind, civic-minded, a proponent of moderation, and always ready with a plan.

### Mercutio

A kinsman to the Prince, and Romeo's close friend. Mercutio overflows with imagination, wit and at times, a strange, biting satire and brooding passion.

### The Nurse

Juliet's nurse, the woman who breast-fed Juliet when she was a baby and has cared for Juliet her entire life.

### Tybalt

A Capulet, Juliet's cousin on her mother's side. Vain, fashionable, supremely aware of courtesy and the lack of it, he becomes aggressive, violent, and quick to draw his sword when he feels his pride has been injured. Once drawn, his sword is something to be feared. He loathes Montagues.

### Capulet

The patriarch of the Capulet family, father of Juliet, husband of Lady Capulet, and enemy, for unexplained reasons, of Montague.

### Lady Capulet

Juliet's mother, Capulet's wife. A woman who herself married young, she is eager to see her daughter marry Paris. She is an ineffectual mother, relying on the Nurse for moral and pragmatic support.

### Montague

Romeo's father, the patriarch of the Montague clan and bitter enemy of Capulet. At the beginning of the play, he is chiefly concerned about Romeo's melancholy.

### Lady Montague

Romeo's mother, Montague's wife. She dies of grief after Romeo is exiled from Verona.

### Paris

A kinsman of the Prince and the suitor of Juliet most preferred by Capulet. Once Capulet has promised him he can marry Juliet, he behaves very presumptuously toward her, acting as if they are already married.

### Benvolio

Montague's nephew, Romeo's cousin and thoughtful friend, he makes a genuine effort to defuse violent scenes in public places.

### Prince Escalus

The Prince of Verona. A kinsman of Mercutio and Paris. As the seat of political power in Verona, he is concerned about maintaining the public peace at all costs.

### Friar John

A Franciscan friar charged by Friar Lawrence with taking the news of Juliet's false death to Romeo in Mantua. Friar John is held up in a quarantined house, and the message never reaches Romeo.

### Balthasar

Romeo's dedicated servant, who brings Romeo the news of Juliet's death, unaware that her death is a 'clever trick to deceive others'.

### Abram

Montague's servant, who fights with Sampson and Gregory in the first scene of the play.

### The Apothecary

An pharmacist in Mantua. Had he been wealthier, he might have been able to afford to value his morals more than money, and refused to sell poison to Romeo.

### Peter

A Capulet servant who invites guests to Capulet's feast and escorts the Nurse to meet with Romeo. He is illiterate, and a bad singer.

### Rosaline

The woman with whom Romeo is infatuated at the beginning of the play. Rosaline never appears onstage, but it is said by other characters that she is very beautiful and has sworn to live a life of chastity.



### Activities

The cast of Romeo & Juliet spent the first week of rehearsal looking specifically at the text and used the below exercises to help understand meaning and significance in the script.

### Text Work – Unlocking Shakespeare

1. During rehearsals in the first week the cast played out scenes in modern day language demonstrating their understanding of and experimenting with Shakespeare's use of verse to breathe life into their characters. Find a way to speak a character's line in an active sense, putting the line into the first person.

### Defining Events in the Play

2. An 'event' being a moment in Romeo and Juliet that changes every characters intention in the play. If it only changes one characters intention it isn't an 'event'. In groups make a timeline of all the events of the play on a large sheet of paper. Discuss your findings with other groups. Amend your timeline accordingly following your discussion. At the NYT we put these timelines on the walls of the rehearsal room.

### Vocal and Physical Exercise

3. Pushing and pulling the text: Standing in the rehearsal space behind each actor should be another actor holding the script. The actor holding the script 'feeds' the actor playing a character their line by saying it out loud. The actor in role simply repeats the line. In early rehearsals this greatly frees the actor to experiment vocally and physicalize their character, (as well as learn their lines!)

### Scene Study

Download the script exert here  
Download a film of the scene here



## Production Design

Interview with Cecilia Carey,  
Designer of the NYT Rep Season 2016

### When did you first want to be a Theatre Designer and how did you get into it?

I did Graphic Design as my degree and worked in publishing for a couple of years, where the combining of text and image was key. However, I started making giant scaled props and painting murals for people's houses alongside and loved creating in a 'real' scale, so I decided to quit the Mac working life and go to 'Motley' to do a post graduate course in Theatre Design. This was a brilliant intense year taught by the amazing designer, Alison Chitty, and all her superb theatre contacts. It was the first I really knew of how theatre design worked and the variety the job entails. From there I contacted theatres such as Hampstead Theatre to design their education shows, designed new plays in Fringe venues in London and assisted designers, Es Devlin and Chloe Lamford as much as I could.

### What's your favourite part of the job?

I love those first meetings with the director to discover where we match up, from masses of images I bring to it initially. Another special moment is when the design is realised from a 1:25 model you've been working on for months in the studio to being executed 1:1 scale – it is amazingly satisfying and then seeing how the cast react. I love working as a team and I'm always excited to see how the different disciplines can take the design in ways I didn't expect or realise were possible.

### Where do you find the inspiration for your designs?

From my studio desk window I can spy on all walks of life spilling out from the local market and high street – perfect for costume and character observations. Aesthetica and Gup magazines publish inspiring visual culture and unique photography stories respectively.

### Is it hard working on a REP season like this, designing three shows at once?

It's important to be as organised and disciplined as possible to be able to meet the directors enough and working out what needs to take priority – splitting my time between being in the rehearsals, to see how a show is shaping up and getting on with designing the other show - alongside my other design projects! Working with different directors of the first time is really exciting but also another reason to be organised and remember to ask the important questions to inform the design as everyone has different ways of working. My training at Motley has been invaluable in giving me the confidence in working in a similar structure each time on how to approach a project from start to finish.

### How does a set design become reality from a design on the page, and how involved are you in that process?

The Production Manager is key to getting the design to how you imagined it to be. There is a provisional 'white card design meeting' to check things are possible and roughly in budget and then changes might be made before the 'final design' hand in. It always pays to give lots of references to the stage management team, prop makers and wardrobe and double check everything that's being ordered or made as it never feels like there's enough time as we get closer to technical rehearsals in the theatre!

### Is it different working on a new play like Pigeon English vs something so established as Romeo & Juliet?

I try to approach every project with the same openness and I don't get distracted about how shows have been done before. The key is to talk to the director as much as possible to find a new way into it together. Romeo and Juliet was a harder process of the two due to the fact it is so well known, but actually more difficult is designing two shows in Rep over the existing Stomp set. When audiences come to see the Rep shows, I don't think many people realise it's such a unique and challenging design project due to the overlapping sets. There are a huge amount of limitations and very little storage so the crew are hugely expert at packing every designed component into every nook and cranny!

### What advice would you give someone who wanted to be a theatre designer?

You need lots of energy and determination! Meeting lots of different teams of creatives is what is exciting about working in theatre, but it means there will always be challenges you didn't expect or encounter from the last project so it's good to be clear what you are going to be doing and not get swept into other jobs of the team. Contacting designers to ask to assist them is a really good way in and try to work in as many different theatres or sites as possible as it gives you the experience to be confident in designing in lots of types of spaces.

### Romeo and Juliet is set in the 1950's, how did you approach this era as opposed to Pigeon English set in the modern day?

Kate and I were briefed to set Romeo and Juliet in the 1950's and it's been so interesting to realise that members in the first year of The National Youth Theatre would have looked like all my reference photos of the teenagers then! So although Pigeon English is set in the modern day, we wanted to make Romeo and Juliet just as relevant to our young cast and it got us thinking about the parallels of teenagers today and that gulf that always exists between teenagers and the adult generation. The duality of the two generations was a theme we've taken on just as strong as the two opposing houses, Montagues and Capulets. The word 'teenagers' was first coined then and it was the first time the youth had real pocket money - those teddy gangs were a force to be reckoned with! We've delved into the gritty, grimey post war vibe of London 1956 and created a non-naturalistic setting in which to explore the heat of youth, revenge, love, conflict, lust, hate, rebellion and death.



## Further Resources

RSC Shakespeare Teacher resources

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/romeo-and-juliet/education>

BBC Shakespeare Unlocked

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/484GwDBByzcGTGCy5bvmhLF/romeo-and-juliet>

BBC Clip

In this clip Ashley Walters (Bullet Boy and Hustle) plays Romeo, from Romeo and Juliet, in search of this new love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3MiaSG1SMQ>

Top tips for learning a Shakespearean speech off by heart. Created by Shakespeare Schools Festival.

[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/offbyheart/obhs\\_tips\\_learning\\_speech.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/offbyheart/obhs_tips_learning_speech.pdf)

Another Article, Teddy Girls:  
The Style Subculture That Time Forgot

<http://www.anothermag.com/fashion-beauty/8064/teddy-girls-the-style-subculture-that-time-forgot>

Watch video clips of When Romeo Met Juliet, a BBC documentary on a production of Romeo and Juliet directed by NYT Artistic Director Paul Roseby in 2010

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00sq6b1>



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**Stephan Kelman's Pigeon English**  
Adapted by Gbolahan Obisesan  
26th Sept – 22nd Nov 2016

Set against a backdrop of beatboxing, graffiti and skate parks, Stephen Kelman's 2011 Man Booker prize shortlisted novel has been electrifyingly adapted for the stage for its West End premiere by award-winning playwright Gbolahan Obisesan. Pigeon English tells the story of inner city life and having to grow up fast on the streets.



**DNA by Dennis Kelly**  
9th Nov – 25th Nov 2016

Directed by Sean Hollands

Amongst the darkness of an unnamed wood, a lawless gang are trying to bury a dark secret. The group need someone to take charge, but who can they trust? Who do they follow? While lies spiral and tension mounts, everyday adolescence twists and turns into an anarchic game of survival. This West End premiere will see the National Youth Theatre REP Company bring to life Denis Kelly's moral tug of war between actions and their consequences.

### Audition to join the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain

Auditions and interviews are now open to join the National Youth Theatre Company. We want to discover exceptional performers and technicians from across the UK and will be visiting over 30 theatre and arts venues in Spring 2017.

Visit [www.nyt.org.uk/audition](http://www.nyt.org.uk/audition) to find out more

### Host Auditions at your school

Have you spotted exceptional talent at your school? Do you want to bring more opportunities to your students? For no extra cost beyond the standard fees we can deliver an auditions day at your school for 20+ students with an interest in joining the National Youth Theatre. The session will include a three hour workshop delivered by a professional theatre director.

### CPD Events for teachers

We host regular and free CPD event for teachers and educators who would like to know more about how we approach theatre making with young people. Gain an insight into how to develop a large-scale production and best practice for nurturing young talent.

Join our Schools Mailing List to hear about our next event

For more information please contact [frankie.haynes@nyt.org.uk](mailto:frankie.haynes@nyt.org.uk)

### Get involved now 6 Day Masterclass Courses

During academic holidays we run six day masterclasses for young people aged 15-25 across the UK. Led by industry professionals these courses provide a platform for participants to develop their talent, performance skills and confidence.

Find out more: [www.nyt.org.uk/masterclass](http://www.nyt.org.uk/masterclass)

### Club Membership

Competition is always tough to successfully audition for the National Youth Theatre Company. Club Membership offers exclusive opportunities, discounts and advice to those who haven't auditioned yet, or didn't quite make it last time, but want to stay involved.

Club Membership is open to anyone auditioning aged 12-25.

Find out more: <http://www.nyt.org.uk/membership/club-membership>

The National Youth Theatre offers  
a stellar beginning for young actors  
**BBC Radio 4**

