

https://www.nuvo.net/arts/review-irt-s-romeo-and-juliet-succeeds-on-every-level/article_d9206068-0fa8-11e8-b294-6b6421eb7474.html

Review: IRT's Romeo and Juliet succeeds on every level

Rita Kohn

Feb 11, 2018



Romeo & Juliet production photo

This is not just another “Let’s do Shakespeare” gesture. IRT’s “Romeo and Juliet” is one of their finest productions, fully deserving of the standing ovation and the laudatory comments by opening night audience members, moved to speak to each whether we’ve met or not.

What touched us is the honesty of each portrayal. We felt complicit in the death of four young people; two finding love despite being forbidden to do so, two mired in deeply embedded hatred. The air we are breathing along with them is toxic. Nobody bothers to retell when or why such gut-wrenching animosity started. The Montagues and the Capulets assume we know because we are them, on one side or the other, bumping into each other, walking the same streets, disdainful, disrespectful in body language and spoken word.

A cast of ten beautifully embodies the story as an unfolding reality. Henry Woronicz's nuanced direction of a script pared to a swift essence of events, simultaneously happening as in the moment and recalled as in a memory, is shaped as a ballet with spoken words. We are made aware every second counts; every gesture can have an implicit impact, exploding into mayhem.

If all this sounds like here and now, it is. A four-hundred year-old quarrel is mercilessly current in setting and clothing. Sophia Macias as Juliet and Aaron Kirby as Romeo are two teens out of sync in a world they didn't make and want to change. They succeed through suicide.

Yet what makes this enduring play, this excellent production, bearable, are the good parts of humanity that give us a sense of hope. Maybe, just maybe, if we all come to the theater and together experience the reaching across, the touching of hands, we can find a way to live in harmony. Attend.

If You Go

WHAT // Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

WHEN // Through March 3

WHERE // Indiana Repertory Theatre upper Stage

TICKETS // Prices start at \$25

MORE INFORMATION

A Seat on the Aisle

Theatre reviews by Ken Klingenmeier w/ Larry Adams, Adam Crowe, Veronique Duprey, Jay Hemphill, Jon Lin, Carrie Neal, Vickie Cornelius Phipps, Amber Shatto, and Daniel Shock

[Home](#) [About](#)

["A Raisin in the Sun" at IRT](#)

["Other Desert Cities" at Carmel Community Players](#)

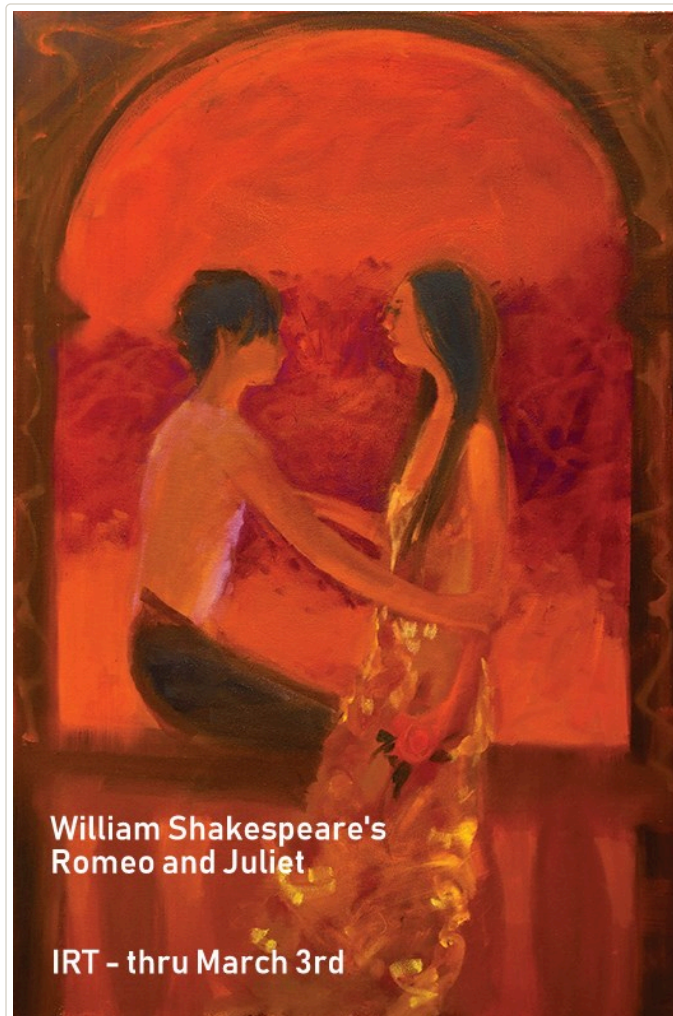
January
28, 2018

"Romeo and Juliet" at IRT UpperStage

[seatontheaisle](#)

[IRT, theatre review](#)

[Leave a comment](#)



[reviewed by Adam Crowe](#)

Scheduling conflicts have made Ken unavailable. That's lucky for me, as it means I was able to attend Opening Night at the Indiana Repertory Theatre for their production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. IRT's current adaptation is presented in about 90 minutes, without Intermission. Fear not – all of the well known poetry from this classic remains. This version, partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, is aimed at school audiences. Thanks to the

funding, thousands of Hoosier students will be able to experience a classic of Western literature.

My own familiarity with the play leans more towards the cultural rather than the academic. Thus, I cannot really identify what parts of the full length play were omitted from this version. I can attest that, for the most part, the storytelling is clear and brisk.



Sophia Macías and Aaron Kirby are star-crossed lovers in “Romeo and Juliet” at IRT UpperStage.

As a local actor myself, I am happy to report that the cast is somewhat weighted towards local talent, including Ryan Artzberger, Ashley Dillard, Jeremy Fisher, Constance Macy, Logan Moore, Millicent Wright, and Robert Neal. All excel, with Wright bringing the most delight as the Nurse of the House of Capulet. Aaron Kirby and Sophia Macías provide the exuberance as the titular teenagers in love, while Charles Pasternak rounds out the cast in multiple, pivotal roles.



Ryan Artzberger as Friar Laurence and Aaron Kirby as Romeo in a scene from IRT’s “Romeo and Juliet”.

Henry Woronicz, a frequent actor on IRT’s stage, handles the directing duties and is wise enough not to let anything get between his talented cast and the beautiful language. On the technical side, Eric Barker’s set is spare, yet appropriately evocative. Todd Reischman’s sound provides excellent accompaniment and Michael Jackson’s lighting is spot on (pardon the pun). Courtney Foxworthy and Linda Pisano have provided contemporary costuming that fits the Director’s vision.



Millicent Wright as Nurse in a scene with Sophia Macías as Juliet in IRT's "Romeo and Juliet".

If you've never seen this classic onstage, IRT's production gives you a perfect opportunity to experience this timeless love story and its beautiful language, brought fully to life by cast and crew.

Romeo and Juliet runs until March 3rd, but only has a dozen or so public performances, the bulk of the performances being scheduled for aforementioned school groups. As a plus, nearly every public performance has a post-show discussion, allowing the audience to share thoughts and feelings about the show.

Indiana Repertory Theatre is located at 140 West Washington Street. I always find parking at the Circle Centre Mall Garage to be easy and affordable. Tickets may be purchased by visiting the website at irtlive.com or by calling (317) 635-5252. Ticket prices for those under 18 are very affordable, and this production provides an excellent introduction to the work of the Bard of Avon.

Banner artwork by Kyle Ragsdale

Photos by Zach Rosing

Leave a comment

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

"A Raisin in the Sun" at IRT

"Other Desert Cities" at Carmel Community Players



[Article Portfolio](#)

[Calendar for gardening events in and around Indianapolis, Ind.](#)

[Calendar for theatrical productions \(and some Other Stuff\) in and around Indianapolis, Ind.](#)

[Contact](#)

[Sitting in the Middle Row](#)

[Who am I?](#)

Indianapolis Theater Reviews

{Because reviews still matter}

INDIANAPOLIS THEATER: REVIEWS

Indiana Repertory Theatre: “Romeo and Juliet” (5 stars)

Posted on January 29, 2018

Most—if not all—of Shakespeare’s plays are cut down for performing to keep the run-time more suitable for modern audiences. There are many different ways to shorten them, but for a 90-minute show, even when abridged, you have to put Shakespeare on fast-forward. And you feel it in the Indiana Repertory Theatre’s *Romeo and Juliet*, which speeds along at a breakneck pace. I’m not saying this

Most recent posts

[2024 IndyFringe:
Theater/Drama,
Comedy &
Storytelling reviews
August 16, 2024](#)

[Stages & Other
Stuff: Event roundup
Aug. 14-21
August 14, 2024](#)

[Lisa’s IndyFringe
schedule
August 14, 2024](#)



Indiana Repertory Theatre: "Romeo and Juliet." Photo by Zack Rosing.

is a bad thing. It keeps your attention laser-focused. You don't have time to think about the potentially confusing language. Instead, you find yourself slipping into it, as if you are absorbing it on a subconscious level. This is how it should be.

Director Henry Woronicz's goal is made clear from the beginning: make the show relevant to teenagers. This production, with funding by the National Endowment for the Arts, is aimed

2024 IndyFringe

Theatre

Festival presented
by Everwise Credit

Union

August 11, 2024

Stages, Sprouts &
Other Stuff: Event
roundup for Aug. 8-
15

August 7, 2024

Summer Stock
Stage Eclipse:

"Lizzie,

The Musical"

August 5, 2024

Stages, Sprouts &
Other Stuff: A

roundup of events

Aug. 1-8

August 1, 2024

Fast Apple Artists:

"The Last

Five Years"

July 30, 2024

Stages, Sprouts &
Other Stuff: Event
roundup for July 25-

Aug. 1

July 25, 2024

"White City Murder"
and "Bigfoot Saves

at middle school and high school audiences, allowing them this theatrical experience.

All elements of the show combine to appeal to this—and every—age group. Sound designer Todd Reischman's opening beats immediately jar the audience to attention with the loud, thumping music. The teenage characters in the show are clothed in contemporary, punkish outfits, designed by Courtney Foxworthy and Linda Pisano. Benvolio even has pink hair. Intense, exciting fights are riveting (which are choreographed by Rob Johansen).

Woronicz has coaxed such expressive body language from the actors that translation is effortless. The show's physicality is daunting. The language becomes clear. Plus, you can catch a lot more insults and sex jokes that way. (Really, I never thought I would see crotch-grabbing on an IRT stage.)



the World"

July 24, 2024

Review archives

Select Month ▾

Look for it

Search ...

Categories

Select Category ▾

Stalk me



Follow Indianapolis Thea

Aaron Kirby is the angst-ridden Romeo, and Sophia Macías is the childish Juliet, complete with foot stomping. Their characterizations emphasize that the two were just teenagers—Juliet a mere thirteen and Romeo not much more than that. Woronicz's choice harkens back to the target audience.

Millicent Wright is a pleasure as the fussy, funny, and lovable Nurse for Juliet. (And really, when is Wright *not* great?) Ashley Dillard's Benvolio gives the character a multidimensional personality. Rounding out the cast are Ryan Artzberger as Friar Laurence, Logan Moore in multiple roles, including Tybalt, Robert Neal as Lord Capulet, and Jeremy Fisher in multiple roles. Saturday afternoon, Chelsea Anderson stepped into the role of Lady Capulet in lieu of Constance Macy, and Anderson did the role proud.

Charles Pasternak, who also plays multiple roles, is getting his own little paragraph here. Pasternak's hyperactive, raunchy Mercutio steals every. single. scene. he is in. You can't help looking at him. He demands your attention. He's a foul-mouthed comedy show of one.

Follow Blog via Email

Enter your email address to follow this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

FOLLOW

Top Tags

[Buck Creek Players](#)

[Civic Theatre](#)

[Footlite Musicals](#)

[Indianapolis theater](#)

[Indianapolis theater: reviews](#)

[Indiana Repertory Theatre](#)

[Indyfringe](#)

[Lisa Gauthier Mitchison](#)

All of this is contained within a minimalist environment designed by Eric Barker.



Indiana Repertory Theatre: "Romeo and Juliet." Photo by Zack Rosing,

Most intriguing is the backdrop. Examine it closely. It appears to be bleeding. A foreshadowing of things to come?

- Through March 4
- Tickets \$25-\$60
- Save \$10 when you book tickets using promo code VERONA1. Valid through Feb. 10 on individual seats priced \$35 and higher.
- Post-Show Discussions immediately following each performance
- Valentine's Day: This special one-time offer includes two tickets, two beverages of your choice (each valued up to \$7), and sweet treats

Phoenix Theatre

Storytelling Arts of
Indiana

Get e-mail!

Enter your email address to follow this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

FOLLOW

Blog Stats

61,077 hits