



Romeo & Juliet: Love Is Love

Description

Repercussion Theatre's 30th Shakespeare-in-the-Park Tour

By **Barbara Ford**

For its 30th anniversary season, **Repercussion Theatre** presents *Romeo & Juliet: Love is Love* from **July 5 to August 8, 2018**. The largest **Shakespeare-in-the-Park (SITP)** tour that Repercussion Theatre has had in a decade – with 30 shows to mark the anniversary – makes the usual rounds of local parks as well as visits to the West Island, the Eastern Townships, the Laurentians, Eastern Ontario and Quebec's Montérégie, with two additional locations: the Olympic Park and Hawkesbury.

The Montreal opening is July 6 at Mount Royal Cemetery; the West Island opening is July 5 at Baie d'Urfé's Fritz Farm, and the Ontario opening is in Cornwall on July 7 at the appropriately named Lamoureux Park. All shows begin at 7 pm.

What's in a name, that which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.

Romeo

Repercussion's customary method of "holding a mirror up to nature" creates a unique, current context through which the well-known love tragedy unfolds. A band of thespians is tasked to perform *Romeo and Juliet* repeatedly until society finally learns that hate not only destroys the subjects of its loathing but also the cherished.



The troupe draw lots to decide who plays which roles and as luck would have it this time, *Romeo and Juliet* will be portrayed by women, among other chance gender-bent character assignments.

Timeless themes of rebellion, power, pride, fate, and the passionate and unpredictable nature of love and hate, resonate anew in this 400-year old tale. Juliet's arranged marriage, built on the business of making powerful alliances through wedlock, and the Friar's ill-fated letter that could have saved the doomed lovers, ultimately force them to take the most drastic of measures in the name of love.

'For stony limits cannot hold love out.'

Romeo



“I don’t think we’re doing anything particularly new”, explains

Artistic Director **Amanda Kellock**. “While Shakespeare has come to be regarded as an untouchable monolith, he himself was not rigid. He was like a Renaissance sci-fi playwright, taking old stories, setting them in far-off, half-imagined places, and applying his contemporary lens to connect with the audiences of his time. This play in particular has often had a “queer” element to it, whether it was the Elizabethan custom of men portraying all of the female roles or the Cushman sisters in the 1800s, who took the world by storm with their interpretation of the play. It’s been such a joy to explore the various ways that identity and desire are experienced and expressed in our production.”

Ultimately, it is not sexual identity that forces the star-crossed lovers to hide their passion but the endless rivalry between the families that inhibits them from proclaiming their love publicly. Kellock asks, “Wouldn’t it be great if the play finally taught us to let people love who they want to love”?

Adam Capriolo (Twelfth Night, SITP 2015) is the effusive Mercutio and the austere Prince Escalus. George Brown College and Stratford Conservatory alumnus, **Ryan Bommarito**, plays Friar Lawrence and the Capulet servant, Peter. Paris, Juliet’s appointed fiancé, is played by first-year NTS student, **Ray Jacildo**. Fellow first-year NTS student from the Maritimes, **Patrick Jeffrey**, is the fiery Tybalt.



Actor/musician/singer, **Gitanjali Jain** (Twelfth Night, SITP 2015 and Julius Caesar, SITP 2016) returns for her third SITP tour as Juliet's Nurse. Recent NTS grad, **Cara Krisman**, returns for her second consecutive SITP production to play Romeo's cousin and friend, Benvolio. **Anton May**, a UK ex-pat and 2016 Dawson graduate who appeared in both of Geordie Productions' school tour productions this year, portrays Lady Capulet. Montreal-based Guyanese-Canadian performer and theatre creator, **Michelle Rambharose**, makes her Shakespearean debut as Juliet opposite **Shauna Thompson**, another recent NTS graduate, playing Romeo. And finally, local actor, singer, producer, director, and choreographer, **Nadia Verrucci**, plays Lord Capulet.

'O sweet Juliet, thy beauty hath made me effeminate.'

Romeo



Subtle costuming by returning META-winning designer, **Sophie El-Assad** (*Much Ado About Nothing*, SITP 2017), differentiates the rigid power establishment from the younger generation trying to break free of their elders' gender-defining finery, and clearly contrasts the "old money" Montagues with the flashier Bourgeois Capulets.

Internationally renowned set and lighting designer, **Ana Cappelluto**, a descendant of the Capulet clan, used childhood memories of growing up in Italy to inspire the adaptable set and evocative lighting, which reflect both the calcified hatred between the "two households" and the sensual duality of love and death.

Gitanjali Jain does double duty as a performer and the Sound Designer, using the Cajon, a South American percussion instrument, and the actors' voices to create the original sound scape, and inserts some traditional songs, though none are inherent to the play. Repercussion's new Artistic Associate, **Shanti Gonzales**, is the Assistant Director. **Holly Greco** created the dances, the exciting scuffles and brawls are devised by fight choreographer **Michelle Lewis**, and renowned Shakespeare coach, **Brian Doubt**, returns for the third year to provide text support. Visual artist and film director, **Sarah Junique**, is the Production Manager and **Danielle Laurin** adds a third SITP production to her credits as Stage Manager for the second time.



Pocket Shakespeare

For the third consecutive year, everyone will be able to enjoy every nuance of the Bard's English thanks to **Plank Design**, who designed a unique application that enables Francophone audiences to follow the text by reading French sub-titles on their smart phones.

Shakespeare-Before-the-Show

Once again, Repercussion Theatre is partnering with **Geordie Productions** to give young audiences playful and innovative ways to engage with Shakespeare. There are six 2-hour **Introduction to Shakespeare workshops** available for kids and teens at a cost of \$35. Participants will learn what all the "foresooths" and "wherefores" are about, experience the fun of speaking Shakespeare, and meet the cast of *Romeo & Juliet: Love is Love*. Maximum 10 children per class. Visit geordie.ca/gtsworkshops to register.



Photo: Gabriela Saltiel, courtesy of Geordie Theatre School

Westmount Park

Wednesday, July 11 from 4 pm to 6:15 pm – 8 to 12 years

Wednesday, July 11 from 4 pm to 6:15 pm – 13 to 17 years

Sunday, July 29 from 4 pm to 6:15 pm – 8 to 12 years

Sunday, July 29 from 4 pm to 6:15 pm – 13 to 17 years

McGill University Campus

Tuesday, July 31 from 4 pm to 6:15 pm – 11 to 17 years

Centennial Park, Beaconsfield

Friday, August 3 from 4 pm to 6:15 pm – 11 to 17 years

Pre-show discussion

Repercussion Theatre is also teaming up with **McGill University's Early Modern Conversions Project** to host an **informative pre-show discussion** on **July 31** at 6:30 pm at the McGill Campus site, prior to that evening's performance.



Image by Sophie El-Assaad

Rain cancellations

The tour is designed to be performed outdoors, however at several locations there are alternate indoor locations in walking distance of the respective park. A show is cancelled ONLY in case of heavy rain and/or thunderstorms. The phone line, website and the company's social media channels are constantly updated.

To stay abreast of last-minute changes to the performance schedule, call 514-931-2644 or follow Repercussion Theatre on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or Snapchat.

Show schedule

All shows begin at 7 pm

July

- 5 – Baie d'Urfé
- 6 – Mount Royal Cemetery (Montreal premiere)
- 7 – Cornwall (ON)
- 8 – Cornwall (ON)
- 10 – Westmount
- 11 – Westmount
- 12 – Dorval
- 13 – Montreal West
- 14 – Knowlton (Eastern Townships)



15 – Hawkesbury (ON)
17 – Nun’s Island
18 – Kirkland

August

1 – LaSalle
2 – Cote-St-Luc
3 – Beaconsfield
4 – Morin Heights
5 – Rivière-des-Prairies
7 – Plateau-Mont-Royal
8 – Olympic Park

19 – Park Extension
20 – NDG
21 – Canadian Centre for Architecture
22 – N.D.G
24 – Pierrefonds
25 – Lafontaine Park
26 – Town of Mt-Royal
27 – St-Laurent
28 – Westmount
29 – Westmount
31 – McGill University Campus

For park details & maps, visit repercussiontheatre.com/rj-loveislove

About Repercussion Theatre

The mission of Repercussion Theatre is to deliver professional, classically based, visually dynamic theatre that is accessible to all, regardless of income, culture, language, age or education. Repercussion brings the performing arts to people in their communities, reaching new audiences and instilling in them, a lifelong love of theatre.

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Read also: [Byron’s Fringe Festival “peeps” diary](#)



Barbara Ford *Barbara has been involved with the performing arts in one way or another for most of her life, first on stage as a professional dancer/choreographer and latterly behind the scenes in marketing and communications. She now uses her knowledge and experience to promote the work of other artists.*

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