

# Matthew Bourne's ROMEO+ JULIET

Music by PROKOFIEV

## PRE-SHOW RESOURCE



### ABOUT NEW ADVENTURES

New Adventures is an iconic and ground-breaking dance-theatre company. Since 1987, we have been known for creating works that have altered the public perception of what is possible when it comes to telling stories without words. The company is led by celebrated choreographer and director, Sir Matthew Bourne.

### AN INTRODUCTION TO ROMEO AND JULIET

Matthew is renowned for shattering stereotypes and exploring and pushing new boundaries in dance. Key to his creative approach is the creation of new work from familiar titles that are accessible to audiences unfamiliar with dance. However, Matthew's aim is not to simply re-tell a well-known story but instead put his own spin on the narrative that provokes the audience to think, feel and consider the story in a new light. New Adventures' adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is no exception, bursting with youth, vitality and Matthew Bourne's trademark storytelling. Perhaps the best-known love story in English literary tradition, and one of Shakespeare's most enduring pieces of writing, *Romeo and Juliet* tells the tragic tale of two lovers who must follow their hearts as they risk everything to be together.

### KEY THEMES

*Romeo and Juliet* is an ageless tale of teenage discovery with universal themes that are still relevant today. New Adventures' re-telling of *Romeo and Juliet* contains unexpected twists that reimagine the era, setting, characters and plot. Here is a list of some of the key themes in the production:

- Forbidden Love
- Power
- Oppression
- Desire and Sexual Longing

To find out more about the themes in *Romeo and Juliet* [click here](#)

### THE PRODUCTION

To put on a show like *Romeo and Juliet*, we rely on the skills of lots of talented people. Before and during the rehearsal period, a creative team work closely together to determine what the show will look, feel and sound like, including:

- Director & Choreographer – Sir Matthew Bourne OBE
- Designer (Set & Costume) – Lez Brotherston OBE
- Lighting Designer – Paule Constable
- Sound Designer – Paul Groothuis
- Associate Artistic Director – Etta Murfitt MBE
- Resident Director – Alan Vincent
- Associate Choreographer – Arielle Smith

*Romeo and Juliet* is performed by a cast of 26 dancers. They are supported by a technical team, including electricians, stage managers and staff who look after the wigs, make-up and costumes that are worn by the performers.

To visit New Adventures' website to find out more about the people involved with staging the show, [click here](#)



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## CREATIVE TASK – WORK

Matthew Bourne's *Romeo and Juliet* is set in an institution and one of the first scenes in the production is based around the daily chores the characters are forced to do. There is a feeling of daily grind, monotony, and fear about what will happen if they do not perform their tasks well enough.

Think of and discuss with your group what chores you might have to do on a daily basis. This could be cleaning, cooking, gardening, mending clothes etc.

- Create a list of tasks e.g. Wash the floor, Grind the salt

### Working on your own:

- Choose 4 different tasks from the list
- Create a movement for each task. Think of the dynamic and physicality of the action. Are you scrubbing or rubbing, mopping or on your hands and knees?
- You should now have 4 different 'Work' movements to represent each task.
- Choose an order for these and connect them together into one phrase. Be sure to stick with the dynamic and quality of each movement, even though you are now connecting them. Consider different levels and changes of direction and you can add a turn, jump or travel to connect the tasks.
- Practice your phrase so it becomes consistent and flows. You can add music here and work to the rhythm or beat.
- Lastly, consider the intention of the scene. How does it feel to be in the institution? How do you feel about being forced to do this 'work'? Are you bored, scared, tired, focused, driven? Bring this into the performance of the phrase.

If you are working in a group, you could bring everyone together to perform their 'Work' phrases. Consider an entrance and where the students will be positioned to perform their phrases and how the other 'inmates' might respond and react.



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## FIND OUT MORE

- To meet the dancers [click here](#)
- To watch exclusive interviews with the cast [click here](#)
- To learn more about the plot and themes of *Romeo and Juliet* [click here](#)
- To learn more about New Adventures [visit our website](#)