Romeo & Juliet

Relaxed Performance Show Information

# Show Information

This production of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* tells the tragic story of two young lovers from feuding families in Verona. The key characters include Romeo and Juliet (the star-crossed lovers), their parents Lady Capulet and Lord Montague, Juliet's cousin Tybalt, Romeo's friends Mercutio and Benvolio, Whaea Lawrence, and Paris (who wishes to marry Juliet).

This production is set in the 60s, and Death appears as a character throughout, serving as narrator and guide through the story.

The production uses a framing device where the ending is shown first, then Death "rewinds" to explain how events unfolded. The story includes a secret marriage, family conflicts, miscommunication, and ultimately leads to multiple character deaths. This production contains significant plot twists and emotional moments throughout. Complete spoilers and detailed plot information can be provided in the story summary, or by contacting the box office in advance.

This is an intense production with consistently loud sound, bright and rapidly changing lights, strobe effects, haze, fight scenes with knives, and emotional performances. The show explores love, passion, grief, and death with emotional expression. It is performed in Elizabethan English and is more overtly sensual than typical Shakespeare productions.

If any of the themes are triggering to you, we suggest phoning or texting **1737** reaching out to services listed on: <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/helplines>

This document includes spoilers. If you don’t want to know details about the show, don’t read any further.

You can watch the full show via this link: [WATCH DRESS REHEARSAL ON YOUTUBE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWH9BS5V-NI)

# Key Details

**Location:** ASB Waterfront Theatre, 138 Halsey Street, Auckland Central, Auckland 1010. Entry through the glass doors on Halsey Street.

Step free access, and wheelchair accessible seating and toilets available.

[ASB Waterfront Theatre’s “Know Before You Go” page with arrival info](https://www.atc.co.nz/asb-waterfront-theatre/know-before-you-go).

**Time:** 2 hours, 45 minutes, with a 20-minute interval.

**Date:** The relaxed performance on Tuesday 29 July is at **7pm**. For the relaxed performance there is no lockout policy, and the internal theatre doors will remain open for the whole show.

# Pre-show Demonstration

Before the show starts on Tuesday 29 July, we will have a pre-show demonstration on stage at **6.30pm**. Please meet at the Breakout Room on Level One, and we will travel into the theatre together. The demo will introduce the lighting, sound, special effects, surprises, and characters, and we will talk about what the show will be like. We will also talk about how the relaxed show will work.

This document will give you even more details about the show.

# Relaxed show features

During the relaxed performance, the audience may come and go, move around, visit breakout spaces, and use comfort and fidget items. If you need to leave during the show and then come back, please return to your same seat. Please don't go onto the stage with the performers.

There are two sets of doors leading into the theatre: internal doors and external doors. The internal doors (those directly entering the auditorium) will remain open throughout the performance. The external doors (the first set you encounter from the foyer) will remain closed but unlocked.

You can leave the theatre at any time. To come back into the theatre, an usher will let you in when it's okay to return. You might have to wait outside the closed external doors for a moment. This arrangement helps maintain a balance between accessibility and minimizing light and sound disruptions. If you'd like assistance to come and go, please let theatre staff know.

If you need to use devices for accessibility, please put them on silent. At the start of the show, the whole audience will be reminded with an announcement that during the relaxed performance it’s ok for the audience to be themselves.

# Lighting

The auditorium lights will be on dimly throughout the show, so the auditorium will never be entirely dark. There is lighting along the stairs and railings.

This production features intense lighting throughout with frequent changes. The auditorium lights will be dimmed but not completely dark. Specific lighting effects include:

* **Strobe/flash effects** during the prologue family photo sequence and Ball Scene
* **Direct lighting into audience** during dance sequences and torchlight scenes
* **Bright pulsing lights** during all fight scenes
* **Quick lighting transitions** especially frequent at the beginning
* **Red light flooding** the stage at the end of Act One
* **Quick blackout** after interval
* **Colour-changing lights** during the Ball Scene with multiple rapid flashes

During the pre-show demonstration, we will show examples of the strobe effects, colour changes, and typical lighting transitions.

# Sound

The production maintains a consistently loud volume throughout. Sound elements include:

* **Pre-show music** playing as audiences enter
* **Digital echo effects** applied to dialogue throughout
* **Throbbing bass sounds** that rumble through the theatre during scene transitions
* **Dance music** including remixed versions of "*And Then He Kissed Me*" played at different speeds with heavy bass
* Record scratching sounds during the Ball Scene
* **Sharp whistle blasts** when the Prince appears, to end fights (these are sudden and loud)
* **Static sound effects** running underneath key dramatic scenes
* **Loud drums** accompanying all fight sequences
* **Emotional vocalisations** including grief expressed through howls and vocal outbursts

During the pre-show demonstration, we will play samples of the music, demonstrate the volume levels, and provide examples of the sudden sounds like whistle blasts.

# Special Effects

The production includes several special effects and staged combat:

* **Knife fighting sequences** with trained fight choreography - all fights are carefully rehearsed with performer safety paramount
* **Descending set pieces** including curtains, moon figures, and arches that lower from above
* **A television screen** displaying scene titles and footage
* **Props being knocked over** during fight scenes (safely choreographed)
* **Character of Death** who clicks fingers to change scenes and time

All stage combat is performed by trained actors following strict safety protocols. Weapons are theatrical props designed for stage use.

# Audience Interaction

There is minimal audience interaction in this production. Performers remain on stage and do not enter the audience area or interact directly with audience members. You will not be asked to participate, come on stage, or engage with the performers.

During dance sequences and torchlight scenes, lighting will be directed into the audience area, but performers will not approach audience members. The production takes place entirely on the stage space.

# Triggers

This production contains content that may be distressing. We want you to have this information to make an informed decision about attendance:

**Mental Health Content:**

* Explicit depictions of self-harm and suicide throughout the second half
* Characters contemplate and carry out suicide by poison and stabbing
* Death is personified and present throughout the entire show
* Multiple character deaths occur on stage with bodies remaining visible

**Emotional Content:**

* The production opens with Juliet appearing dead
* Intense grief expressed through howling and emotional outbursts
* The first half explores passion and love; the second half focuses heavily on grief and despair
* Family mourning scenes with devastating reactions

**Other Content:**

* Sexual content and romantic relationships are depicted more overtly than typical Shakespeare
* Violence including fatal knife fights

**Support Resources:**

* Front of house staff are available to discuss content in more detail
* Quiet breakout spaces are available if you need to take a break. They are located on the “Air Bridge” on Level 1, and inside the Villa Maria Gallery on Level 2. You can see where the Breakout Rooms are by viewing the ASB Waterfront Theatre Visual Guide on our website here: <https://www.atc.co.nz/ticketing-info/accessible-theatre>.
* If any of the themes are triggering to you, we suggest phoning or texting **1737** reaching out to services listed on: <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/helplines>

Remember you can leave and return at any time during this relaxed performance if you need a break.

# Want to know more?

Reach out to Sam Phillips, Auckland Theatre Company’s Head of Learning and Participation, on [sam@atc.co.nz](mailto:sam@atc.co.nz) or on 021 298 6253. Sam will also be at the ASB Waterfront Theatre and will present the pre-show demonstration.

This show information by Auckland Theatre Company used a template designed and provided by [Arts Access Aotearoa](https://artsaccess.org.nz/).