Redefining Juliet

**Key information**

Running time: 1 hour/no interval

Digital freesheets

In an effort to be more sustainable, and in the spirit of The Art of Change, this digital programme is part of a trial we are conducting to discontinue printed freesheets.

Welcome to the Barbican and *Redefining Juliet*, the penultimate event in our 2018 season, The Art of Change, which explores how artists respond to, reflect and can potentially effect change in the social and political landscape. Conceived by Storme Toolis in 2015 through our Open Lab programme, the creative process was filmed and broadcast on BBC Four. Earlier this year, *Redefining Juliet* was revived in Stratford-Upon-Avon, receiving a period of research and development and culminating in a reading at The Other Place as part of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Mischief Festival. This version now comes to The Pit and we’re delighted to welcome Storme back with her creative team of director and actors. By selecting people who wouldn’t typically be cast in the role of Shakespeare’s iconic heroine, Storme challenges preconceptions about who can play the part. We hope you enjoy the show.

Toni Racklin, Head of Theatre

The character of Juliet is iconic and heavy with cultural meaning built up over several centuries. Even for those who have never seen the play, or the many films, adaptations and spin-offs inspired by it, Juliet represents something: an idealised, all-consuming love, and an idealised idea of youth and beauty.

With this project, we wanted to challenge society’s idea of who could and should play Juliet. It was important for us to do so not by shouting from on top of a metaphorical soapbox, but simply by showing the audience three wonderful performers playing Shakespeare’s Juliet. Athena, James and Lara give their own unique performances, but all three of their very different Juliets inhabit the world we have created for our production of the play.

This world is quite deliberately not modern. Inspired by Baroque art, particularly the paintings of Caravaggio, but equally not restricted to a specific era and place, we wanted to give our Juliets the timeless, almost legendary status of mythical subjects.

Inevitably, we have found ourselves redefining who Juliet herself is, and could be, as part of this project. What is the meaning, now, of a 13-year-old girl who as the result of an intense love affair and the restrictions her family and society have placed on her, chooses death? How can we possibly hold this up as the pinnacle of romantic love? Athena, James and Lara’s own words tackle these questions and more. I’m hugely grateful to them for sharing their curiosity, talent and honesty.

Robin Norton-Hale, Director of *Redefining Juliet*

Performers & Creative team

Performers

James Le Lacheur

Athena Stevens

Lara Steward

Romeo: Dominic Jones

Friar Laurence: Russell Anthony

Creative team

Creative Director: Storme Toolis

Director: Robin Norton-Hale

Designer: Kate Lane

Lighting Designer: Joe Price

Sound Designer: Ed Maclean

Assistant Director: Sammy Glover

Design Assistant: Jamie Simmons

Producer: Ellie Keel

Developed in collaboration with the Barbican and the RSC



Biographies

James Le Lacheur trained at the Oxford School of Drama. Their theatre credits include *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (Palace Theatre), *James and the Giant Peach* (Colchester Mercury Theatre), *Black Sheep* (Soho Theatre), *Antony and Cleopatra* (Sam Wanamaker Festival, Shakespeare’s Globe) and *Anna Karenina* (Pegasus Theatre/Royal Court). Short films include *Demon Days*, *Happy Holidays*, *Bail*, *Chronos*, *Blackout*, *Away*, *Steve and the Audition*, *Our World* and *Cottonmouth*. James is also the Artistic Director of Fast Parson Theatre, whose credits include *Gaigai Tauna: The Snake Man* and *The Curious Incident of the Frog in My Sightline*.

Athena Stevens is an Associate Artist at Shakespeare's Globe. She is currently under commission there to write a feminist response to *Faust*. Her most recent play *Schism* premiered at the Finborough Theatre and later transferred to the Park Theatre. In 2019 she will be under commission to write a play *Hello to the Trolls* for the National Youth Theatre. Athena is also an elected spokesperson for the Women's Equality Party and Artistic Director of Aegis Productions Ltd. She was the first actor with a disability to receive an Off West End Award Nomination for Best Female Performance.

Lara Steward is an actor who just so happens to be profoundly deaf. She has mainly acted in independent short films with the roles from a killer to a teenager trying to find her place in the world. She also appeared in a BBC Drama *Silence* and can be found in one of the Malteasers’ adverts.

Robin Norton-Hale is a stage director for theatre and opera, and a writer. She was one of the founders of OperaUpClose in 2009, and since 2014 has been Artistic Director and Chief Executive of the company. Theatre directing includes the world premiere of Glyn Maxwell’s *Masters, Are You Mad?* (Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Southwark Playhouse), *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (King’s Head Theatre), *Glyn Maxwell's Best Man Speech* (UK tour) and *Pick ‘n’ Myths* (devised for Lyric Theatre Hammersmith and UK tour). She has directed a double-bill of her own new version of the play *Let’s Make An Opera* and Britten's *The Little Sweep*, and *La Traviata* for Malmö Opera, Sweden. Directing for OperaUpClose includes *La Bohème* (Winner of the Olivier Award for Best Opera 2011), *La Voix Humaine* (Kings Place), *Carmen* (Soho Theatre & UK tour), *La Traviata* (Tricycle Theatre, Soho Theatre & UK tour), *Don Giovanni* (Soho Theatre & UK tour) and *The Barber of Seville* (King’s Head Theatre & UK tour).

Kate Lane is an interdisciplinary artist and scenographer. She is interested in design working as visual dramaturgy in performance practice. Her work sits between performance/ theatre and live art. She is a founding member of performance collective Brave New Worlds. Her Scenographic practice has been shown extensively in the UK including Sadlers Wells, Southbank Centre, V&A, the Roundhouse in London. Internationally it has been shown at Ravenna Festival in Italy, Musique Cordial in France, Cork Festival in Ireland and Arts Printing House in Lithuania. With Brave New Worlds she has held residencies at the Barbican as part of their Open Lab Programme, The Point, Plateau Gallery and Arts Printing House. Her work with them was selected as part of the UK Exhibit for Prague Quadrennial and the Make:Believe Exhibition at the V&A in 2015. She exhibited as part of *Costume at the Turn of the Century 1990-2015* at the A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum in Moscow in July 2015.

Joe Price trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and received the 2015 Francis Reid Award for Lighting Design. Credits include: *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (Young Vic); *The World's Wife* (Welsh National Opera); *Conditionally* (Soho Theatre); *Mrs Dalloway* (Arcola Theatre); *Breathe* (Bunker Theatre); *Goldfish Bowl* (Paper Birds); *Heather* (Bush Theatre); *This Perfect World* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Gate* (Cockpit Theatre); *Box Clever* (Nabokov); *Fossils* (Brits off Broadway NYC); *This Must Be The Place* (VAULT Festival); *Let The Right One In* (Arts Ed); *Magnificence* (Finborough Theatre); *Heads Will Roll* (Told by an Idiot); *How To Date A Feminist* (Arcola Theatre); *Some Girl(s)* (Park Theatre); *Around The World in 80 Days* (Theatre Royal Winchester); *The Love I Feel Is Red* (Tobacco Factory); *Some People Talk About Violence* (Barrel Organ); *Dry Land* (Damsel Productions); *Alternative Routes* (National Dance Company Wales); *The Duchess of Malfi* (Richard Burton Theatre Company); *Animal/Endless Ocean* (Gate Theatre); *Y Twr* (Invertigo).

Sammy Glover's credits include *Skin(ny)* (Southwark Playhouse), *Alra Showcase* (Arts Theatre), *Fnlp* (Camden People's Theatre) and *Circleville, Circlevalley* (Pleasance). Between 2017 and 2018 she was Associate Director at The Big House Theatre Company based in London which works with care leavers and at risk young people between the ages of 16-25. Her work there includes directing site specific *Loose Lips* by Bruntwood Playwright Award Winner Katherine Soper, and Associate Director on *Phoenix Rising* (3 Off West End Award nominations) and *Electric* at The Rio Cinema in Dalston. She is currently in development for *And the Heat of it*, her theatre company Tell it Tuesday's debut play which looks at the experience of a city through the eyes of young communities in London.

Ellie Keel became an independent theatre producer after working for two years with Thelma Holt, the Oxford Playhouse and the Cameron Mackintosh Foundation. She now produces new plays both independently and on behalf of organisations including The North Wall, The Big House, Heretic Productions, and Forward Arena. For The North Wall she co-founded and produces the annual Alchymy Festival of new plays. With Heretic Productions she co-founded and produces Heretic Voices, a national competition and festival of new plays in monologue form. Her work in London includes Hal Coase's *Callisto: a queer epic*, which transferred to Arcola Theatre from the Edinburgh Fringe, *Home Chat* by Noël Coward at The Finborough Theatre, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* adapted by Hal Coase at Arcola Theatre, and *Loose Lips* by Katherine Soper at Stoke Newington Town Hall. She trained with Stage One. Ellie is a Director of LGBT+ youth charity Just Like Us and a Trustee of The King's Hall Trust for the Arts.