

If you are planning to watch a play at King's College gardens for the very first time, I highly recommend 'Romeo and Juliet'. Directed by CSF's Dr Simon Bell, starring Michael Cummings as Romeo and Jemina Watling as Juliet, this play is a must see in my opinion.

It was a cold evening on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2017, I was sitting at the far left of the front row with a few of my peers from the summer program that I was attending at the time. As I looked around, all I could see were 3 spotlights at the back row, rows of seats and the exquisite pergola that was decorated with various colored flowers. The beautiful garden was filled with people of different ages, ranging from children as young as 8 to adults as old as 70. I was overwhelmed with joy as it was the first time I had ever watched a play outdoors and had very close contact with the exuberant actors as they ran, shouted, and recited their lines with great zest.

In my opinion, all the actors did a tremendous job at playing the part of their characters; Romeo being lost and blind in love; Juliet being a young and pure hearted girl; Lord Capulet acting all royal, high and mighty; Lady Capulet who is very ineffectual; Mercutio who does not take life seriously; Benvolio being the peacemaker that he is supposed to be; the nurse of the Capulet household, who is more of a mother to Juliet than Lady Capulet. However, my favorite character of them all is Tybalt, who is played by James Eken. He portrayed Tybalt when he itched for fights so clearly that you could feel his immense hatred pouring out of him; the way he tensed his muscles, clenched his jaws and glared at Romeo in Act 3, scene 1 of the play; it was just absolutely astounding.

However, I disliked the fact that they cut out some scenes of the play such as Act 1 scene 1, where there was a fight between the Capulets and Montagues' men. Other than that, I think that this play would have been perfect.

The best thing about the is that play is that it really draws the audience in, as if they were part of the play as well. Everything felt so real to me; so much so that during the fight with Mercutio and Tybalt, I had a sudden rush of adrenaline and felt the need to join the fight!

To conclude, this play is suitable for audiences of all ages, although I feel that it should be for teenagers as it has some scenes that included "blood". The actors are amazing and the setting is breath-taking. This has got to be one of my favourite productions that lasted for about 2.5 hours. I highly suggest that you see this play right now!

Connor Choong Ming Xuan

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The performance of Romeo and Juliet on 5 August in King' s College, directed by Dr. Simon Bell, was truly spectacular, a marvelous continuation of the traditional Cambridge Shakespeare Festival passed down through generations.

Romeo and Juliet, commonly know as the stereotypical love story romantics love to quote from Shakespeare has already gained much fame and recognition, detailing two star-crossed lovers whose love leads to their demise. However, it is so much more than just an old classic, as the lively performance last night has shown.

The performance was lively and interactive, bringing about both the poetic and humorous side of Shakespeare. From the sonnets entwined in the conversations between Romeo and Juliet to the

incessant ranting of Mercutio, it caters to a variety of tastes and would certainly be an enjoyable experience to wind up your day.

Although the performance by all the actors were spectacular, I would particularly want to highlight the performance of Mercutio, played by Teddy Corbett. A diverse range of characters provides more punch to a play and the portrayal of Mercutio as the raving and humorous friend of Romeo's was right on the mark. Starting from the boisterous flair his entrance entailed, to the consistent teasing and exaggerated language, right down to his untimely death in which he cries out, "A plague on both your houses" whilst being dragged out, the consistent energy that his performance provided to the play was invaluable as a source of comic relief. However, such as with Jar Jar Binks of Star Wars, for such characters that verge on the obnoxious, you either love them or hate them. Personally, I found Teddy Corbett's performance of Mercutio to add more flavour to the entire play.

Although the performance was great overall, prepare for cold weather and extensive tiredness in the muscles from sitting on cold wet grass for long intervals of time. This did create minor discomfort which slightly impaired the experience but nothing overtly serious.

Aside from that, enjoy the show, I recommend all, from Shakespeare experts to complete novices to watch this play, immerse yourself and generally have a good time.

Yat

On 5th August, 2017, a timeless play directed by Dr Simon Bell was performed in the King's College garden, Cambridge. This was the first time I sat on the meadow to watch a play. This was truly a magnificent experience as outdoor theatre is not very common in Hong Kong.

I liked this format of theatre because the actors could have interaction with the audience and the energy could be easily transferred. With the help of the beautiful moonlight and the freezing breeze, the play seems real and was like happening around us.

Since I am a drama student, I had watched Romeo and Juliet for more than four times and had studied the script thoroughly. Even though I am quite familiar with the play, the performance I saw yesterday was like a new story to me. The actors cleverly added some original lines into the play so that the audiences sitting far behind could know what was happening in the front. They also projected the voice to the far behind and tried not to stay at the same spot for too long. One thing I was really impressed was that although there were very things blocking between the front stage and the back stage, the actors got our attention so well that I could not see when did Juliet or Romeo went up the balcony! I had learnt something new and had new feelings every time I rewatch the play. Shakespeare is definitely the king of theatre.

Yoyo Lau

On 5th August, 2017, I went to King's College Gardens to see a play of Romeo and Juliet. It was directed by Dr. Simon Bell. Romeo was played by Michael Cummings, and Juliet was played by Jemima Watling.

When we first arrived at the wide span of grassland I wasn't sure how the play was going to happen. There was no backdrop, with just an archway that is probably part of the gardens instead of part of the play. Two strings marked where the audience should sit. We heard from Andy that the actors would interact with the audience sitting really close to the stage, so we sat down on the

grass right at the front. People around us were having picnics - blankets, baskets of food, wine - and there is something between the audiences themselves that you can't see in a formal theatre. They are all merrily chatting and laughing.

The play started off with some music played from a speaker, and Friar Laurence came out to deliver the Prologue. I didn't know what his role was, but he was holding a Grim Reaper's scythe, and I think that is a really thoughtful prop - yes, Friar Laurence is the mastermind behind the relationship between Romeo and Juliet, yet his plans and plotting cannot escape fate.

Tybalt / Paris was my favourite actor in the play. When he first entered the stage, I cheered under my breath - such a Tybalt he was! Dressed in black and decorated in red, with incredibly sharp features, he carried an air of arrogance and boldness. He was every inch the fighter and tyrant.

I wasn't expecting so much excitement during the play, seeing that there was not many props and tools assisting the action, but the actors themselves created and defined the settings. Merely their expressions and gestures could tell you where they were and what they were seeing. There was no confusion at all, and the story unfolded as clearly as if I was seeing a Hollywood film.

As the play goes on, the sun set and it got colder and colder, and dew formed on the grass, dampening everything. I wish I had brought a blanket with me during the interval, but actually I was too absorbed in the play to realise how cold it was.

Overall the play was a tremendous success and I loved every moment of it. The actors were brilliant and they brought the characters to life. I would definitely recommend it. It would be a spectacular experience for everyone, no matter how acquainted you are to this classic Shakespearean play.

Venus

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Romeo and Juliet is a famous play by Shakespeare. I did not enjoy watching plays in the past until yesterday's performance--- Romeo and Juliet, at the King's College Garden for the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival.

First, in terms of the stage setting, the stage was fully utilised and the setting was simple but sufficient. The actors and actresses could climb up above the rooftop and running from the back of the audience and went on the stage, engaging the audience. The setting of the play was only a box with a frame, which was like a bed and used for multiple purposes throughout the play. It was cleverly used. Besides, they used the lighting effectively. When Romeo visited Juliet's tomb, they turned off all the lights and lighted up the trees, creating a darker yet beautiful atmosphere for the tragic ending.

Second, in terms of the actors and actresses' acting skills, the actors and actresses playing Romeo and Juliet particularly stood out. Their facial expressions clearly delivered the changes of the characters' emotions. Through it, I understood more about the play despite the fact that I cannot completely understand old English. The more I understand it, the more I enjoy.

In conclusion, the performance was engaging and skilfully presented the famous Shakespeare play.

Anon

### **Charming boy plus alluring girl equals a hypnotic production**



It was a freezing Saturday night where the breeze blew right through our sweaters. Despite the chilly weather, it did not affect the passion and excitement we had for the 30th anniversary of the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival. The Festival, founded in 1987 by the artistic director David Crilly, attracts a whopping number of over 25.000 guests a year, and this year was no exception.

This story features an ongoing feud between two families, the Montagues and the Capulets. The play opens with vigorous fighting between the two families with Romeo later arriving at the Capulet's party and immediately falls in love with Juliet, it is love at first sight. Romeo, quietly approaches Juliet and confesses his love for her. After expressing their love towards each other, Juliet finds out that Romeo was a Montague and their families were not in good terms. She was greatly saddened by the news and realised that they were not allowed to marry each other. They then married in secret however, good times don't last...

Behind the scenes working really hard is the director of the play Dr. Simon Bell he creates a beautiful atmosphere that compliments the romance and charm of the play. The romantic yet innocent and meek Juliet was played by Jemima Walting she presented herself as youthful and sweet to Romeo, but as soon as she was called by her Nurse, she became annoyed and retorted. The contrast of her attitude towards different people shows that she is a typical teenager who is rebellious and emotional. Romeo, Romeo who played thou Romeo? Michael Cummings of course, who did the lovestruck teenager role perfectly. The hilarious character of Mercutio played by Teddy

Corbett was humorous and used the the space on stage fantastically. Despite the serious plot he was able to provide comic relief to the audience with his care-free tone, which made the audience burst into fits of laughter.

The sound effects were fascinating. Our hearts were thumping out of our chests and cringing when we saw the actors and actresses slapping and hurting each other during the feud. It was so real that we even felt sorry for them as we believed every strike and slap. The only thing that could have been improved was the projection of their voices. Sometimes, we feel that their voices are barely audible, especially some lines by Juliet. Despite this it did not detract from the overall performance, which was superb.

We think that the view in the open air theatre greatly enhanced our enjoyment and was mesmerising. Living in Hong Kong, which is covered by skyscrapers and scarce greenery, we barely get to enjoy anything in an open air theatre because of land constraints. The outdoor theatre was engaging and unpredictable with the use proxemics. The actors and actresses could suddenly pop by your side, take some of food, and you'll see them happily munching on them when they get off the stage. They could just throw an apple towards you and snatch your hat for fun. Being able to interact with the actors made us feel more part of the play and we thoroughly enjoyed this once in a lifetime experience! If you want to see a fantastic production and catch an apple while you're watching a show then head to King's College for a fun-filled show!

By Chloe Ching and Rachel Leung

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## Being the apple of Juliet's eye on saturday night



Are you getting bored by the cramped and stuffy seating in the theatre? Or worried about having to hurry dinner so you don't miss the start? What about having a stomach ache during the middle of the play? Or needing to go to the toilet and battle through rows or tutting audience members? If so then The Cambridge Shakespeare Festival would be the best choice for you. Having its 30th Anniversary this year, it attracts over 25,000 guests all around the world and this year features one of the most famous and classic plays, Romeo and Juliet. It definitely wouldn't disappoint you with its superb acting, skilled stage setting and marvelous use of dramatic lines. Sitting on the grass of King's College Garden, hearing the clash of sharp swords, with the two

houses in Verona spitting spiteful hatred towards each other it is no wonder this drove the star-crossed lovers to their untimely death.

The audience could use their imagination to imagine the background or the place which the actors were acting. Can you imagine a theatre with no curtains, no background photo or scenery and not much special light effects? This performance used simple props only a wooden box and some cloth which were used to show the ball, the bed, the church and the coffin which was fantastic and extremely intelligent. The director used proxemics to make the actors and actresses really close to you, so close you could touch them! This was really awesome, especially as an audience member on the front row! The most funny moment was when Juliet ate an apple and threw it on the ground, then Romeo picked it up and kissed it, later when he was leaving the stage he threw the apple at us and we caught it. We were really happy and amused because we were involved in the action and it made us feel part of the performance.

This well known drama was directed by Simon. The pair of star-crossed lovers, Romeo and Juliet were performed by Michael Commings and Jemima .To my amazement the most outstanding actor was Teddy Corbelt, who played Mercutio. His actions, his words and his emotions projected the humour of Mercutio fully. He played Mercutio fantastically and we will never forget his remarkable performance. Rachael Oliver, played Nurse should also be praised for her excellent performance. She did not show her grief when she discovered that Juliet was dead instead, she reflected on her emotions gradually. At first, she was astonished that Juliet had committed suicide. Then she could hardly accept this fact and was driven crazy. Her eyes were full of dread and my spine shivered when watching this scene. At last, she realised that she need to call for help. Although it was just a minute of the performance, she presented every emotion and allowed the audience to go on the emotional rollercoaster with her.

Overall, I thought that the play was brilliant and perfect, but the only thing was that the weather was really cold and everyone was freezing. Freezing, yes! So if you want to go to this play, you should bring more warm clothes or blankets to enjoy the performance fully. Another perk of being in an outside theatre is that you can bring some food with you so you won't get hungry during the play and you could enjoy the moment that when you watch the play and savour some delicious food at the same time.

This play was really fantastic and I wish that all of my friends and family could have a chance to watch it so if you are in Cambridge don't miss this opportunity!

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## A Ravishing Romantic Remarkable Story

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Romeo and Juliet is a fabulous and famous love story that contains both love and death. This play, situated in the gardens of King's College, had large grassland area which became the two hour's traffic

of our stage. The relaxing and enchanting atmosphere was enhanced by the addition of music and sound effects such as during the masque ball and using live sounds to create a realistic and shocking slapping noise when Lord Capulet strikes his daughter for refusing to marry Paris, an eligible suitor. Instead Juliet decides to follow her heart and pursue Romeo despite him being a Montague!

This famous story is acted by a band of Cambridge local actors and directed by Dr. Simon Bell. Romeo acted by Michael Cummings was the superb and the standout performer with the gestures and emotions acted brilliantly, complimenting with every other actor. However, there was one thing could be improved, the music. They need to use more speakers to make the music become more atmospheric as some of the sound was lost to the British weather, which was a shame.

The summer in UK is very cold. Although the weather is bad, the actors are still dedicated. The stage makes a good use of the environment, the trees, flowers and trellis form an extremely breathe-taking setting. The stairs and bed are put in an effective position, not that conspicuous but seemingly natural. Moreover, the use of lighting is perfect. At the ending, the lighting on the bed illuminates the stage representing the grief but making it seem glorious and almost holy. Their love is brilliant, just like the soft light on the bed and on the night we watched the performance the moon shone in full above the bed making their fate is poignant and reminding the audience that their fate was predetermined by the stars.

This performance is quite different when compared to the movie. The movie is more romantic whereas the drama is funnier. There is no competition about whether to see the performance live or watch it on a TV, live is always better. In this performance Romeo, played by Michael Cummings, is cute and sappy and Juliet, played by Jemima Watling, is not that reserved but a little bit fierce. Her sweet performance in front of Romeo contrasts to her attitude with Nurse, showing her to be a moody teenager. The funniest character is Mercutio, played by Teddy Corbett makes a lot of jokes in the acting and uses lively facial expressions to bring the whole drama to a climax, and making everyone laughing happily. These characters combined with the power of Lord Capulet, the care of Nurse and the fierceness of Tybalt lead us to a wonderland.

A kind reminder, please bring a blanket when you are going to watch the performance. Otherwise, the cold wind is a knife which can sting to your skin and you cannot enjoy the drama whole-heartedly.

Don't hesitate to watch this amazing performance and be transported to wonderland in King's College Cambridge.

Cindy and Sam

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Play : Romeo and Juliet

Date : 5th August

Duration : 2hr30min

Venue : King's college, Cambridge

Main Cast : Michael Cummings, Jemima Watling, James Eken, Timothy Weston, Teddy Corbett, Cassandra Hodges

I was very glad to watch the classical Shakespeare's play performed by CSF at King's College Garden last night. Below are some of my comments and thoughts to the drama.

I will take about the main characters first. I think both Romeo and Juliet played by Michael Cummings and Jemima Watling had did quite well. They were really expressive and full of emotions as a pair of green lovers in the play. Jemima Watling also had a sweet and soft voice. However, I think that they were a little bit frivolous. Although they were very young in the play, their love was serious, which costed their lives (death-marked). As a love at first sight, it should be graceful, dignified and enchanting. Although they have done it well somehow, I think it wasn't enough. Sometimes they were making laughters more than a serious love, which made their love a little childish. But overall, they were both good actors and showed the youthfulness of the lovers very well.

Next, I will talk about the nurse, Mercutio and Tybalt. The nurse acted like a annoying (somehow) and caring "mother" to Juliet, which was very good. The crazy Mercutio played by Teddy Corbett really caught my sight with his "naughty" acting. James Eken had played a pugnacious Tybalt. He could tell the audience he wanted to fight all the time with his fierce and angry face.

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Louie Wong

Celebrating its thirtieth year of consistently high quality Shakespearean production, the CSF is currently performing various classics of Shakespeare, such as Romeo and Juliet. I was delighted and incredibly honoured to attend the performance in King's College Garden, directed by Dr Simon Bell, on 5 August.

It was my first time attending theatrical performances of its kind. It was drastically different from the usual ones in grand cinemas. For instance, we could freely choose our seats. Many simply brought bottles of wine and leisurely took a sip whilst watching the performance.

Amongst all the actors, Timothy Weston (playing Mercutio) was particularly humourous. For example, he commented 'If love be rough with you, be rough with love' when Romeo still reminisced about Rosaline in a mocking manner. He also exaggerated his acting a lot, which clearly showed his viewpoint of love as only a physical pursuit. Furthermore, the part where Benvolio, Mercutio and Romeo danced merrily on the stage attracted laughter from the audience. I feel like Mercutio was able to perform his role as a comic character when responding to Romeo's yearn for love.

As for Romeo and Juliet, they have done an impressive job, especially in the scenes of love at first sight (which is coincidentally a sonnet) and the balcony scene (comparing Juliet to the sun). I was touched by their intense emotions incorporated in their speeches. I could watch their passionate speeches as young lovers for a thousand times!

However, I feel like that the ending was a bit rushed as Juliet woke up and found Romeo lying dead next to her. It might be better if the transition from Juliet's joy of waking up again in the tomb to the sorrow of realising Romeo's death was longer and more dramatic. Aside from the play, the cold weather was a bit disturbing as some of us could not concentrate at the play towards the end.

All in all, I enjoyed the play a lot and I wish I had the valuable opportunity to watch other such performances by the CSF in the future. I sincerely recommend it to everyone who wants to have a memorable night with their friends and families.

Dickson

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