

NEWS RELEASE



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Modern *Romeo and Juliet* Heats Up Repertory Season at Alabama Shakespeare Festival

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTGOMERY, AL (Monday, March 31, 2008) The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is turning up the heat this summer with their romance-themed repertory season, which begins with a modern take on Shakespeare's classic love story *Romeo and Juliet* running April 11 – June 28 on the Festival Stage in repertory with Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Set in a steamy South Florida city, the production offers a fresh and accessible take on this standard of classical theatre.

The city streets are awash in violence as the rival Capulet and Montague families engage in a seemingly endless feud. When love's first blush falls on Romeo and Juliet, teenagers from the rival clans, the stage is set for duels, deceptions and tragic events. The young lovers marry in secret and plan to escape, but when Juliet's cousin is killed by Romeo their plans take a tragic turn. Directors Geoffrey Sherman and Diana Van Fossen have accentuated the passion and urgency of young love by setting the play in a present day Miami-like city featuring art-deco homes and using up to the minute fashions and a current top 40's soundtrack to support the production design.

"The pace and heat of Miami are perfect for Shakespeare's sense of urgency and steamy setting in *Romeo and Juliet*. The flesh and blood of his love story unravels on city streets at an accelerating pace with which we can identify in our own time. Miami's exotic locale rouses a sense of adventure much like that triggered in an Elizabethan audience by Shakespeare's Verona," say directors Sherman and Van Fossen.

Romeo and Juliet has performed exclusively for Alfa SchoolFest, ASF's student matinee program, since January 23 with over 11,486 students having attended the performances.

The cast features **Avery Clark** (*Journey's End* at the Alley Theatre) as Romeo, **Adriana Gaviria** (*Hermanas* at FringeNYC, *Anna in the Tropics* at Dallas Theatre Center, Arizona Theatre Company and Pasadena Playhouse) as Juliet, **Anthony Marble** (*Othello* at the Cincinnati Playhouse, Denver Post Ovation Award) as Mercutio, **J. Paul Nicholas** (Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* at 59E59 Theatres, Attorney Linden Delroy on *Law & Order: SVU*) as Tybalt, **Anne-Marie Cusson** (*Echoes of War* at the Mint Theatre with Frances Sternhagen) as the Nurse, and **Rodney Clark** (*Death of a Salesman* at ASF) as Friar Laurence. Also in the cast: **Larry Bull** as Escalus, **Christopher T. VanDijk** as Paris, **Allison Frederick** as Personal Assistant to Paris, **Jerry Ferraccio** as Montague, **Hollis McCarthy** as Lady Montague, **Nathan T. Lange** as Benvolio, **David Dortch** as Abram, **Sarah**

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Walker Thornton as Beatrice, **Matt D’Amico** as Capulet, **Sarah Dandridge** as Lady Capulet, **Chet Carlin** as Capulet’s Cousin and Friar John, **Nick Lawson** as Peter, **Greg Foro** as Sampson and **Afton C. Williamson** as Regan. Scenic Design is by **Robert Wolin** (assistant designer on Broadway’s *Young Frankenstein*, *The Producers*, *Flower Drum Song* and *Never Gonna Dance*), costume design by **Elizabeth Novak** (ASF resident costume designer), sound design by **Richelle Thompson** (Utah Shakespearean Festival and American Folk Ballet) and lighting design by **Lonnie Alcaraz** (2006 Season at Utah Shakespeare Festival, *LETHE* at Cornerstone Theatre Company).

Romeo and Juliet begins performances with previews on Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12 at 7:30PM. The Opening matinee on Sunday, April 13 at 2:00PM and will be followed by a reception with the cast. *Romeo and Juliet* is available in “Extreme Weekends” along with *Cymbeline* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* on May 9 – 11, 16 – 18, May 30 – June 1, and every weekend in June. Tickets are \$19 - \$42. Subscription packages save 20% on tickets to the Season of Romance. For more information call the ASF box office at 1-800-841-4ASF or go to www.ASF.net.

The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is among the largest Shakespeare theatres in the world. Designated as The State Theatre of Alabama, ASF has been located in Montgomery since 1985 when it moved from Anniston as a result of Mr. and Mrs. Wynton M. Blount’s gift of a performing arts complex set in the 250-acre Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park.

This program/project has been made possible by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Fact Sheet

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

2007-2008 Season

Produced by the Alabama Shakespeare Festival

Dates: **Previews:** Fri., April 11, Sat. April 12, 2008

Opening: Sun., April 13, 2008

Extreme Weekends: May 9 – 11, 16 – 18, 23 – 25, 30 – June 1 and every weekend in June.

Regular Performances: In Repertory April 24 – June 28, 2008

Curtain 7:30 p.m. Tues. – Sat.; 2 p.m. matinees on Sat. and Sun.

Prices: Preview Performances only \$19! Regular Performance Tickets are range from \$19 - \$42. Group discounts are available. To purchase, call the ASF Box Office at (334) 271-5353 or toll-free at 1-800-841-4ASF.

Website: www.asf.net;

Location: The Festival Stage in the Carolyn Blount Theatre, home of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, located in the Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park, on Woodmere Boulevard just off East Boulevard.

Production Staff:	<i>Directors</i>	Geoffrey Sherman and Diana Van Fossen
	<i>Scenic Designer</i>	Robert Wolin
	<i>Costume Designer</i>	Elizabeth Novak
	<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Lonnie Alcaraz
	<i>Sound Designer</i>	Richelle Thompson
	<i>Dramaturg</i>	Susan Willis
	<i>Movement Consultant</i>	Denise Gabriel
	<i>Fight Director</i>	Jason Armit
	<i>Assistant Fight Director</i>	David Dortch†
	<i>Stage Manager</i>	Tanya J. Searle*
	<i>Production Assistant</i>	Micheal Aaron Jones*†

Cast:

The English

Escalus, <i>Prince of Verona</i>	Larry Bull*
Mercutio – <i>a young gentleman and kinsman to the Prince</i>	Anthony Marble*
Paris – <i>a noble young kinsman to the Prince</i>	Christopher T. VanDijk*
Personal Assistant to Paris	Alison Frederick†
Montague – <i>Head of a Veronese Family at feud with the Capulets</i>	Jerry Ferraccio†
Lady Montague	Hollis McCarthy*
Romeo – <i>Montague's son</i>	Avery Clark*
Benvolio – <i>Montague's nephew and friend of Romeo and Mercutio</i>	Nathan Lange†
Abram – <i>a Servant to Montague</i>	David Dortch†
Beatrice – <i>personal assistant to Romeo</i>	Sarah Walker Thornton†
Capulet – <i>head of Veronese family at Feud with the Montagues</i>	Matt D'Amico*
Lady Capulet	Sarah Dandridge*
Juliet – <i>Capulet's daughter</i>	Adriana Gaviria*
Tybalt – <i>Lady Capulet's nephew</i>	J. Paul Nicholas*
Capulet's cousin – <i>an old gentleman</i>	Chet Carlin*
Nurse, <i>a Capulet servant, Juliet's foster-mother</i>	Anne-Marie Cusson*
Peter – <i>a Capulet servant attending on the Nurse</i>	Nick Lawson†
Sampson - <i>a servant to Capulet</i>	Greg Foro*†
Regan – <i>a servant to Capulet</i>	Afton Williamson†
Friar Laurence – <i>of the Franciscan Order</i>	Rodney Clark*

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Romeo and Juliet
by William Shakespeare
(Continued)

Friar John – <i>of the Franciscan Order</i>	Chet Carlin*
An Apothecary, of Mantua	David Dortch†
Bodyguard to the Prince	Anthony Marble*
Members of the Watch	Afton Williamson†, David Dortch†, Greg Foro*†
Citizens of Verona	Alison Frederick†, Chet Carlin*
Masquers	David Dortch†, Jerry Ferraccio David Dortch†, Greg Foro*†, Hollis McCarthy*, Sarah Walker Thornton†, Afton Williamson†
Servants	Greg Foro*†, Afton Williamson†

*Member Actors' Equity Association

†Member of Graduate Acting Company

*† Appears Courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

Audience: All patrons must have a ticket, regardless of age. Children under the age of six are not admitted to the theatre. Recommended for Ages 12+.

Synopsis: In this modern treatment of Shakespeare's best-known love story, the warring families of Montague and Capulet are forever changed when star crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet fall in love and marry in secret. When violence breaks out between the families and Juliet's cousin is murdered by her lover, the couple's plans are tragically altered.

Setting: A South Florida-styled Verona, Mantua.