

'Juliet And Romeo' review

Theatre, Experimental

FRIDAY MAY 31 2019

Link: <https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/juliet-and-romeo-review>



Time Out says
4 out of 5 stars

A witty, dance theatre look at Shakespeare's lovers, decades later

'Juliet and Romeo' is on at The Place in June 2019. This review is from its 2018 premiere at BAC.

If only they hadn't asked Shakespeare over for tea. That's where the problems started for Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare wildly embellished their story (for starters, the double suicide never happened), and our star-crossed lovers have been struggling to live up to the Bard's legendary love story every since. Now the two are middle aged, disillusioned and in therapy – and we've been invited to watch.

'Juliet and Romeo' is about the lies we tell ourselves about love and is a beautiful and utterly involving show: insightful, funny and rich. It's a Lost Dog production - co commissioned by the BAC, The Place and Warwick Arts Centre – and is a dance-led affair, devised and performed by Ben Duke and Solène Weinachter, who smoulder with equal parts lust and loathing. Just like Duke's critically acclaimed 'Paradise Lost', 'Juliet and Romeo' is about bringing a myth – in this case the myth of 'true love' – to its knees.

Dance and banal chat, rose-tinted memories and strained therapy sessions, myth and real-life intertwine. When Romeo first spies Juliet at a party he glides towards her with juddery and magnetic moves, compelled and repelled by his love. The two have sex and their dancing is frenzied, funny and ugly. Later on, as the two struggle with parenthood, Romeo performs a manic dance of entrapment and literally climbs the railings of James Perkins' deliberately sparse set. Juliet watches on scornfully, munching popcorn.

A litany of love songs – Sinatra, Simon and Garfunkel, Prokofiev – are allowed to soar and then, with a sly line here or strange dance here, brought crashing down to earth. In a final scene, Weinachter's Juliet stands alone on stage and sings, lights dimmed and her voice enchanting and – just for a moment, before the mask slips once again – we all fall in love with love.

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