

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

William Shakespeare  
**Romeo and Juliet**

Performed by **Michael Sheen • Kate Beckinsale** and cast

**CLASSIC  
DRAMA**



NA312512D

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1	Romeo and Juliet – The Prologue – Chorus	2:24
2	<b>Act 1 Scene 1:</b> A street in Verona	3:20
3	<b>Act 1 Scene 1:</b> PRINCE Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,	1:28
4	<b>Act 1 Scene 1:</b> MONTAGUE Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad?	7:12
5	<b>Act 1 Scene 2:</b> A street	5:07
6	<b>Act 1 Scene 3:</b> A room in Capulet’s mansion	0:48
7	<b>Act 1 Scene 3:</b> NURSE Even or odd, of all the days in the year	4:31
8	<b>Act 1 Scene 4:</b> A street outside Capulet’s mansion	2:24
9	<b>Act 1 Scene 4:</b> MERCUTIO O then I see Queen Mab hath been with you	3:22
10	<b>Act 1 Scene 5:</b> The Great Hall in Capulet’s mansion	0:48
11	<b>Act 1 Scene 5:</b> CAPULET Welcome, gentleman! Ladies that have their toes	4:57
12	<b>Act 1 Scene 5:</b> ROMEO If I profane with my unworthiest hand	3:47
13	<b>Act 1 Scene 5:</b> CHORUS	1:01
14	<b>Act 2 Scene 1:</b> Outside Capulet’s mansion	2:58
15	<b>Act 2 Scene 2:</b> Outside Capulet’s mansion	9:43
16	<b>Act 2 Scene 3:</b> Outside Friar Lawrence’s cell	5:36
17	<b>Act 2 Scene 4:</b> A street in Verona	6:10

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18	<b>Act 2 Scene 4:</b> NURSE I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this...	3:40
19	<b>Act 2 Scene 5:</b> Capulet's mansion	4:22
20	<b>Act 2 Scene 6:</b> Friar Lawrence's cell	1:59
21	<b>Act 3 Scene 1:</b> Verona, a public place	7:50
22	<b>Act 3 Scene 1:</b> PRINCE Where are the vile beginners of this fray?	3:21
23	<b>Act 3 Scene 2:</b> Juliet's bedroom	5:44
24	<b>Act 3 Scene 2:</b> JULIET Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband	2:52
25	<b>Act 3 Scene 3:</b> Friar Lawrence's cell	1:22
26	<b>Act 3 Scene 3:</b> ROMEO 'Tis torture, and not mercy	4:21
27	<b>Act 3 Scene 3:</b> FRIAR LAWRENCE Hold thy desperate hand!	4:00
28	<b>Act 3 Scene 4:</b> Capulet's mansion	1:56
29	<b>Act 3 Scene 5:</b> Juliet's bedroom	3:30
30	<b>Act 3 Scene 5:</b> LADY CAPULET Ho, daughter, are you up?	2:47
31	<b>Act 3 Scene 5:</b> CAPULET When the sun sets, the earth doth drizzle dew	3:55
32	<b>Act 3 Scene 5:</b> JULIET O God! – O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?	2:21
33	<b>Act 4 Scene 1:</b> Friar Lawrence's cell	4:12

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34	<b>Act 4 Scene 1:</b> FRIAR LAWRENCE Hold then, go home, be merry, give consent	1:49
35	<b>Act 4 Scene 2:</b> Capulet's mansion	2:10
36	<b>Act 4 Scene 3:</b> Juliet's bedroom	3:21
37	<b>Act 4 Scene 4:</b> A room in Capulet's mansion	1:19
38	<b>Act 4 Scene 5:</b> Juliet's bedroom	2:55
39	<b>Act 4 Scene 5:</b> FRIAR LAWRENCE Come, is the bride ready to go to church?	6:18
40	<b>Act 5 Scene 1:</b> A street in Mantua	4:01
41	<b>Act 5 Scene 1:</b> APOTHECARY Who calls so loud?	2:09
42	<b>Act 5 Scene 2:</b> Friar Lawrence's cell	1:37
43	<b>Act 5 Scene 3:</b> A churchyard outside the tomb of the Capulets	5:50
44	<b>Act 5 Scene 3:</b> ROMEO How oft when men are at the point of death	2:51
45	<b>Act 5 Scene 3:</b> FRIAR LAWRENCE Saint Francis be my speed! How oft tonight	4:02
46	<b>Act 5 Scene 3:</b> PRINCE What misadventure is so early up	2:12
47	<b>Act 5 Scene 3:</b> FRIAR LAWRENCE I will be brief, for my short date of breath	6:27

**Total time: 2:50:52**

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William Shakespeare  
**Romeo and Juliet**

**CAST**

Romeo	<b>Michael Sheen</b>
Juliet	<b>Kate Beckinsale</b>
Chorus	<b>Philip Madoc</b>
Prince	<b>Norman Rodway</b>
Capulet	<b>David Bradley</b>
Lady Capulet	<b>Frances Barber</b>
Montague	<b>Edward de Souza</b>
Lady Montague	<b>Judy Loe</b>
Nurse	<b>Fiona Shaw</b>
Friar Lawrence	<b>Heathcote Williams</b>
Mercutio	<b>Anton Lesser</b>
Tybalt	<b>Jasper Britton</b>
Paris	<b>Ronan Vibert</b>
Benvolio	<b>Simon Harris</b>
Friar John/Apothecary/Cousin Capulet	<b>Peter Yapp</b>
Balthasar/Servant	<b>John Paul Connolly</b>
Peter/Abram	<b>Jason Cheater</b>
Samson	<b>John Summerfield</b>
Gregory	<b>Hywell Simons</b>

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## CAST



**Michael Sheen** (*Romeo*) has worked in the West End and across the country in *Look Back In Anger*, *Romeo and Juliet*, Ninagawa's *Peer Gynt*, *Moonlight* and the Royal National Theatre's *Ends of the Earth* and *The Homecoming*. He is increasingly active as a director (*The Dresser*, *Badfinger*) and has appeared in the films *Mary Reilly* and *Wilde*. He also reads *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**Kate Beckinsale** (*Juliet*) made her screen debut in Kenneth Branagh's film *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was followed by other films including *Cold Comfort Farm* and *Haunted*. She played the lead in TV's *Emma* and her theatre credits include *The Seagull* and *Faithless*.



**Philip Madoc's** (*Chorus*) extensive theatre work includes the roles of Othello, Iago, Faust, Macbeth and, with the RSC, The Duke in *Measure for Measure* and Professor Raat in *The Blue Angel*. TV roles include Lloyd George and Magua in *The Last of the Mohicans*. He also stars in his own detective series, *A Mind to Kill*. He also reads *The Death of Arthur* and *The Old Testament* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**Norman Rodway** (*Prince*) is an Associate Artist of the RSC, where his many roles have included Richard III, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* and Gloucester in *King Lear*. He has also worked for the Royal National Theatre in *The Seagull* and *Hedda Gabler*, and other major theatres nationwide. His TV credits include *Rumpole of the Bailey* and *A Month in the Country* and he also reads *Great Speeches in History* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**David Bradley** (*Capulet*) won an Olivier Award for Best Supporting Actor for the role of The Fool in *King Lear* and other awards for his extensive work for the Royal Shakespeare Company, which has included roles such as Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, Polonius in *Hamlet* and Mephistopheles in *Dr Faustus*. He has been seen on TV in *Our Friends in the North*, *Cracker*, *Band of Gold* and *Reckless*.



**Frances Barber** (*Lady Capulet*) is well known for her roles in films such as *Prick Up Your Ears*, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* and *Young Soul Rebels*. Her TV performances include *Inspector Morse*, *Hancock* and *The Ice House*. After an Olivier Award for Most Promising Newcomer in 1984, she went on to win acclaim for many theatrical roles including leading roles in *Pygmalion* and *Insignificance*.



**Edward de Souza** (*Montague*) is one of the country's leading classical actors and has worked many seasons for the RSC, Royal National Theatre and Old Vic. His film credits include *The Thirty Nine Steps* and *The Spy Who Loved Me*. He also reads *Don Quixote*, *The Island Race* and *The New Testament* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**Judy Loe** (*Lady Montague*) has appeared on stage across the UK and on TV in *The Gentle Touch*, *The Home Front* and *Life After Death*. Her film credits include Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life*.



**Fiona Shaw** (*Nurse*) has won the Olivier Award for Best Actress four times, as well as a clutch of other awards, for her roles in *As You Like It*, *Electra*, *The Good Person of Sechuan*, *Hedda Gabler* and *Machinal*. Her interpretation of *Richard II* was widely acclaimed, as is her work in films such as *My Left Foot*, *Jane Eyre* and *Anna Karenina*.



**Heathcote Williams** (*Friar Lawrence*) is a poet, playwright and actor, best known for his extended poems on environmental subjects: *Whale Nation*, *Sacred Elephant* and *Autogeddon*. As an actor he has taken memorable roles in *Orlando*, *Wish You Were Here*, *The Odyssey* and Derek Jarman's *The Tempest*. He also reads *Oedipus*, *Paradise* and *The New Testament* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**Anton Lesser** (*Mercutio*) has played many of the principal Shakespearean roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company, including Petruchio, Romeo and Richard III. His other theatre credits include *Wild Oats* and *Art*. Appearances in major TV drama productions include *The Mill on the Floss* and *The Politician's Wife*. He also plays the title role in Naxos AudioBooks' recording of *Hamlet Prince of Denmark*.



**Jasper Britton** (*Tybalt*) took the lead in the Regents Park Open Air Theatre production of *Richard III* and has also worked for the Royal National Theatre and the RSC in *The Wind in the Willows*, *Unfinished Business*, *The Beggar's Opera* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. His TV appearances include *The Bill*, *The Upper Hand* and *Peak Practice*. He also reads *Treasure Island* for Naxos AudioBooks.



**Ronan Vibert** (*Paris*) has worked for the Royal National Theatre in *A Matter of Life and Death* and *The Mother*, and across the country in plays as varied as *Secret Rapture* and Ninagawa's *Peer Gynt*. He has been seen on TV in *The Cloning of Joanna May*, *Jeeves and Wooster* and *The Buccaneers* and his film credits include *Empire State* and *Queen of Hearts*.



**Simon Harris** (*Benvolio*) has appeared on stage across the country in numerous plays including *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth* and *The Dresser*. He is also a playwright and his debut play *Badfinger* opened the Donmar Warehouse 'Four Corners' season in 1997.





**Peter Yapp** (*Friar John/Apothecary/Cousin Capulet*) has appeared in plays and theatres across Britain and in the West End including *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *The Black Prince*. His TV credits include *House of Elliot*, *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Poirot*. He also appears on Naxos AudioBooks' *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *Macbeth*.



**John Paul Connolly** (*Balthasar/Servant*) has worked in theatre across the UK including *Pictures of Tomorrow* and *She Stoops to Conquer* in his native Northern Ireland. His TV credits include *To Play the King* and he has worked extensively for BBC Radio Belfast.



**Jason Cheater** (*Peter/Abram*) trained at RADA and has since been active on stage and screen including *Design for Living* at the Donmar Warehouse, *The Inner Circle* at the Royal National Theatre and *Wind in the Willows* at the Old Vic. His film work includes *Mojo* and *Indian Summer*.



**John Summerfield** (*Samson*) trained at LAMDA and his theatre credits include *The One You Love*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Great Expectations* and *Little Shop of Horrors*.



**Hywell Simons** (*Gregory*) trained at LAMDA and has since appeared on TV in *Roughnecks* and *The Bill* and on stage in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Bouncers*, *Nothing To Pay* and *Gulliver's Travels*.

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## William Shakespeare

# Romeo and Juliet

Shakespeare had already explored tragedy in his history plays, including **Richard III**, and in **Titus Andronicus**. The great series of tragedies, beginning with **Hamlet**, dates from four or five years later, and in many ways **Romeo and Juliet** does not belong with them. For a start, it is not a tragedy in the conventional sense because the fate of its protagonists is not a direct consequence of inherent characteristics or failings – whereas (for instance) Lear himself, through his own folly, initiates a chain reaction which leads to his downfall and death. Romeo and Juliet, by contrast, are much more the victims of ill fortune than of their own vice or weakness, even if moralists may seek to suggest that the young lovers are punished for their intemperate lust or failure to obtain parental consent. This moralistic view is in any case certainly not Shakespeare's: in fact he lavishes upon his subjects extraordinary tenderness of language and feeling. They are 'star-crossed lovers' who ultimately bring good to Verona because their deaths shock their feuding families into reconciliation.

### Sources

Shakespeare derived his play almost entirely

from *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, a poem by Arthur Brooke published in 1562. Brooke, in turn, found the story in a French version of an Italian tale whose origins go back at least to the mid-15th century. Brooke, who writes in clumsy couplets, is keen to stress the moral deficiencies of his hero and heroine – they are in thrall to 'unhonest desire', rely on 'superstitious friars' and thus are suitably punished – whereas Shakespeare, as we have already noted, is entirely in sympathy with his characters and derives much of his emotional effect from the acuteness of our identification with a couple who are romantically defiant, risking all for the sake of their love.

### Summary of the Plot

*Act One, Scene 1:* A quarrel breaks out between servants and members of two rival families, Capulets and Montagues. The Prince breaks up the fight. Romeo tells Benvolio of his love for Rosaline. *Scene 2:* Capulet, encouraging Paris to woo his daughter Juliet, invites him to a party that night. Romeo hears about the party and decides to go, hoping to see Rosaline.

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*Scene 3:* Lady Capulet finds Juliet apparently indifferent to the idea of marriage. *Scene 4:* Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio will gatecrash the masked ball but feel a sense of foreboding. Mercutio delivers his 'Queen Mab' speech. *Scene 5:* At the party Tybalt recognizes Romeo and has to be restrained by Capulet. Romeo sees and falls in love with Juliet, discovering her name from the Nurse. Juliet dances with Romeo and is equally smitten.

*Act Two, Scene 1:* Romeo enters Juliet's garden, while his friends look for him. *Scene 2:* Romeo overhears Juliet acknowledge her love for him. He reveals himself, confesses his love for her, and undertakes to make arrangements for their marriage the next day. *Scene 3:* Romeo finds Friar Lawrence gathering herbs and requests his help in marrying Juliet. *Scene 4:* Tybalt has challenged Romeo. The Nurse finds Romeo who sends her back to Juliet with the message that she is to come to Friar Lawrence's cell that afternoon for their marriage. *Scene 5:* The Nurse returns to the impatient Juliet to tell her of the arrangements. *Scene 6:* Romeo and Juliet depart to be married by the Friar.

*Act Three, Scene 1:* Mercutio and Romeo meet Tybalt. Romeo fails to prevent the others from fighting; Mercutio is killed, and Romeo swiftly avenges his friend by slaying Tybalt. When the Prince discovers these

events, Romeo is banished from Verona. *Scene 2:* The Nurse tells Juliet the bad news, but adds that Romeo will still visit her that night. *Scene 3:* Romeo hears the news of his exile from the Friar. The Nurse finds Romeo beside himself with grief. *Scene 4:* Capulet promises Juliet to Paris and sets the wedding date three days hence. *Scene 5:* Romeo and Juliet part in the morning. Juliet's parents threaten to disown her if she will not marry Paris.

*Act Four, Scene 1:* Paris tells the Friar that he must officiate at his and Juliet's wedding on Thursday – two days away. Juliet asks the Friar for help and he outlines a plan involving a sleeping draught whereby the marriage with Paris may be avoided and she may join Romeo. *Scene 2:* Juliet makes no apparent difficulty when her father arranges the wedding with Paris. *Scene 3:* Juliet, not without anxiety, drinks off the potion provided by the Friar. *Scene 4:* At dawn Capulet oversees preparations for the wedding-party. *Scene 5:* Juliet appears to be dead. The Friar advises her family to make ready for her funeral.

*Act Five, Scene 1:* Romeo, in exile at Mantua, hears that Juliet is dead in the family vault. He buys poison from an apothecary and determines to join her. *Scene 2:* The Friar hears from a colleague that his message never reached Romeo and thus decides to be with Juliet when she

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wakes from the effects of the potion. *Scene 3*: Romeo, arriving at the tomb so that he may die with her, finds Paris (who has brought flowers for the seemingly dead Juliet) and kills him. He takes the poison. Now the Friar comes, discovers the dead Romeo and Paris and begs Juliet, now awake, to flee the place. She, finding Romeo dead, kisses him and then kills herself with his dagger. When the Prince and the fathers of the dead lovers arrive, reconciliation between the warring families is at last achieved.

### Comment

**Romeo and Juliet** is the play which, in English literature at least, effectively invented the modern love story. Its charm and its power derive from the romantic setting (Verona, an Italian Renaissance city), the youthful innocence and ardour of the lovers, and (perhaps crucially) the excitement and drama created by the opposition which they have to contend with, an opposition which does not simply stem from the older generation but which is starkly present in the feud between their two families and which seems to be supported by the malignity of Fate. The richly realized context of their love is additionally enhanced by (for example) the superbly concrete character of Juliet's old Nurse, who fondly encourages the pair until

the 'better' offer of Paris's love comes along. The Nurse's sentimentality and materialism are all too convincing, and are symptomatic of the way in which Shakespeare suggests that none of the other characters can match the lovers for sincerity and steadfastness, especially once the brilliant and impulsive Mercutio has gone. Youthful as they are, we see that they are the people who grow and mature as the play progresses: Romeo, as sensitive and intelligent as the later Hamlet, realises that his 'love' for Rosaline is no such thing but merely infatuation: however instant the development of his love for Juliet may be, it is 'the real thing', as is Juliet's for him. The imagery of light and religion which Shakespeare consistently bestows upon the lovers is suggestive of the truth and value of their feelings: at the masked ball where they first meet, Romeo's immediate reaction to Juliet is that 'she doth teach the torches to burn bright', and their first words to each other are all built on the conceit that he is a 'pilgrim' and she a 'saint'.

The wit, tenderness, dramatic variety and poetic beauty of this play continue to work their spell: it has proved a perennial favourite inspiring, even in our century, works such as the musical *West Side Story*.

### Notes by Perry Keenlyside

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## The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

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Virtuoso dance-music from the time of Boccaccio's Decamerone

Ensemble Unicorn

Cover picture: Romeo and Juliet, 1884 by Sir Frank Dicksee (1853-1928).  
Southampton City Art Gallery/Bridgeman Art Library, London.

The New Cambridge Shakespeare

# William Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet

Performed by **Michael Sheen • Kate Beckinsale**  
and full cast

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Juliet	<b>Kate Beckinsale</b>
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**Peter Yapp • John Paul Connolly • Jason Cheater  
John Summerfield • Hywell Simons**

## THE COMPLETE TEXT – FULLY DRAMATISED

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*"Michael Sheen...an authoritative Romeo (he also directs).*

*Kate Beckinsale is a reflective Juliet. Fiona Shaw is the nurse – garrulous,  
interfering, totally convincing."*

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2:50:52