



Spring 2011

VIOLENT DELIGHTS AND VIOLENT ENDS

*My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep: the more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite.*

- Juliet, 1597

The world is yours.

- Scarface, 1983

Why perform Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* at Bennington College in the spring of 2011? Isn't the future of diminished prospects dismal enough without dredging up those ill-fated lovers? Why drum up reasons to be glum?

It started with a hunch. Maybe there still is something in this tale of boundless love worth exploring. I have seen many productions of *Romeo and Juliet*; one moved me. It was performed by teenagers in Bushwick, Brooklyn and they changed the ending because they'd seen so many of their young friends die. More often, I've sat through joyless interpretations I disliked so much it hurt to keep my eyes open.

The challenge loomed like Tybalt's dare to Romeo. Could we rise to this language? This passion? This violence? This galloping pace? Could we bring these characters to full-blooded life?

Then there was Roberto Saviano's investigative account and Matteo Garonne's graphic film, *Gomorrah*. When I saw the film, I was struck by the enduring mythology of Scarface. All over the world young men dream of becoming the mercurial gangster embodied by Al Pacino in the film, *Scarface*. Violent delights have violent ends: this ethos exerts particular traction among boys who come from nothing and long to live fast, live large, and die young. Having the world and losing everything swiftly, in a burst of flame, like Phaeton, the rash charioteer who crashes the sun to the ground, is key to this apotheosis.

Electrics Lab

Andrew Plimpton
Jessi Milestone
Elissa Daniels
Maria Jacobson
Eric Marlin

Costume Shop Staff

Katee "Treds" Tredway
Megan Diehl
Ariel Andrew
Bahar Baharloo
Emily Krug
Madison Best
Meaghan Morgan-Puglisi
Nikki Derse
Nora LaCasse
Sierra Marcum

Run crew

Light Board Operator ----- Kenneth Olguin
Spot Light Operators ----- Emily Thomas & Erica Baffa
Stage Hand ----- Julia Loewenthal

Hair and Make-up Lab ----- Emily Krug & Samantha Beitler
Wardrobe ----- Zoe Donellycolt & Hannah McCarthy

Special Thanks

Danny Michaelson, Terry Teitelbaum, Meaghan Morgan-Puglisi, Katee Tredway, Madison Best, Linda and Bill Hurley, Janis Young, Barbara Alfano, Tom Bogdan, Scott Lehrer, Matt Scott, Felix Ivanoff, Kate Lyckowski, Colleen Burns, Tina Cooper, and all the Costume Shop workers.

Drama Faculty and Staff

Michael Giannitti, Linda Hurley, Kirk Jackson, Dina Janis, Sherry Kramer, Daniel Michaelson, Robert Post, Michael Rancourt, Jean Randich, Sue Rees, Jenny Rohn, Dan Roninson, Terry Teitelbaum.

Electrics Staff

David Brinkman
Ashley N. Connell
Bronwyn R. Maloney
Carl J. South
Jordan Kapplan
Andrew Fridae
Nikolaus A. Tsocanos
Emily Jane Rosen
Amanda M. Haggerty
Katherine F. Perkins
Olivia Murphy

Posters and Programs

Shehrezad Maher

Yet the plot is set in motion by the best of intentions, and the language is as rich with joy, humor, and love as it is with anger and violence. In fact, the tragedy can only exist if that juxtaposition is present—if both the characters and the audience hope against hope that, somehow, everything will turn out all right.

Our main source of inspiration for this production was another narrative about youth and hope in a violence-ridden society: Matteo Garrone's 2008 film *Gomorrah*, based on Roberto Saviano's brave exposé about the Camorra, the Neapolitan mob. (Saviano received multiple death threats after the book's publication and now lives in hiding, under 24-hour police protection.) We felt that *Gomorrah* was set in a similar world to that of *Romeo & Juliet*: a lawless world in which tempers and temperatures run hot, in which children grow up witnessing violence and end up propagating that violence themselves, in which young dreamers yearn for something more even as they are caught up inextricably in the dangerous conflicts of the older generation. The cast has worked hard to understand and embody the passion, energy, power, and lyricism of Shakespeare's text and to express the humor along with the tragedy, the beauty along with the violence, the "hate, that is meant love."

- Meg Osborn

Scene Shop Staff

Tina Cooper
Corina Dalzell
Isabella Hreljanovic
Carl Johanson
Jon Burklund
Brandon LaDue
Liam Dailey
Finn Murphy
Katy Nelson
Katherine Perkins

Set Construction Lab

Graham Pirtle
Alexandra Armanino
Bahar Baharloo
Caitlin Brzezinski
Amanda Campbell
Alex Doyle
Erika Lewis
Mike Lowell
Eissa Saeed
Christina Stiles

I began to imagine a world in which the rules of the action film, the meteoric mobster saga, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* could mesh and meet. What would that look like? Sound like? What would that be?

We decided to set Shakespeare's love story not in romantic Verona, but in the bleak cement-poured housing projects of Secondigliano, the Camorra-run suburb of Naples. Here if you play by the rules, you get a roof over your head, and if you balk, you'll get whacked in a heartbeat. Secondigliano presented a plausible descendant of Elizabethan Verona: the blood hate, the corruption, the interdiction of individual choice other than that dictated by the "System."

Romeo and Juliet are nothing if they are not those who challenge the System. They dare to reject the schism of self and other. They dare to embrace the other that is more self than self itself.

And what of the Verona they leave so suddenly behind? Do the Capulet and Montague parents really learn from the loss of their progeny? Will these corrupt family empires, having erected golden statues to their martyred children, really change to allow for a compassionate, tolerant, progressive society? I can't help but doubt.

As much as we wish to distance ourselves from the Camorra empire, it behooves us to remember that the Neapolitan mafia earned 150 billion Euros in 2007. In addition to trafficking in drugs and arms, the thriving Camorra mafia invests in legitimate businesses around the world, one of which was the reconstruction of the World Trade Center.

At the end of the play, the survivors are urged to "Go hence to have more talk of these sad things." I think that's Shakespeare's cunning way of telling us, the audience, what to do with his play.

Think of that, and of our own blood feuds, the next time you visit Ground Zero.

- Jean Randich

There will be a 10 minute Intermission

CAST

<i>Romeo</i>	Ezra Lowrey
<i>Montague</i>	Chris Platika
<i>Lady Montague</i>	Katherine Perkins
<i>& Lady at Capulet Party</i>	
<i>Benvolio</i>	Jama McMahon
<i>Balthasar</i>	David Williams
<i>Abraham / Paris's Page</i>	Andrew Plimpton
<i>Juliet</i>	Laurel Johnson
<i>Capulet</i>	Dmitri Glickman
<i>Lady Capulet</i>	Sarah Matussek
<i>Nurse</i>	Sarah Robotham
<i>Tybalt / Carabinere</i>	Colin Hinckley
<i>Peter / Apothecary</i>	Cody Sullivan
<i>Sampson</i>	Zachary Horvitz
<i>Gregory</i>	Amanda Campbell
<i>& Lady at Capulet Party</i>	
<i>Capulet Party D.J</i>	Colleen Burns
<i>Friar Laurence</i>	Dominik Eisenschmidt
<i>Mercutio / Carabinere</i>	Ben Mankoff
<i>Prince / Paris</i>	Santino Torretti

Piangeró la sorte mia by George Handel sung by Maria DiFabbio

CREATIVE TEAM

<i>Director</i>	Jean Randich
<i>Set Designer</i>	Sue Rees
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Michael Giannitti
<i>Costume Designers</i>	Alex Cassanos & Brea Life
<i>Sound Designer</i>	C. Webster Marsh
<i>Composer</i>	Amanda Buckley
<i>Mai Lena Composer</i>	Dmitri Glickman
<i>Fight Choreographer</i>	Felix Ivanoff
<i>Dramaturge</i>	Meg Osborn
<i>Hair/Make-up Designer</i>	Mimi Bain
<i>Technical Director</i>	Mike Rancourt
<i>Master Electrician</i>	Rob Post

Music Technician
Costume Technical Supervisor

Dan Ronison
Terry Teitlebaum

Assistant Director
Assistant Set Designer
Assistant Lighting Designer
Assistant Sound Designer
Set and Props Assistant

Maria DiFabbio
Emily Thomas
David Brinkmann
Erica Frohnhofer
Hye-Young Choi

Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager

Olivia Murphy
Amanda Haggerty

Hip-Hop Consultants
Music Consultant
Fight / Dance Consultant
Piano Accompanist

Niko Tsocanos & Sarah Matussek
Colleen Burns
Theo Koppel
Kate Lyczkowski

Dance Captain
Fight Captain

Sarah Matussek
Ezra Lowrey

Costume Construction
& Coordination Team

Danny Michaelson
Terry Teitlebaum
Meaghan Morgan-Puglisi
Madison Best
Maria DiFabbio
Kaitee Tredway

DRAMATURGE'S NOTE

*Proud can I never be of what I hate;
But thankful even for hate, that is meant love.*

- *Romeo & Juliet*, III.5

The fact is that the only thing you learn here is how to die.

- a priest in Roberto Saviano's *Gomorrah*,
after delivering a eulogy for a 15-year-old boy

This play is a tragedy. You knew that coming in, of course. It's a story you're probably familiar with. A bitter feud, star-crossed lovers, miscommunication, and death.