



# Not Romeo and Juliet

By Fish and Twiner's Bait Shop

Educational Resource Pack

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## Not Romeo and Juliet: An Introduction

*Not Romeo and Juliet* is an outrageously funny mangling of Shakespeare's most iconic tragedy.

The key message at the heart of the show is one of empowerment. Shakespeare doesn't need to be treated delicately. It doesn't belong just to highly educated intellectuals. It isn't sacred or scary. Shakespeare is there to be played with, enjoyed, and even re-written!

This production is an excellent introduction to demystifying Shakespeare for high school students of all ages.

'flawlessly executed physical comedy' – Stage Whispers

'you will see Romeo and Juliet in a brand-new light' – Weekend Notes

'thoroughly silly... in the best possible way' - Fringe Feed

## Show Synopsis

Shakespeare and clowning collide in this beautifully funny remix of the Bard's most iconic tragedy.

Cirque du Cirque du Spectacular is in a shambles - a relic from the olden days of circus, when beasts roared and strong women bent iron bars. Conducted by the egotistical ringmaster Veronique, a series of increasingly absurd acts unfold: bird themed burlesque, inside-out contortion, floor aerials! Meanwhile, long-suffering assistant Stephanie stumbles upon, then falls in love with a copy of Shakespeare's Complete Works.

As the romance of the bard's words possess them, against all the rules, these charming idiots cast themselves as Romeo and Juliet. Together they attempt to stage the greatest show on Earth, restricted only by a lack of skills, talent, knowledge and resources.

*Not Romeo and Juliet* is high octane theatrical anarchy and ridiculous physical comedy at its best. The perfect show for Shakespeare lovers and haters alike.

## Fish and Twiner's Bait Shop

Fish and Twiner's Bait Shop is a Melbourne based physical theatre company. We make embodied, dynamic, accessible theatre with clown at its heart. We are serious about stupidity!

## Pre-Incursion Activities

Read *Romeo and Juliet* and/or watch one or more film versions. Recap the key characters and plot points.

Describe the characters of *Romeo and Juliet*: how they behave in the play, but also how you imagine they might look and sound.

Research the conventions of Elizabethan theatre.

List which characters (from *Romeo and Juliet* or another Shakespearean play) you most identify with and least identify with. Describe why.

## Post-Incursion Activities

Write an epilogue for *Romeo and Juliet* (or another Shakespearean play) using poetic language and iambic pentameter. Change what happens in the story as much as you like. Eg They don't die but *Romeo* gets back together with *Rosalind* and *Juliet* ends up with *Benvolio*. Or, *Juliet* wakes up, realises *Romeo* has died and then moves on with her life. Etc

Compare and contrast the conventions of Elizabethan Theatre and Clown such as:

- Direct address
- Heightened language
- Asides
- Soliloquy
- Play within a play
- Stylised gesture
- Transformation of time and place versus real time and place

And/or:

Compare and contrast the conventions of Not *Romeo and Juliet* (Clown) with Naturalism.

Reflect on the unconventional casting of two women as *Romeo* and *Juliet*. In small groups rehearse and present a Shakespearean scene with a consciousness of unconventional casting. Eg gender blind casting or casting against type. Analyse these scenes with a focus on what was learnt about the characters or the text as a whole through the use of unconventional casting. Discuss the political and social consequences of unconventional or diverse casting in theatre and screen generally. Expand the conversation to reflect on the importance of representation of all marginalised people in popular culture.

Stage a debate in class that addresses the statement 'Shakespeare is sacred'.

## In-School Engagement Opportunity

### Workshop description - Clown 101

An introduction to performing in the theatrical style of Clown. Through games and exploration students develop and refine their expressive skills specific to the performance for, practice engaging with an audience, and hone their own unique brand of funny.

### Cost

\$150 per 90 minute workshop

### Participants

Maximum participants per workshop 26.

Participants are advised to wear clothes they feel comfortable moving in - such as theatre blacks or a PE uniform.

## Australian Curriculum Relevant to Not Romeo and Juliet

Drama	<p>Analysing and reflecting upon intentions; and responding to and interpreting artworks.</p> <p>The performance exposes students to contemporary theatre making practices and dramatic conventions, European clowning techniques, and Shakespearean text in action. Through analysing Not Romeo and Juliet students expand their viewpoints and enrich their drama making. They witness new forms and performance styles in practice and are able to breakdown the elements of drama at play.</p>
English	<p>Evaluating Language.</p> <p>Not Romeo and Juliet upends who is allowed to speak Shakespearean text, and how. It is commonly assumed that heightened theatrical text can only be spoken by highly educated people with 'actor' voices. The characters in Not Romeo and Juliet demonstrate that Shakespeare is for everyone.</p> <p>Literature and context.</p> <p>By positioning Shakespearean text outside the context of 'Actors' performing in a 'Theatre', students are invited to reflect on the culture and context the text was originally created in.</p> <p>Interpreting, analysing and evaluating.</p> <p>Students are exposed to unpretentious Shakespearean language in use. The performance includes instructions on how to read the text: 'don't pause at the end of the line, but at the punctuation'. It provides</p>

	<p>an opportunity for comparative analysis with other Romeo and Juliet texts such as Shakespeare's play and Baz Lurhmann's film.</p> <p>Language devices When the characters finally re-write Shakespeare they do so in iambic pentameter rhyming couplets laden with symbolism and simile. This is as an accessible introduction for students to the devices of poetic texts.</p>
Health and Physical Education	<p>Valuing Diversity. Not Romeo and Juliet invites audiences to question who is allowed to be cast as the iconic star-crossed lovers. The resounding answer is anyone. Regardless of gender, ability or cultural background anyone can be the star of the show.</p>

### Further Reading/References/Resources

<p>Why is that so Funny by John Wright</p> <p><a href="https://dramaresource.com/why-is-that-so-funny/">https://dramaresource.com/why-is-that-so-funny/</a></p>	<p>The bible for physical comedy. An accessible read full of practical exercises and games.</p>
<p>Clown Scenes By Tristan Remy</p> <p><a href="https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1176043.Clown_Scenes">https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1176043.Clown_Scenes</a></p>	<p>Documentation of classic clown routines from the tradition of the one-ring circus.</p>
<p>Shakespeare Unbound: Chapter 2 Romeo and Juliet Bell Shakespeare/ABC</p> <p><a href="http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/1403896/shakespeare-unbound">http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/1403896/shakespeare-unbound</a></p>	<p>High quality video excerpts from the play and text analysis with the performers.</p>
<p>Shakespeare's Globe teaching resources</p> <p><a href="https://teach.shakespearesglobe.com/">https://teach.shakespearesglobe.com/</a></p>	<p>Everything and anything Shakespeare related including high quality teaching resources.</p>

## Credits

This educational resource pack was created by Fish and Twiner's Bait Shop  
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### *Not Romeo and Juliet* credits

Created and performed by Lily Fish and Kimberley Twiner

Directed by Steph Kehoe

Devising consultation by Giovanni Fusetti

Thanks to Caitlin Dullard, La Mama Theatre, St Andrews Uniting Church Fairfield, Women\*s  
Circus