



THE
SHAKESPEARE
PROJECT

Romeo & Juliet

BY: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

DIRECTED BY: KARL HAWKINS

ADAPTED BY: KARL HAWKINS & CARMINE DIBIASE



TRUNK
TOUR

AUGUST 2022

ARTWORK BY
MCKENNA PADGETT



JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF
ARTS & HUMANITIES

CAST

JULIET KENLI DOSS
ROMEO NARDGE FRANCOIS
BENVOLIO CHRISTIAN WATTS
TYBALT/LADY CAPULET CHESLEE DUKE
PARIS CHEYENNE OLIVER
MERCUTIO/FRIAR LAURENCE DARRYL JONES
PRINCE/NURSE BRIDGETT RAYBURN

PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR KARL HAWKINS
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER CHEYENNE OLIVER
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER LAURELLEI VEASEY
COSTUME DESIGNER KELBY KING
CO -SCENIC DESIGNER & SCENIC CHARGE JESSICA GALLAHAR
CO- SCENIC DESIGNER & TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....CHEYENNE OLIVER
DRAMATURG CARMINE DIBIASE
CO-FOUNDER & FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER CARRIE COLTON
MANAGING DIRECTOR MICHAEL BOYNTON
CO-FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMILY DUNCAN

PLAY TEAM

SAMANTHA DRAKE & GRAYSON SINGLETON

**THE MISSION OF THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT IS TO ENHANCE THE
UNDERSTANDING OF PERFORMING ARTS AND LITERATURE CURRICULUM BY
PRESENTING FREE PROGRAMMING AND PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTIONS OF THE
WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.**

*THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES STRIVES FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE BY
PROVIDING A LEARNING-CENTERED ENVIRONMENT WHERE STUDENTS CULTIVATE
CRITICAL THOUGHT, INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY, AND AN EXPANSIVE WORLDVIEW.*

*THE JSU FOUNDATION, THROUGH COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH
INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS,
CREATES OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO THE
STUDENTS, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY OF
JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY.*

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I was approached to direct *Romeo and Juliet* and it was to be set during the civil rights era, I immediately knew that I was going to use historical events to serve as the backdrop and catalyst starting the action of this play. The question that kept haunting me, in a good way, was what happened after? How did people feel? Cope? Move forward? That is why the action of our play starts in Anniston, AL, in 1961, a few weeks after the freedom rides were attacked downtown. Tensions are already high, and you will quickly see how merging the history of the American south with Shakespeare's beautiful language will help us see this story that we know and love in a fresh, new way.

My hope for you watching this is to walk away feeling empowered to change the world! Know that you can use your voice and power to fight for all of the things that make the world unique and beautiful. You have the will and ability to make a difference, but we must look at the past and stand against racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, in order to inspire the present and change the future.

Thank you for coming and supporting The Shakespeare Project and the arts as a whole.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE!



KARL HAWKINS
TSP CASSIUS IN JULIUS CAESAR
& *BANQUO IN MACBETH*



ROMEO & JULIET

BY: CARMINE DIBIASE, DRAMATURG FOR THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT

Act I: Shakespeare opens his play with members of the feuding Capulet and Montague families fighting in a public space in the northern Italian city of Verona, but in our production the setting is Anniston, Alabama, in the 1960s. The Capulets are white, and the Montagues are African American. However, aside from shortening the script to about ninety minutes of performance time, very few changes have been made. The public fight between the two families, therefore, sets the scene for us as it did for Shakespeare. Benvolio, Romeo's kinsman, tries to make peace but Tybalt, a Capulet, provokes the Montagues until the Prince steps in and ends it by threatening them all with dire punishment. In the peaceful moments that ensue, we meet Mercutio, Romeo's brutally realistic, unromantic friend. Romeo then attends a festivity at the home of the Capulets, where he meets Juliet, and the two fall immediately in love, only to learn that they are members of two feuding families.

Act II: Romeo and Juliet confess their love for each other and vow to be together forever. Romeo seeks the help of Friar Laurence, who agrees to marry the couple in a secret, private ceremony. Juliet's nurse learns of the plan and reports the news to Juliet, who is delighted. Meanwhile Tybalt, who spotted Romeo and Juliet together at the Capulet's festivity, challenges Romeo to a duel, which will end in a tragically unexpected way in the next act. But this act concludes with Romeo and Juliet's secret marriage, the happiness of which is colored already—for the audience, since Romeo has yet to learn of it—by Tybalt's violent challenge.

Act III: Tybalt seeks out Romeo, but Mercutio, who is not only unromantic but also hot tempered, fights Tybalt instead. Romeo arrives on the scene, tries to stop the fight by explaining that he is now married to Juliet, and as he comes between Mercutio and Tybalt, he inadvertently causes Mercutio to be fatally stabbed by Tybalt. Romeo then, fueled by vengeance, kills Tybalt, and the result is disastrous to the newly wedded couple. Romeo is banished forever from the city, and Juliet is forced to agree that she will marry another man, Paris, within days. The couple spend one last blissful night together, and Romeo, at the break of day, must leave or else be found out and executed.

Act IV: Friar Laurence is not only a man of the cloth but also a kind of chemist, as he knows the properties of herbs. He makes a potion that will induce a death-like sleep in Juliet, and persuades her to agree to take it. That way, he promises, she can buy time, avoid marrying Paris, and make it possible to be reunited, somehow, with Romeo. Meanwhile, Romeo, exiled now in the city of Mantua, despairs. Friar Laurence's message to him, explaining the plot involving Juliet's feigned death, never reaches him because disease is spreading throughout the countryside, making communication impossible. The act concludes with the nurse discovering what she believes is Juliet's corpse, and Juliet's burial in the family mausoleum.

Act V: In exile in Mantua still, Romeo has a foreboding dream about Juliet, and soon after he receives word that Juliet is dead. Now in utter despair, he buys a lethal poison from an apothecary, a chemist, and travels determined to Juliet's city, to die there, at her grave, and be together with her in death. What unfolds is a tragedy of errors: Romeo finds Juliet in the family tomb, thinks she is dead, drinks the poison and dies just before she wakes up. Juliet comes out of her drug-induced sleep to find Romeo's dead body there, beside her, and she then kills herself in earnest with a knife, after she discovers that Romeo has not left a single drop of poison for her.

CAST



Kenli Doss is an actress/director from the Jacksonville area. She is also a published poet/dramatist. Her

works appear in the 2020-2021 Something Else Literary Arts Journal and in Bonemilk II (2022). This is Kenli's fourth time working with TSP. Some may recognize her as Puck from the 2021 production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." You can find her on Twitter and Instagram at @doss_kenli.



Nardge Jean Francois is thrilled to be working with The Shakespeare Project again on his favorite Shakespeare play,

"Romeo and Juliet." He currently resides in Orlando, FL working as a professional singer at various venues including Universal Studios, Seaworld, and Busch Gardens. He also regularly sings with Flashback: A Frankie Valli Tribute show on American Cruise Lines and O-Town Motown. Recently, he has had the privilege of performing with Kanye West and others at the Donda 2 concert in Miami. Past theatre credits include Benny in "In The Heights" (Osceola Arts), Orlando in the original musical "Arden" (Fringe Festival), and Ross in "Macbeth" (The Shakespeare Project).



Christian Watts is a twenty-three year old senior at Jacksonville State University, and he

is thrilled to work with the Shakespeare Project. Earlier in the summer he had the opportunity to work with Huntsville Shakes in their production of "Love Labour's Lost," playing Dumaine/Armado. Christian would like to thank Karl Hawkins for this amazing opportunity and also thank all of his family and friends for supporting him.



Cheslee Duke is an actor and singer based in Munford, AL. Some previous stage credits

include: Morticia in "The Addams Family Musical" (CAPA), "The Witch in Into The Woods" (JCATD), Tracy Turnblad in "Hairspray" (VST). Some TV/Film credits include: "Ms. Marvel" (2022), "Bloom" (2020) and "The Passage" (2019). They would like to thank their friends and family and The Shakespeare Project for the opportunity. They hope you enjoy the show!

CAST CONTINUED...



Bridgett Rayburn is currently a senior at Jacksonville State University studying Theater Performance. This

is her second show with The Shakespeare Project, with the first show being "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the roles of Quince, Fairy, Cobweb, Peaseblossom, and Mustardseed. Bridgett is a carpenter, director, and actor. Other theatrical credits include Assistant Directing *Emilie: La Marquise Du Châtelet Defends Her Life Tonight*, Directing "The Big Bad Bullysauros" for Alpha Psi Omega, and playing Beline in "Imaginary Invalid." She is so honored to be apart of this show and can't wait for everyone to see!!



Darryl Jones hails from Chicago, IL! Darryl is large and in charge! He is sweet, and exuberant! This Gentle Giant is

proud of his skin and culture, and is very excited to be with this company for his first Shakespeare production. Recent Credits include: Ensemble in "Ragtime" (Music Theater Works), Jake in "Sideshow" (The Black Hills Playhouse), Tom Collins in "Rent" (Possibilities Theater). Darryl would like to give thanks to God, his family, friends, and late mother Angela K. Horton.



Ashlee Cheyenne Oliver is a Stage Manager hailing from Oxford Alabama. He obtained his BA in Theatre Production

with a concentration in Stage and Production Management from JSU. Credits for Stage Management include North Dakota Shakespeare, The Shakespeare Project, Jacksonville Opera Theatre, and Highlands Playhouse. He is slated to return to work with NETWorks this fall on the Broadway National Tours of "Hairspray", "Fiddler on the Roof", and "ELF"! Cheyenne is a part time workshop leader and instructor who specializes in management. He is a member of SMA and hold his IATSE card. He is a fulltime freelance SM and technician. He wishes to tell the younger generation of artists to follow your dreams and to never stop creating. TikTok: cheyenneoliver24



TOUR CREW

Laurelei Veasey is currently a junior theatre performance

major at Jacksonville State University. This is her first time working with The Shakespeare Project, and she could not be more excited. She is currently an intern at CAST theatre company and has stage managed shows like "Legally Blonde Jr.", "The Addams Family", and "The Little Mermaid Jr."

PRODUCTION TEAM



Karl Hawkins (any pronouns) is delighted to be making his professional directorial debut with TSP! Karl has had the pleasure

of appearing in both *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* with TSP as well. A Black, queer theatre artist based in NYC, Karl is an actor, director, singer and acting coach; aside from working in the theatre, Karl is a bookseller in Brooklyn and is on staff for the nonprofit, Blacklight Community. Selected directing credits: "Bootycandy", "The Black Bullet Dichotomy", "night, Mother", "Ten Blocks On The Camino Real". For more info, check out their website www.karljhawkins.com or Instagram @littlekarl_ To Thine Own Self Be True!



Carmine Di Biase writes about English and Italian literature, and his poems have appeared in various journals. His

chapbook of poems, *American Rondeau*, has just been published by Finishing Lines Press. He also writes for academic journals and for the *Times Literary Supplement*. He is Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at Jacksonville State University in Alabama, where he lives with six cats and his wife, who teaches music and is principal cellist for the Gadsden Symphony Orchestra.



Jessica Gallahar is an award winning scenic designer based in Anniston and is thrilled to be joining TSP. After

working in the interior design industry for several years, she followed her children into the world of community theatre, bringing along her creative skills and eye for design. Since then, Jessica has designed over 20 shows, both professionally and in the community. Some of her favorite show credits are "Matilda the Musical", "The Addams Family (young at part)", "Legally Blonde Jr.," and Disney's "Newsies." Jessica owes everything to her husband of almost 20 years and their three beautiful girls and thanks them for all of their endless support and encouragement.



Kelby King is a graduate of Jacksonville State University serving as the designer for their productions

of "How I Became a Pirate" and "Anne Frank." Since then, she has worked as a freelance costumer, having recently been the assistant designer for the JSU Music Departments production of "Little Women." She also worked with Valley Fair in Minnesota as a stitcher.

PRODUCTION TEAM CONTINUED...



Carrie Colton is thrilled to be able to come home to The Shakespeare Project! Carrie is a certified

combatant and instructor with Dueling Arts International and The British Academy of Dramatic Combat. Favorite combat choreography credits include: "Pippin" (Actors Academy) "Scarlet Pimpernel" (Candlelight Dinner Playhouse) and "Twelfth Night" (North Dakota Shakespeare). She is currently the Artistic Director at Rocky Mountain Theatre for Kids and an Associate Professor of Movement at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

www.carriecolton.com



Emily Duncan graduated from JSU in 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts English. While working at the

Utah Shakespeare Festival from 2019-2020, Emily also received her masters in Arts Administration from Southern Utah University. Emily has previously served on the CAST Board of Directors and currently serves on the Knox Board of Directors. Emily has participated in several regional productions, as an ensemble member, director and crew. Emily currently works at Jacksonville State University as the Career Development Coordinator for Arts & Humanities and Business & Industry.



Dr. Michael Boynton holds an MFA from Wayne State University in Acting; an MFA from New York University,

Tisch School of the Arts in Musical Theatre Writing; and a PhD from the University of Maryland, College Park in Theatre and Performance Studies. He has worked professionally as an actor with national companies like the Hilberry Repertory Theatre in Detroit and the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company in Baltimore. In Alabama in recent years, he has played Caesar in "Julius Caesar" and Theseus/Oberon for "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with The Shakespeare Project. His dramatic writing has been produced nationally and internationally and even appeared on Broadway in shows like the musical "Hairspray." In Alabama, Michael has worked primarily as a director in recent years - past JSU directing credits include "The Tempest," "Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson," "Into the Woods," "The Seagull," "She Kills Monsters," "The Imaginary Invalid," "The Laramie Project," and "Emilie La Marquise Du Châtelet Defends Her Life Tonight."

ABOUT US

While volunteering at the Coldwater Mountain Bike Fest and working on CAST's production of *Annie* in 2017, Carrie shared an idea with Emily. "We should do Shakespeare here in the summer!" referring to Zinn Park. As a Utah native, Carrie didn't know how hot summers in Alabama get, nor did she know about the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's origins in Anniston. Carrie wanted to make arts accessible, while also giving our students opportunities to work alongside professionals and learn. The origin of what we coined "the Shakespeare Project" focused on removing all barriers. Shakespeare is often seen as elevated language and "costly" art, yet our schools are required to cover these works in courses of study. Currently, not every student has access or every school the funding to see or produce live theatre, so we seek, with donors and grant funding, to provide these professional performances of Shakespeare and classic literary works for free.

In addition, our primary focus is to provide performances that aid comprehension, meaning we choose actors and team members who have the strongest grasp of the text and the language. We also choose to set our works in more modern, relatable times. Shakespeare is one writer, who conveys the complex nature of being a human. In each story, each moment, there is someone to whom we can relate. We assemble a diverse, talented crew, from across the U.S., who gather together to create magic.

In 2018, The Shakespeare Project produced William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* for more than 2,000 students and 700 community members, and in 2019, *Macbeth* was produced, reaching more than 1,700 students and 1,200 community members. While we were closed in 2020, we did reunite our casts virtually in January 2021 to record and edit audio of *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* for classroom use in Spring 2021. Then, we partnered with the Alpha Psi Omega, the theatre student organization, in producing six community performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in area parks for 300 plus community members during late April 2021. Now, we bring to you *Romeo & Juliet*!



SHAKESPEARE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Teaching Shakespeare is a professional development workshop TSP hosts, aimed at aiding teachers in rediscovering the joy and accessibility of teaching Shakespeare. In 2022, we've hosted two sessions, one aimed at JSU students striving to become teaching artists, and one aimed at students and current teachers continuing to learn about the Bard. In May, Michael Bahr, retired Education Director for the Utah Shakespeare Festival, presented his Playteam training and resources to our students via Zoom. Later, Shakespeare in Detroit's Co-Founder and Artistic Director Sam White brought their "Shakespeare for Young Audiences" training to Jacksonville State University, August 1st and 2nd.

These hands-on seminars ignite the passion for Shakespeare's words, characters, and themes. Through very practical approaches, teachers are equipped to head back to the classroom and make Shakespeare's 16th-century lessons engaging for 21st-century students, by making the language and theatrical elements of Shakespeare relevant and exciting in the classroom. Additional classroom workshops are also available through Jacksonville State University, so for more information or to schedule something for your classroom, email Dr. Michael Boynton, mboynton@jsu.edu.

PLAYTEAM



Samantha Drake



Grayson Singleton



Samantha Drake is a Senior Theatre Performance major and Music minor at JSU. She was most recently seen in "The Big Bad Bullysauros" as Bronnie Brontosaurus (JSU), Lady Bracknel in "The Importance of Being Earnest" (JSU), and Mary in "Mary Poppins" (Wallace State). She is a current member of the JSU Chamber Singers and A Cappella Choir and is also Alpha Psi Omega's Understudy Educator for fall 2022.

Grayson Singleton is a Junior pursuing a degree in Theatre Production with a minor in Film. She was the Stage Manager for "Emilie: La Marquise Du Chatelet Defends Her Life Tonight." Also she was the Assistant Stage Manager for "Little Women The Musical," "The Importance of Being Earnest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Boy Gets Girl" and more. In addition Grayson is the Philanthropy Vice President for her sorority, Alpha Xi Delta. She is ecstatic to be working with The Shakespeare Project!



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT EMILY DUNCAN AT
(256) 782-5886 OR EMAIL ELDUNCAN@JSU.EDU.**

IF YOU'D LIKE TO GIVE BY CREDIT CARD, VISIT JSU.EDU/GIVEJSU AND
DESIGNATE THE GIFT TO THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT.

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The Duncans & The McAlisters, and our
supporters including JD (John Davis),
Sam White (Shakespeare in Detroit), and
Michael Bahr (Utah Shakespeare Festival).