

THESPIHONEST PRESENTS



Romeo & Juliet

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2014 I read my very first Shakespeare play– *Romeo and Juliet*. I hated it. I thought it was impossible to understand and didn't make any sense to me. In 2018 I took my very first Shakespeare class while working on my BFA. It was taught by Tara Flannigan (one of the most talented people in the field and someone I deeply look up to) and she chose the “But soft what light...” speech for our class to analyze and discuss. It blew my mind. That was the moment that my love for Shakespeare and classical works began. I started to realize that Shakespeare is for EVERYONE. Any genders, any ethnicities, any social backgrounds, and it can tell any kind of love story. Finally, in 2020 I chose to write my thesis for my English Minor on the astrological elements and the idea of fate in *Romeo and Juliet*. This is where my vision for this production began. I have lived with *Romeo and Juliet* for over a decade and it felt only fitting for my directorial debut.

This production began as a question about fate and what control we have over higher powers. But over the past two years as we developed the show, our country's political climate changed and shifted into something deeply dark and disturbing. This changed the life of our show from something ethereal to something very real and present in our city today. The hate and horrors brought onto the queer and trans community and the war against people of color who are the heartbeat of our city prompted us to continue to stand up for love and acceptance. This show reminds us what happens when we choose hate over love. How fear and a desire for power ruins entire communities.

We must look after each other. Stand up for your neighbors, speak out against tyranny, hold each other close, and love whoever the f*ck you want to love.

With our deepest love and respect,
Rebecca Swan and the Thespionest Family.

CAST

Romeo	Jurnee Woo
Juliet	Olivia Leigh Twiford
Mercutio / Friar John	Imani Alis
Friar Laurence	Sara Bunge
Lady Capulet	Kendyl Grbac
Tybalt / Peter / Page	Lo Lundeen
Musician	Jules Lustenader
Nurse	Tyler Marshall
Montague / Prince	Pilar Mendoza
Capulet / Apothecary	Zach Sain
Benvolio.....	Rebecca Swan
Paris / Sampson	Jeremiah Taylor

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Rebecca Swan
Stage Manager	Bonnie-Lynn Montaño
Producer	Kendyl Grbac
Producer	Jack Boyle
Executive Producer	Lily Blaisdell Hamilton
Composer	Carina Lim
Set Designer	Megan Trapani-Devin
Intimacy Coordinator	Charlie Jackson
Fight Choreographer	Katie Orr

CAST BIOS



Jurnee Woo (*Romeo*)

Woo is a passionate actor whose work focuses primarily on the experiences of BIPOC Queer women. She was most recently featured in the award-winning short film, *Thank You For Breaking My Heart*, which had its Los Angeles premiere at the OutfestNEXT film festival. Woo has previously studied Theatre while attending Louisiana State University, where she also collegiately competed in their women's track and field program, becoming an All-American and representing Team USA as a 400-meter hurdle semifinalist for the World Athletics U20 Championships. She's very excited for you to watch this show.



Olivia Leigh Twiford (*Juliet*)

Olivia Leigh Twiford is an actor originally from Phoenix, Arizona, and based in Los Angeles. She holds a BA in Theatre and Film from Loyola Marymount University and trained internationally at the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia and the Bonn Academy in Germany. Shakespeare credits include PUCK in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and CELIA in *As You Like It*. Her work has been shaped by mentors including Peter Bogdanovich, John Todd, and Saul Kotzubei, as well as the Margie Haber Studio and Improv LA. She is grateful to the cast and creative team for this collaborative, heart-forward process.



Imani Alis (*Mercutio / Friar John*)

Imani Alis is an actor and artist from South Los Angeles. Now, they are all over the Hollywood indie theatre scene. In fact, you may have last seen them in a devised show at the Cat's Crawl named *T*. When not in the spotlight, you'll find them lost in a fantasy novel or taking a stroll through nature or DIY-ing something they glanced at on Pinterest. Imani would like to thank all those who have consistently supported them in their theatrical endeavors. Cheers!



Sarah Bunge (*Friar Laurence*)

Sara Bunge graduated from Loyola Marymount University in May of 2024 with a BA in Theatre Arts and a Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential. Since then, Sara has been working professionally in theatre with companies like Mixed eMotion Theatrix, About... Productions, and Jaxx Theatricals. Sara also fronts 2 bands, produces and travels with shows yearly to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and recently advanced onto Writing Lab at The Groundlings. Special thanks to Bex for her heartfelt vision and inspirational approach, the cast and crew for their consistency and brilliance, and friends and family for the unwavering love and support.



Kendyl Grbac (*Lady Capulet*)

Kendyl Grbac (she/her) is thrilled to be producing her 4th production, while also acting in this one! Producing credits: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Faustus* (Thespionest), *The Pillowman* (Season 10). Recent acting credits: *Macbeth* (Thespionest), *9 to 5*, *Measure for Measure*, *She Kills Monsters*, *Vinegar Tom* (Chapman), *The Addams Family*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (McLaughlin).



Lo Lundeen (*Tybalt / Peter / Page*)

Lo Lundeen (they/them) is a multimedia artist in Los Angeles, California. This is their second production with Thespionest theatre company. Lo's past credits include Puck in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hamlet in *Hamlet*, and Roz Keith in *Dolly Parton's 9 to 5*. Lo works as an actor, producer, painter, musical theatre instructor, and basically any other side gig that they can fit into their schedule. Lo would like to thank Tom Bradac for inspiring their love for Shakespeare and encouraging them to be a fool.



Jules Lustenader (*Musician*)

Jules is a singer-songwriter and actor originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, now located in Los Angeles. Recent musical acting credits include Beth in *Merrily We Roll Along*, Maria in *Sound of Music*, Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods*, Clara in *Passion* (BATCC Award Winner), and Violet in *Violet*. She is featured as Meg in the original cast recording of *Tinderella the Musical*. Jules has been writing and performing original folk-rock music since she picked up the guitar in 2009. She is a proud graduate of San Francisco State University's Theatre Department.



Tyler Marshall (*Nurse*)

Tyler is really excited to be working with this Shakespeare dude! He has heard a lot about him. A SoCal native, Tyler is an alumni of OCHSA's Musical Theater Conservatory (2012) and UC, Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts (2018). Touring: *North: The Musical*, 2nd National Tour (Walter Wetherby), *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* (Boss Elf), *A Carol Channing Christmas* (Vocalist), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Hedwig Schmidt). New York/Off-Broadway: Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall 2012/2017 (Soloist), *Excuse Me: A Song Cycle* (Tyler). Regional/Other: *Passion* (Sgt. Lombardi), *Songs for a New World* (Man 2), *Edges: A Song Cycle* (Man 2), *The Little Mermaid* (Scuttle), *Something Rotten* (Robin), *Spring Awakening* (Ernst), *James and the Giant Peach* (Ladahlord). Proudly represented by FireStarter Entertainment. Thank you to my family, partner, and Thespionest. Instagram: @therealmerylstrep



Pilar Mendoza (*Montague / Prince*)

Pilar Mendoza is a Cuban-American actress, teaching artist and content creator. Pilar is thrilled to work with Thespionest on *Romeo and Juliet*. She holds an MFA in Acting from East15 Acting School (2025). She can be seen next at Riot Shakespeare's production of *Henry IV Part 1*. Credits include: *Alternative Canon* (LakehouseRanchDotPNG), *Pericles* (Theatreworks), and *The Winter's Tale* (CHW Productions). All her love to Kaiden and Sorephelia.



Zach Sain (*Capulet / Apothecary*)

Zach Sain is making his LA Shakespeare debut. After moving to LA from Minnesota in July 2025, Zach has been acting in a lot of short films and taking classes at the Groundlings. His last theatrical work was *The Little Mermaid* (Pilot) in October 2025. Back in Minnesota Zach was in *The Cid* (El Cid) and *The 37 Postcards* (Avery). Zach has trained in musical theatre and stage combat. He graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth in 2021. His favorite animal is the Grey Wolf.



Rebecca Swan (*Benvolio*)

Rebecca has worked at multiple regional theatre companies including Lyric Repertory Theatre, Great River Shakespeare and Prague Shakespeare companies. She recently had her Europe debut at the Prague Castle as Cordelia in *King Lear*. She holds a BFA in acting from USU. When not working on Shakespeare you can find her designing narrative Drag shows at Sassafras Saloon. Love to Victoria, her family, friends, and her kitty Calzone for keeping her full of laughter and joy and being her biggest fans.



Jeremiah Taylor (*Paris / Sampson*)

USC alum and former aca-fella of the Trojan Men, Jeremiah is thrilled to be working with the talented folks of Thespionest! Originally from the Midwest where he studied at Cranbrook, Jeremiah currently works as an artistic coordinator and can be seen performing at various local theaters such as Jaxx and The Broadwater.

PRODUCTION BIOS



Rebecca Swan (*Director*)

This is Rebecca Swan's fourth production with Thespionest. She is beyond grateful for the trust from the production team for her Los Angeles directing debut. Rebecca wrote her thesis in college about *Romeo and Juliet* so this production has lived in her for half a decade and she couldn't be prouder of the cast and crew making her dream come alive. Rebecca has worked at multiple regional theatre companies including Lyric Repertory Theatre, Great River Shakespeare and Prague Shakespeare companies. She recently had her Europe debut at the Prague Castle as Cordelia in *King Lear*. She holds a BFA in acting from USU. When not working on Shakespeare you can find her designing narrative Drag shows at Sassafras Saloon. Love to Victoria, her family, friends, and her kitty Calzone for keeping her full of laughter and joy and being her biggest fans.



Bonnie-Lynn Montañó (*Stage Manager*)

Bonnie-Lynn Montañó (Stage Manager) is an LA-based actor, LMU grad, singer, and theatre-maker. Previous work: Neha & Neel at Artists at Play (ASM), *Pacific Overtures* at East West Players (2nd ASM), *Cambodian Rock Band*, *EWP* (PA), and more. Acting credits: Universal Studios Fan Fest 2025 (Star Trek Ensign), *Pirates Wanted* (Captain Souvanna), *Songs for a New World* at Loyola Marymount University (Woman 1). Thank you to her family, friends, and Cade for their love and support. ig: bonifacia.erlinda



Kendyl Grbac (*Producer*)

Kendyl Grbac (she/her) is thrilled to be producing her 4th production, while also acting in this one! Producing credits: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Faustus* (Thespionest), *The Pillowman* (Season 10). Recent acting credits: *Macbeth* (Thespionest), *9 to 5*, *Measure for Measure*, *She Kills Monsters*, *Vinegar Tom* (Chapman), *The Addams Family*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (McLaughlin).

Romeo & Juliet has been a labor of love, and we are so grateful you're here supporting independent classical queer theatre (honestly, can you think of anything better?). All my love to Jack and Bex, who have been there since the beginning.



Jack Boyle (*Producer*)

Jack Boyle is a Los Angeles-based director, producer, who is absolutely thrilled to be joining the Thespionest team for this incredible take on *Romeo and Juliet*! Past directing and producing credits include: *It's A Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *California Suite*, and *The Pillowman*. Jack holds a BA from Chapman University and majored in theatre studies with a minor in television from Dodge College.



Lily Blaisdell Hamilton (*Executive Producer/Company Owner*)

Lily Blaisdell Hamilton (she/they) is the owner and founder of Thespionest Theatre Company. With Thespionest she has played Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet* (2016), Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Mephistophilis in *Faustus*. Additionally she directed *Macbeth* and *The Taming of the Shrew* and has been a producer on all of Thespionest's shows. She is so proud of how Thespionest has grown and so excited to see this beautiful show come to life!



Carina Lim (*Composer*)

Carina is over the moon to be back for yet another Thespionest production! As a composer, she loves engaging with audiences through adventures and emotion, with *Romeo and Juliet* being the perfect ground for those worlds to collide. Her favourite music style is contemporary classical, and she hopes that you would enjoy this modern rendition made for a classic love story.



Megan Trapani-Diven (*Set Designer*)

Megan Trapani-Diven is over the moon to join the Thespionest team for the first time! Her previous theatre work includes props & set decoration with Rogue Machine Theatre, *The 6th Act*, Village Green Productions, and *Season 10 Stage*. When she's not wrangling knickknacks and whatnots galore, she can usually be found events assisting, cooking, or volunteering at the local marionette theatre. As always, she would like to thank Joey and Robyn, who have patiently put up with her schemes for many years.



Charlie Jackson (*Intimacy Coordinator*)

Charlie Jackson is an LA based actor and intimacy coordinator. This is her third time working with Thespionest and she can't wait to watch everyone's brilliant artistry come to life!



Katie Orr (*Fight Choreographer*)

Katie Orr is a BFA graduate of Chapman University and beyond thrilled to help bring one of her favorite stories to life- and death. Whether it be creating and choreographing dragons (*She Kills Monsters*) or generally getting beat up on stage (*Pillowman*, *California Suite*... suspiciously high numbers of Jack Boyle Productions) Katie can be found in a state of happily controlled distress as an actor, puppeteer, and fight choreographer across LA and OC. She would like to thank her family and friends for their love and support and LPM for giving an anxious preteen girl a sword.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

- **Sassafras Saloon** for hosting our fundraising events.
- **The Actor's Company** for allowing the use of their beautiful theatre.
- **Our Donors** for their generosity and their support of our production.
- **Fractured Atlas** for their fiscal sponsorship.
- **Jules Lustenader** for the use of her original song *Rainbow Hour* and her compositions throughout the show.
- **Carina Lim** for the use of her original compositions in the show.
- **Girl in Red** for the use of her song *Watch You Sleep*, covered by Jules Lustenader.

