

Theatre Review: *Romy and Julian*

by Sarah Ben Salem

Romeo and Juliet – when you hear this title you automatically think of the dramatic love story everyone knows about. But then there is *Romy and Julian* and you might think, “Oh, what happened there?” But that’s okay because I will summarise the play for you and then you can form your own opinion.

This modern version of Shakespeare’s classic is about a girl named Romy and a boy named Julian who are completely different. They have different styles, are interested in different things and listen to different music. BUT... and that’s the point: They are in love with each other. So, what will they do? You will see! (If you want to.)

The actors were pretty entertaining, but there were also some really boring scenes. The technical effects used in the play were okay. There was a bit of music and that was it. Personally, I think they could have done a little bit more. But as I said, it was okay. The costumes were exactly as I expected them to be; for me, there was nothing I could criticise about them.

Of course, you should never disregard the audience. The audience was pretty enthusiastic, but at times it seemed as if they were “asleep”. Sometimes there was also some laughter, but nobody sobbed or sniffed during the play. At the end of the play, everyone clapped loudly. But I am not sure if they just clapped out of politeness or because they really enjoyed the play.

In my opinion, the actors did a good job and the play was also very entertaining. I mean there were also some scenes which were really strange, but all in all, it was a good play with some really funny scenes. However, when Julian got in a fight with Al, for example, it was not really that exciting. Personally, I think it was not dramatic enough. Or when Julian’s mum and Romy’s dad were on the pull at parents’ evening – I think that did not really fit in with the rest of the story.

All in all, I would say that if you want to see a new and funny version of *Romeo and Juliet*, then you should go and see *Romy and Julian*, otherwise you should probably avoid this play.

Theatre Review: *Romy and Julian*

by Niklas Grüner

Have you ever wondered what the famous Shakespeare play *Romeo and Juliet* would look like nowadays? Yes? Then this review might help you decide whether you should go and watch the modern-day version of *Romeo and Juliet* or whether you should spend your money on other things.

To begin with: I saw the play *Romy and Julian* on Tuesday, March 13. It was staged by Vienna's English Theatre at Praterstern. The name of the play is a reference to Shakespeare's original *Romeo and Juliet* (if you haven't noticed already). *Romy and Julian* was written by Clive Duncan. It is about a sixteen-year-old boy named Julian and a girl named Romy who is of the same age. Julian is the kind of person who only wears brand-name clothes like Adidas, Nike or Levi's while Romy mostly dresses like a hipster.

At the beginning of the play Julian falls in love with Romy, but soon he realizes that she is a completely different type of person. Most people would say that a hipster and a chav are never ever going to have a romantic relationship with each other, but as the story goes on both of them begin to realize that the style of clothing you wear and the music you listen to are not the only things which define a person's character. In order not to spoil the whole story, I will go on with how the play is actually being brought to the audience.

The stage was mainly just a few chairs and two big walls painted in comic style, which was in my opinion a little too simple. But to be fair the theatre's stage was not one of those big ones you might see in Burgtheater or Volkstheater. It was more about the size of a classroom. The seven or eight characters which appeared in the play were portrayed by only four actors, making the play rather annoying and boring to watch. Although the actors were not bad, the characteristics of each character did not really come to light.

I would also like to say that *Romy and Julian* is not even close to Shakespeare's original version because despite the "fight between hipsters and chavs" (in Shakespeare's play: the fight between the two families) there is not much similarity to *Romeo and Juliet*. No one dies, for example, and there is much less tragedy, drama and hate in the new version *Romy and Julian* than in the original.

Though it was not the greatest play I have ever seen in my life, it was a nice way to learn new English vocabulary which you would never learn in a regular school book.

To end this review: I would not recommend that you watch *Romy and Julian* because there are many other plays which are by far better and more enjoyable to watch.

Theatre Review: *Romy and Julian*

by Clemens Hofstädter

Kitschy and awkward. These two words came into my mind while I was reading the booklet of the play *Romy and Julian* by Clive Duncan. A hipster girl and a chav fall in love with each other. Almost like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, but modern and trying to reach a young audience with words which adults consider to be "cool".

The performance was even worse. The play could have been interesting for the target audience but the actors killed the play. Four actors playing nine characters? Impossible. Even for good actors. The actors portraying Romy and Julian were okay – no more, no less. But the other actors played the different roles as if they were one person and not five.

The lighting never changed, even when it was night, and the background was boring and drab.

When the play finished, I was astonished by the audience's reaction. While I disliked the play, most people seemed to enjoy it.

Altogether, I would not recommend the play *Romy and Julian*, but it might be a good diversion for pupils from day-to-day school life.

Theatre Review: *Romy and Julian*

by David Just

On Tuesday, March 13 I saw *Romy and Julian* by Clive Duncan. I saw the play at Vienna's English Theatre.

Romy and Julian is about a young boy and girl who fall in love with each other, but their lives are completely different. Julian dresses like a chav and likes to play video games; Romy, however, dresses like a hipster and has never seen the point of video games. In the end they leave their "old" personalities behind and are happily together.

During the play I noticed that Richard Blockman (Al, Mr Caple, Ben and Tybalt) did a great job convincingly portraying the different roles. He used his voice and body language very well, especially when he played someone who is very "cool" or aggressive.

The second actor I would like to praise is Emily Panes (Romy). It was very amusing to watch her act upset. She didn't use her body language as well as Richard Blockman but the way she used her voice was brilliant.

Apart from Richard Blockman and Emily Panes, Eben James and Bianca Mulligan did a great job as well. I think it is clear now that I enjoyed the acting very much. However, there is one thing about the whole play that was very disturbing to me. The background didn't change at all – two chairs represented a car and a curtain was supposed to represent a balcony!

Overall, I would rate the play with 2.5 out of 5 stars. With the acting being nearly perfect but the background still being need of improvement, I would recommend this play to people who don't care about the surroundings too much. Even though I would rate the play with 2.5 stars, I still think it was worth 8€ to learn something about the story of Romeo and Juliet.

Theatre Review: *Romy and Julian*

by Tini Lehmann

Everyone is looking for their one and only true love. Having butterflies in your stomach when you see him smile, holding hands while strolling down the street and ending up in the park. Afterwards, you are having a romantic dinner at McDonald's and then spooning a scoop of ice cream. But when you look at the display of your phone, you realise how time has just flown by. He is a gentleman and therefore he escorts you home. There you are. Standing in front of your house, smiling shyly at each other and you start getting nervous. Will he make the first move? You close your eyes and feel your heart lurch to a sudden stop.

But this is not the way it happened in the story of *Romy and Julian*...

As you might be wondering, *Romy and Julian* is a modern version of Shakespeare's all-time classic *Romeo and Juliet*, which my class went to see on Tuesday, the 13th of March at Vienna's English Theatre. Shakespeare wrote the most well-known tragic tale about two lovers divided by injustice, prejudice and their violent warring families. Although that might sound pretty good, in the case of *Romy and Julian* it is the complete opposite. Like Brian once said, "Life's a piece of sh**", when you look at it." True words spoken. It is unbelievable how a great piece of art can turn into a true disappointment. But let me explain my anger in more detail.

As I mentioned before, we went to see the play *Romy and Julian* on Tuesday, the 13th of March at Vienna's English Theatre. I have already seen another play at this theatre, which was called *Rob and the Hoodies* (based on Robin Hood) and which I pretty much liked in fact. It was funny and had something special that a school play needs, which I clearly missed in *Romy and Julian*. Basically, the story is about two teenagers who meet at a school play and fall in love with each other. But when they meet again, in normal clothes, they realise they have nothing in common and many problems arise. The actors tried to express the problems teens have to deal with, but failed miserably. Julian's obsession with brand-name clothes was completely overdone and unfortunately the play mainly focused on this aspect. I really wished for something more important that separated the two than clothes. It seemed ridiculous to get so upset about the style of your girlfriend/boyfriend because if you consider being in a relationship with someone, you then have to think whether you can stand them or not. Something like clothes should not change your mind.

Even though the story is more something for toddlers, the actors did a pretty good job. In total, there were four actors. The actors of Julia and Romy only played their roles. In addition, there was also an actress who played Sara, Julian's mother and the PR Manager of Wiley. The actor who played Ben also portrayed Mr Caple and Al. I did not like Ben as much as Julian but the actress of Sara was the worst in my opinion. Her squeaky high voice and her unpleasant way annoyed me. I have to admit that the role of Sara was more overweening than loveable, but she played her other roles as cockily as she played Sara. However, Romy was cordiality personified. She knew her strengths and was quick-witted as well as eloquent. Besides that, being big-hearted and empathic clearly were traits of hers. Then there was the actor of Julian, probably the most enthusiastic one. He embodied the character's arrogance and brand fixation perfectly. His strong voice fit well in louder scenes, like the one where he got into a huge fight with Al. For some reason, I nevertheless think that he and the actress portraying Romy would make a really cute couple. I do not know why but I guess it is because I am a girl and I like romances. All of the actors used their bodies wisely and expressed the feelings of their characters convincingly.

Then there were the props; well at least they should have been there. I do not know what you expect of props, but when it comes to me, actual props, like changing scenery and windows for the garden scene

or a car, pop into my mind. I wished for more than just four chairs and one curtain, but I am not that upset about the missing props but more about the one scenery that always remained the same. I really felt uncomfortable with only one background. It gave me the wrong impression and as a result I could not really project myself into the situation when there always were these overwhelming logos in the back. That is the only thing I can criticise because I did not mind the missing props that much. Nevertheless, the few technical effects of the play were not better. The light was basically just a bright white light. Every so often there was music between the individual scenes and I cannot really criticise that because some songs were really catchy.

Finally, I would like to comment on the play's end. I actually really liked it. It evoked the previously missing feelings and every girl in the audience screamed. The end was literally the best part of the play, but unfortunately, it could not save it.

All in all, I would not say that *Romy and Julian* is worth going to the theatre and watching the play. But for missing a few classes, it is perfect! So even though you might decide to watch the play, please remember, "Always look on the bright side of life!"

Theatre Review: *Romy and Julian*

by Rosi Reitzig

Do you know the new version of *Romeo and Juliet*? On Tuesday, March 13 I saw a theatre play called *Romy and Julian* by Clive Duncan at Vienna's English Theatre.

This play is a modern reinterpretation of the classic *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. It should appeal especially to the younger generation. It's about a girl, Romy, and a boy called Julian who fall in love with each other despite complicated circumstances. Julian gets to know Romy through an unintentional visit to the theatre. They like each other from the start. But how life goes, there are many differences and problems between Romy and Julian. Of course, I'm not going to tell you how the play ends, but you may be wondering if the play has an unhappy ending just like Shakespeare's original.

During the play I very much enjoyed the performance of the actor who played Ben, Mr Caple, Al and Tybalt. I liked him the most because he had a very demanding role since he had to portray four different people. He lent credence to each of his roles. I also liked the actor who played Julian. Julian could show his feelings very well.

However, I wasn't very impressed with the technical aspects of the play. The set was very simple and for props there were only two chairs, but the costumes worked rather well. Other than that, there were no special effects or anything else.

Overall, I have to say that the play wasn't very exciting and rather boring, but the end did appeal to me.

Theatre Review:

***Romy and Julian* – not everyone will like it**

by Lisa Welt

Romy and Julian
Vienna's English Theatre
13th March 2018

These days, everything is customised for a specific target group. Think of *Cinderella* shampoos or *Spiderman* toothbrushes. But is there a need to restage a classic like *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare in the reality of a 2018 teenager's life – at least how adults imagine it? Many people I know don't think so, but I have to admit that I'm personally a fan of rewritten fairy tales set in the present. However, whether a play is good or not depends on many factors, such as the story, the actors, the stage set, the technical effects and many others, but today I will limit my review to these four aspects.

Firstly, the story. A play needs a story and it should be a creative, interesting and unique one. I would not describe a production of *Romeo and Juliet* as unique or very creative, but that's different with *Romy and Julian*. Setting up a new story with the elements of a 400-year-old story may seem easy at first glance, but I think the producers worked hard on creating it. Two lovers, but their families are fighting; two lovers, but their styles are as different as can be. Both differences have a high potential for conflict, which is exhausted in both stories. Will there be a happy ending? Surprise, surprise, William Shakespeare, the author of *Romeo and Juliet*, didn't let them live happily ever after (featuring a lot of blood and murder). But will Romy – a Hipster – and Julian – a Chav – overcome their diversity, do they even have to overcome it?

Acting is art and we never know if the actor exactly meant to act in a way the audience disliked or didn't mean to. Therefore, I can only review this from my own point of view. What I was mostly surprised by was the fact that there were only four actors. They all had many different roles to play and did very well, but there were big differences between their acting. In some scenes they were obviously overacting and then – scene change – there weren't any emotions anymore. It also caught my attention very fast that the actors definitely had preferred roles. It sometimes felt like they were just reciting their texts, hoping it would be over soon. But all in all, they did a good job and their pronunciation was easy to understand.

There are fancy stages with different sets for every scene and there is the stage set of *Romy and Julian*. Two chairs, two banners in pink and blue on the left and on the right side and a wall divided in two sections by lighting. The two parts of the wall were both covered with different posters to visualise Romy's and Julian's contrasting styles.

Notable technical effects were very hard to find – except for the songs that were played at the end of every scene. The light hardly ever changed. But I feel like it was a bit orangey so it looked “warm”.

To sum up, I liked the idea of the story but I think the conflict between the main characters' styles was overexaggerated and it didn't fit well with reality. I liked the performance of the actors but it was not extremely stunning. I would rate the play with 3 out of 5 friendly stars because I wasn't very impressed. If you like overdramatised but nevertheless cute and a little bit heart-warming plays, I'd recommend you watch it. If you don't, but want to know how the story ends, I suggest you google it.