

Nothing embodies passionate and absolute love than the story of Romeo and Juliet; two teenagers whose lives and love are destroyed by their feuding families. This play has become a myth: one does not require words to understand it and one would understand the play without understanding a word. This is especially true of TNT Britain's current production: the original Shakespearean language is so finely tuned, emotive and compelling that the audience could have closed their eyes and still would have been able to follow both the story and its themes.

There was a full house in the main auditorium of Munster's Stadt Theater. The audience, including many young people, literally stormed into the theatre. The myth of "Romeo and Juliet" excites this response, and the production duly satisfied a visceral need in the modern audience. The staging was simple and effective: a couple of pillars, a curtain, two moveable walls and a few wooden boxes served as the various stage settings for the English ensemble. Each of the seven actors played multiple roles managing to change from one major character into another in just a matter of seconds, all of which mirrors the conventions of Tudor theatre.

This was not a modernist take on the play but a performance that focused on clarity, on language and gesture and which, especially in the first half of the evening, made thrilling switches from tragedy to comedy, where scurrilous and bawdy wit powered the production – just as it does in Shakespeare's original. So began an evening that managed to explore both the full depth of the text while engaging the imagination of the audience – a delicate balance.

It was an evening of almost breathless theatrical magic: as actors and even theatrical style switched in an instant: Natalia Campbell appeared on stage as the Ruler of Verona in one scene only to shamle on stage as the nurse in the next scene. Richard Croughan portrayed the characters of Mercutio and Paris and David Chittenden played the role of the patriarch Capulet as well as Romeo's friend Benvolio. Even Dan Wilder (Romeo) and Rachel Lynes (Juliet) took the roles of masked statues when they were not busy yearning for each other - which they did with enchanting youthfulness.

Overall, the great attraction of the production was the performance of the actors, who took the stage by storm; juggling their different roles and switching from speech to song with agility. The acting was so natural that one could almost feel the action were improvised. Credit then to the director, Paul Stebbings, who managed to prove that true love exists at least in the world of theatre. And fortunate for us that world class theatre comes to our stage, which the audience acknowledged with a standing ovation.