

Shakespeare

Falling in Love

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Becoming a Shakespearean actor

I'm not sure when it originally began. I just have this feeling of always wanting to perform. When I was young I would put on little shows for my family, you know, in my home. And I just loved the idea of telling stories and that was the joy of it. And Shakespeare wasn't someone that I necessarily knew about that much. I'd heard his name before but I didn't know what his plays were about particularly. And then as I got to school I then was introduced to Shakespeare.

Playing Juliet

The first time I got to play and be in *Romeo and Juliet*, I played Juliet at the Bolton Octagon which is a theatre in the north of England. It was in the round, the audience were all around us and it was set in Italy. And we were rich youth of Italy and that was kind of the scene. And I enjoyed it so much, I loved playing Juliet, but unfortunately it was a really short run. We did about three weeks. And so a couple of years later I got the opportunity to play Juliet again. I jumped at the chance. I wasn't ready to finish with her. I wanted to kind of have that again, and also the chance to play in London and to play Juliet on The Globe stage, which is where this play was originally written for. You know, there was already the balcony built in to the theatre for that scene. We were performing it mainly for teenagers. And so the teenagers are there seeing teenagers on stage which I found fantastic. We were up there representing them in a way. And we were dressed like them. There were scenes where I was in school uniform and a lot of the audience were in school uniform as well. And it just meant that they could really follow. I think *Romeo and Juliet* is so good for young people because they can really follow the story. These are situations that they can find themselves in as well. Especially the idea of falling in love for the first time or seeing people that you fancy. Or the situations with your parents. And what I love about performing *Romeo and Juliet* is, especially to young people, or to people who maybe have never been to the theatre before, is that when you ask a question as your character we often got an actual response from the audience. And they really invest in *Romeo and Juliet*, I think. And even though you may know what's going to happen – most people who watch it do know the fate of Romeo and Juliet – they still kind of go on the ride with them. They still have the joy of them falling in love. And they feel that and they go through that. And then it's so heartbreaking at the end.

What do you like about Shakespeare?

When I started actually speaking Shakespeare's words out loud I did find a love for it. I love how Shakespeare made up words sometimes. When he couldn't find the right word to make sense of what he was trying to say. And also of course sometimes he writes in rhyme and so he needed to make up a word that would fit the rhyme. And I really liked that about it. I like the poetry of it. And also the fact that his stories were quite vivid and exciting. And what people go through, especially like in *Romeo and Juliet*. These are two young people, 14, around that age. And they have such an amazing, tragic, but such an exciting kind of few days. And what a kind of joy to read that as a teenager yourself.