



INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. PRESENTS  
A PUNK FAIRY TALE adaptation of

# ROMEO & JULIET

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Melissa Chalsma

*Limited Engagement Opens Friday, July 3  
at the Old Zoo in Griffith Park!*

June 12, 2-15...Los Angeles...This summer INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. presents its imaginative and soul-stirring take on the most famous love story of all time, Shakespeare's **ROMEO & JULIET**, directed by Independent Shakespeare Co.'s Artistic Director Melissa Chalsma. **ROMEO & JULIET** will begin previews at THE GRIFFITH PARK FREE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL on Thursday, June 25 at 7pm and will open on Friday July 3 at 7:00pm and perform through Sunday, July 26 at the Old Zoo in Griffith Park. All ISC Summer Shakespeare productions are FREE to the public! **ROMEO & JULIET** is the first of two productions being presented at this year's GRIFFITH PARK FREE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL. **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** will play July 30 – August 30.

Adolescent bliss spins out of control in this imaginative and surprising staging of the most famous love story ever told. This new adaptation incorporates an original rock score and design that is equal parts fairy tale and punk. Erika Soto and Nikhil Pai (in the title roles) lead a cast of Independent Shakespeare Co.'s most popular performers. They combine the textual clarity ISC is known for with a passionate and athletic physicality to create a Romeo and Juliet that explodes off the Griffith Park stage.

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Comments Independent Shakespeare Co.'s Artistic Director, Melissa Chalsma, "Romeo and Juliet is an incredibly fast-paced play, painting an extraordinary depiction of glorious impulsiveness as well as harrowing consequences. Unique among Shakespeare's tragedies, it is peppered throughout with indelible comic characters and deeply joyous situations. For its young protagonists, hope seems always within reach, despite all evidence to the contrary. It's incredible to explore the youthful and desperate hearts that are the center of the play. In our production, that means devising a contemporary yet fantastical aesthetic for the set and costumes, and creating original, live, rock music as the score of the production. We can't wait to share it with our audience!"

### ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM AND CAST

**MELISSA CHALSMA** (Director) is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Independent Shakespeare Co. (ISC). Under her leadership, along with co-founder David Melville, the company created the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival, which has grown into the largest theater event of its kind in Los Angeles. In 2015, ISC received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle's highest honor, the Margaret Harford Award for sustained excellence in theater. She directs and acts in many ISC productions. ISC roles include Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (as well as directing), Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*. As director: Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Hamlet*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Two Gentleman of Verona*. She has performed in theaters across the country, on Broadway (including the American premiere of Harold Pinter's *Moonlight* with Jason Robards, Blythe Danner, and Liev Schreiber), and in the UK.

In her ten years as a college faculty member she taught at Moorpark College, Pepperdine University, and California State University, Northridge. Drawing on her experience as an educator, she has guided the company in the development of educational programming for schools, as well as workshops directed toward families that take place before performances in Griffith Park.

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The cast of **ROMEO & JULIET** will feature: Joseph Culliton, Thomas Ehas, William Elsman, Mary Goodchild, Faqir Hassan, Aisha Kabia, Jack Lancaster, André Martin, David Melville, Xavi Moreno, Vladimir Noel, Ashley Nguyen, Nikhil Pai, Sean Pritchett, Evan Lewis Smith, Erika Soto and Bernadette Sullivan.

Season Production Design is by Caitlin Lainoff. Season Lighting Design is by Bosco Flanagan. Costume Design is by Houri Mahserejian. Composers are David Melville and Ashley Nguyen.

### **SCHEDULE AND PRICING**

**ROMEO & JULIET** will preview on Thursday, June 25 at 7:00pm and will open on Friday, July 3 at 7:00pm and perform through Sunday, July 26 at the Old Zoo in Griffith Park. All ISC Summer Shakespeare productions are FREE to the public. For more information, please call (818) 710-6306 or online at [www.iscla.org](http://www.iscla.org)

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For more information, photos, press interviews or for press comps please contact David Elzer/DEMAND PR at 818-508-1754 or at [davidelzer@me.com](mailto:davidelzer@me.com)

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*INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. (ISC) was founded in 1998. We have been producing accessible, imaginative performances of classical plays since that time. We are the 2015 recipients of the LA Drama Critics Circle's highest honor, the Margaret Harford Award for sustained excellence in theater. Our first performances were located on the Lower East Side of New York City. The stripped down production style of our early productions enabled us to travel easily and we quickly found ourselves touring Europe, ending with an invitation to perform our production of Macbeth for four weeks at The King's Head Theatre in London. In 2001 we relocated to Los Angeles and -- with the support of the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Department of Cultural Affairs -- founded Free Shakespeare in Barnsdall Park, in 2004. Because of audience demand, in 2010 we moved to the significantly larger venue at the Old Zoo and re-christened the summer season the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival. The growth in attendance is extraordinary: our first season played to fewer than 1,000 people; by 2014 over 45,500 people came to Griffith Park for 40 nights of free classical theater productions. In 2012, we expanded our offerings with our indoor performance space, Independent Co. Studio where we present original work, re-imagined stagings of classics, readings and classes. For more information call 818-710-6306 or visit [www.iscla.org](http://www.iscla.org).*

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## Calendar Listing:

THE GRIFFITH PARK FREE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL  
PRESENTS

## ROMEO & JULIET

Directed by Melissa Chalsma

OPENS FRIDAY, JULY 3 THROUGH SUNDAY, JULY 26!

ALL PERFORMANCES ARE AT 7PM!

Previews are:

Thursday, June 25

Friday, June 26

Saturday, June 27

Sunday, June 28

Thursday, July 2

OPENING/PRESS NIGHT: Friday, July 3 at 7pm

Performance dates:

Sunday, July 5

Thursday, July 9

Friday, July 10

Saturday, July 11

Sunday, July 12

Thursday, July 16

Friday, July 17

Saturday, July 18

Sunday, July 19

Wednesday, July 22

Thursday, July 23

Friday, July 24

Saturday, July 25

Sunday, July 26

Note: no performance July 4

Directions to the Old Zoo at Griffith Park are also available on the website.  
Free, ample lot and street parking.

For information please call (818) 710-6306 or online at [www.iscla.org](http://www.iscla.org)