The test of any production of Shakespeare is whether it sells the language. Can the actors hack the verbal gymnastics — the linguistic pommel horse and high bar — required by the mix of poetry and pedantry? Sadly, in the case of the RSC’s latest take on Romeo and Juliet, the answer is a big no.

It’s almost immaterial whether you buy into the director Erica Whyman’s decision to lay her scene in present-day England, somewhere up north, and to make some of the male roles female, including Mercutio (a swaggering Charlotte Josephine). With the words underserved, you’re left with a tale of two green teens (Bally Gill and Karen Fishwick) who decide to marry moments after meeting and are destroyed by a series of increasingly implausible contrivances. Some saving grace comes from Fishwick’s spirited Juliet-next-door. She seems to know what she’s saying and what’s being said to her. The scene in which her dishevelled, chauvinist father (Michael Hodgson) dumps the Bard’s insult bucket over her (“Out, you green-sickness carrion! Out, you baggage! You tallow-face!”) is a highlight.