

Thematic Message/Conceptual Statement by Clove Love, Director

Acceptance, Love, Kindness, Freedom

All things **Romeo** and **Juliet** sought to bring to their families lives. They had the embryonic union of two families, whose **feud** is as old as time, thrust on them at seventeen years old. The **weight** of this shattering **R+J**'s **hopes** and **dreams** of a **happy marriage**, with **family** and **friends** present, existing in **harmony**, rather than breaking out into **fights** and **killing** each other. Instead, **Capulet**'s eagerness to resolve their **financial troubles** and **Montagues**' hatred of **Capulet**'s mooching tendencies that they literally just **made up** in their heads cause they're **snobs** results in the **arranged marriage** between **Juliet**, our **diamond**, and **Paris**, a **rich** consul and **future** Governor of Verona, NY.

Freedom; something **Juliet** craves, pulls her towards her **destiny**, her **love**; **Romeo**.

Love. Something **Romeo** is after no matter what, even in **death**.

But without the **acceptance** of the people around them, how can **harmony** exist?

Without **kindness** in people's **hearts**, how can a **society** be **whole**?

Acceptance, Love, Kindness, Freedom – These are all things that our **society** could use today in these particularly **dark times**. Times where people don't know if they'll be able to **live as themselves** in 4 years time, **marry** who they love, or have **families** of their own choice. It's **devastating**, watching **my rights** be **stripped** away. And yes I still walk around **knowing** who I am, but to be **forced** to hold that within me and put on this **mask** of someone I know I'm not...it's **gruesome**. I can't imagine how other queer people are feeling right now.

But I do know that in **community** we are **stronger**. In **community** we can send messages that can **change the world**. These teenagers did not get the **freedom** to choose their own **future** and it led them to **revolt** in a tragic way. We are watching **history repeat** itself. We are **standing by** as **history repeats** itself. Are we **complicit**, as the **Capulets** and **Montagues** are for the **deaths** of their **beloved** children?

Or are we **activists**?

Art allows us to use our **voices** and **speak up** about what really matters. **Freedom** is being **taken away**. **Acceptance** is being squashed by **bigotry**. But **Kindness** can be found in **community**. **Love** can **change hearts** and **minds**. And **art** can **change the world**. Queer people deserve to **exist** loudly, **take up space**, and make **world changing art**.

And just watch how good we look doing it, too.