

Theatre through the Ages

ELIZABETHAN THEATRE



SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATRE



Reconstruction of the Globe Theatre as it would have appeared in the late 16th century. The illustration is based on the evidence of the 1596-7 inventory of the Swan Theatre, the 1596-7 inventory of the Swan Theatre, the 1596-7 inventory of the Swan Theatre, the 1596-7 inventory of the Swan Theatre.



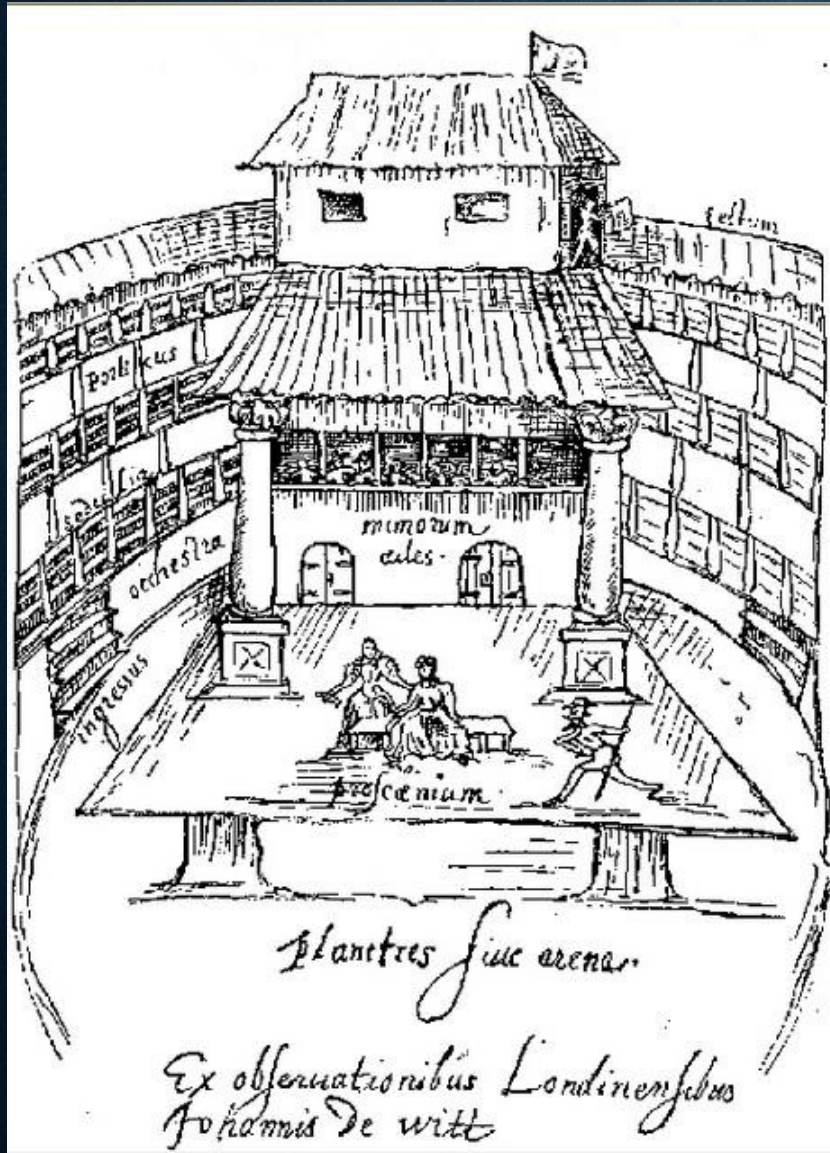
Queen Elizabeth 1st (played by
Judy Dench)



The new built Globe Theatre in London –
Based on the original as accurately as possible.

**THEATRES WERE BUILT ON
THE NORTH BANK OF THE
THAMES – IN A RATHER
LAWLESS AREA OF LONDON.**





The flag was raised & a trumpet played to announce the play was about to start

THE THEATRE WAS A FASHIONABLE PLACE TO GO – WHICH ENCOURAGES PICKPOCKETS & OTHER CRIMINALS TO TRY THEIR LUCK!



**THE AUDIENCE WAS A MIXTURE OF
THE VERY RICH AND THE VERY POOR**



LADIES HAD TO BEWARE OF THIEVES



ACTORS WERE ALL MALE AND MANY WERE THE SONS & GRANDSONS OF ACTORS





A few theatres were indoors – as shown in the film ‘Shakespeare in Love’. Allowing actors to work in the winter months



Actors wore
contemporary
costume some of
it donated by
their wealthy
patrons





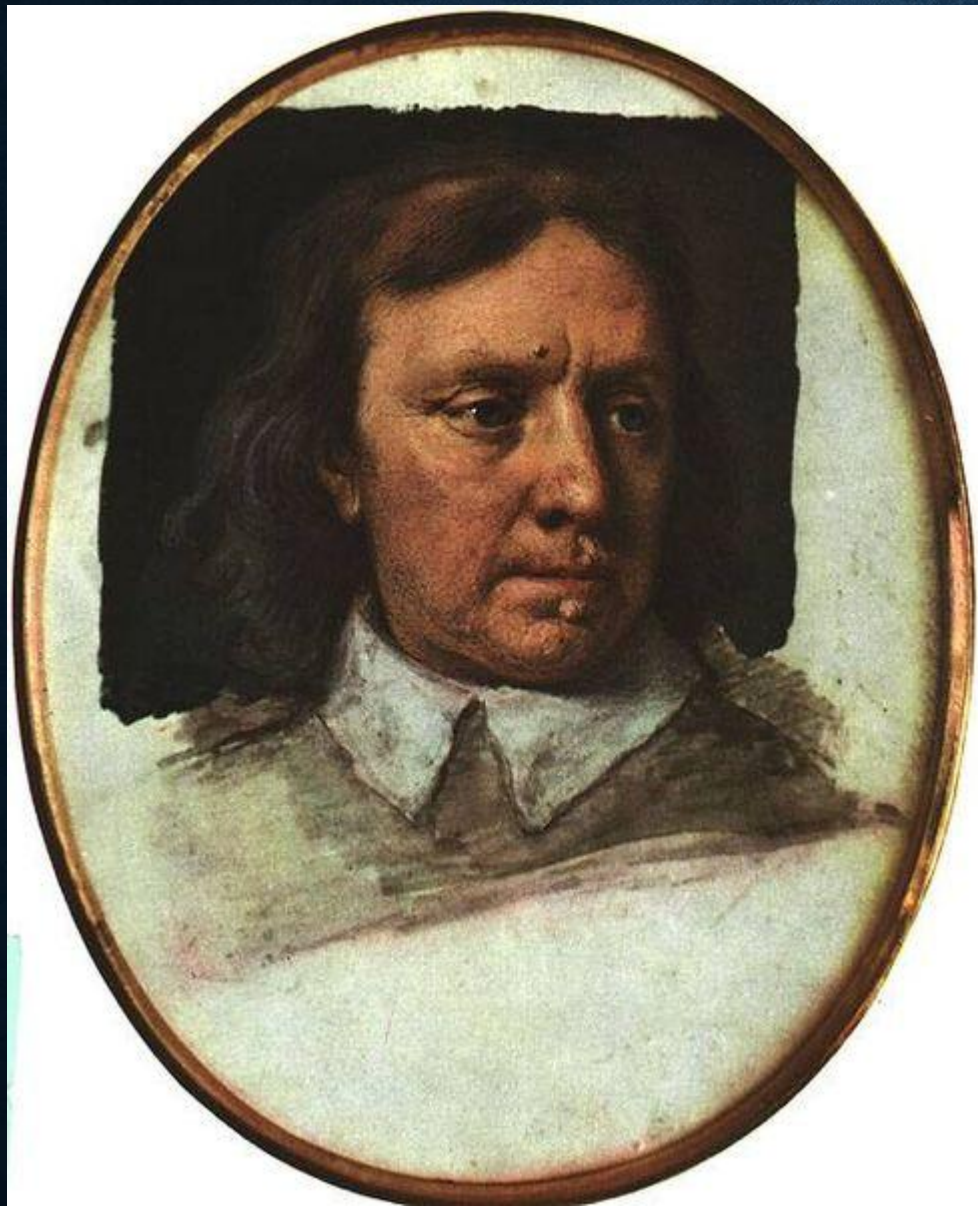
The modern globe – showing the apron stage, balconies & modern 'groundlings'.



RESTORATION THEATRE



Charles 2nd was
'restored' to the
throne after the
Civil War. His
father had been
executed and
he had spent
most of his
youth abroad.



- During the rule of Thomas Cromwell all theatres had been shut – as they were ‘ungodly’ and thought to encourage vice and sin.

DURING THE COMMONWEALTH (WHEN THERE HAD BEEN NO KING) THEATRE, MUSIC AND DANCE HAD BEEN FORBIDDEN AS SINFUL.



KING CHARLES LOVED ALL THE THINGS THAT THE PURITANS THOUGHT SINFUL AND UNGODLY. HE REOPENED THE THEATRES & ALLOWED ACTRESSES FOR THE 1ST TIME IN BRITAIN.





Nell Gwyn –
one of the
king's
mistresses,
started off as
an orange
seller at the
theatre

Plays were performed in the afternoon – in dimly lit theatres. The actors had to fight to be heard over the audience and it was not unusual for the audience to riot if they disliked the play.





If a play was set in the past, the actors might wear something vaguely historic on top of their ordinary dress.

This is meant to be a Roman heroine...



The audience loved love stories and tragedies, but the style of acting was very exaggerated. Actors (especially actresses) had a bad reputation.



Actors still wore contemporary fashions – often competing with the audience for outrageousness.

18TH CENTURY (GEORGIAN THEATRE)



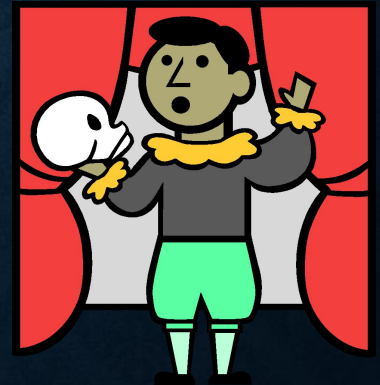
David Garrick playing the part of Hamlet

THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON GEORGIAN THEATRE WAS DAVID GARRICK. HE WAS AN ACTOR AND A MANAGER – SO HE HAD LOTS OF CONTROL.



GARRICK WASN'T HAPPY THAT THEATRE HAD SUCH A BAD REPUTATION AND HE SET ABOUT REFORMING IT FROM WITHIN.

- He insisted that his actors turned up for rehearsals!
- That they turned up for performances on time and not drunk!
- He tried to get the prostitutes off the stage and made sure that his actresses were respectable women.



HE ALSO HAD A GO AT IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE AUDIENCE:

- He stopped people leaving half way through – and selling their tickets to other people.
- He improved the stage lighting, so the audience could see what was happening.
- He provided benches for the ‘pit’ so everyone sat down.
- He brought Shakespeare’s plays back to the stage.
- He introduced a more natural way of acting.

ACTRESSES BECAME MORE RESPECTABLE



An 18th century theatre



VICTORIAN THEATRE



Queen Victoria
ruled for over
70 years.

During this time
there were
many social
changes.



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'At Astley's Theatre' (*The Old Curiosity Shop*)

Theatre was still popular with the whole population.



Engraved & Published by George Smeath

11, Spadina Street, London

Pit Boxes & Gallery -



Theatres were still places to meet friends & socialise
– especially if you could afford a box.

The Alhambra
Theatre in
Bradford was
built at the
turn of the
20th century.





Victorians liked happy fairytale endings and the sets and costumes were often rich and decorative.



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TALES FROM
SHAKESPEARE

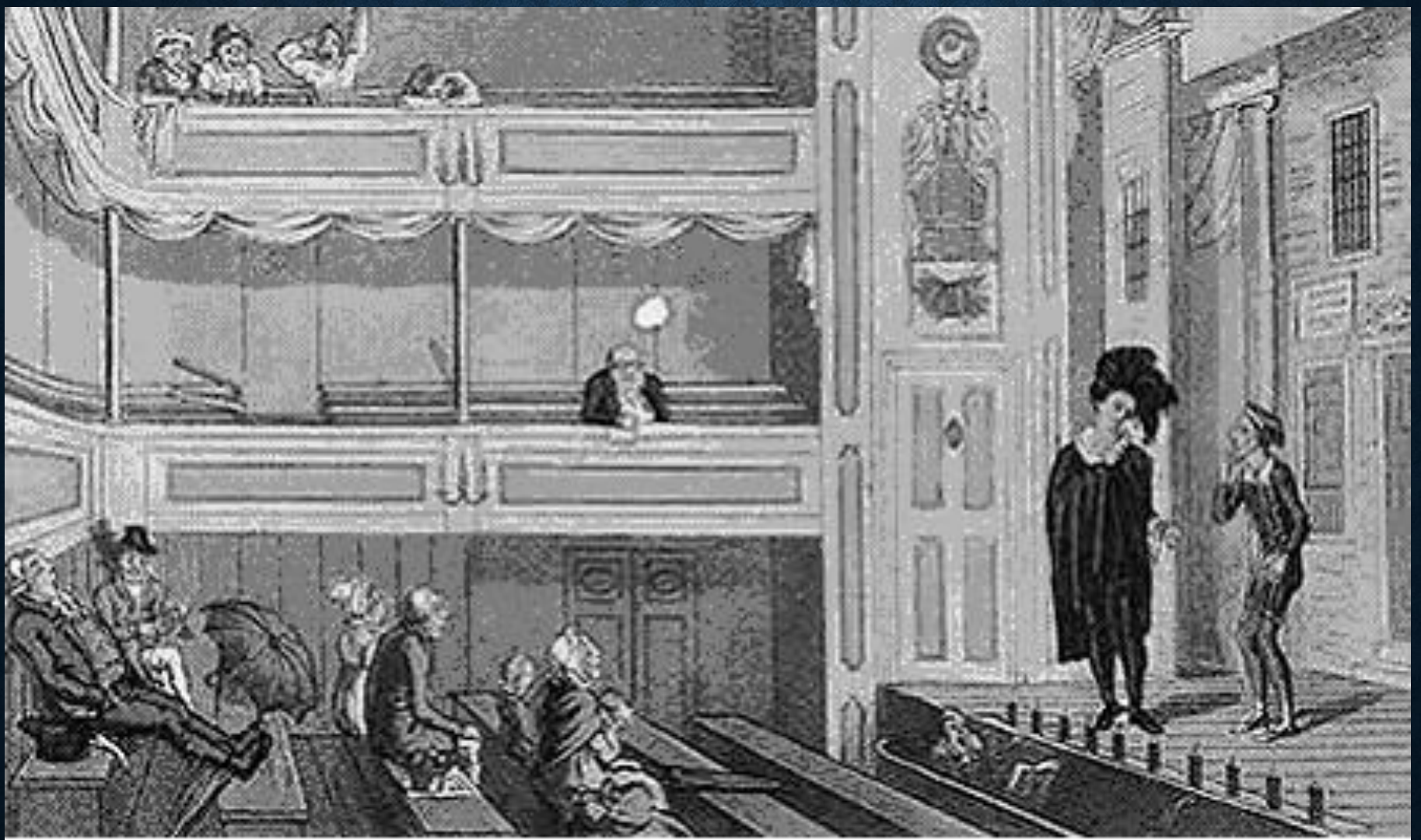


CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

The Victorians found some of Shakespeare's plays and language rather rough and vulgar. They censored some of the plays making them more suitable for a Victorian audience.

Stages were more set back from the audience





Theatre was meant to be 'improving' and educational – rather than earthy & real!



Romeo and Juliet
was performed in a
highly sentimental
way – often with
complex scenery
and many ‘extras’.

ROMEO AND JULIET

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"PHOTOGRAPH"
SERIES

JULIA MARLOWE AND E.H. SOTHERN
IN "ROMEO AND JULIET"



The Victorians found the tragedy in Shakespeare's plays too savage.

20th

Century

British

Theatre



H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II



The Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, built in the 1920's was very modern at the time.

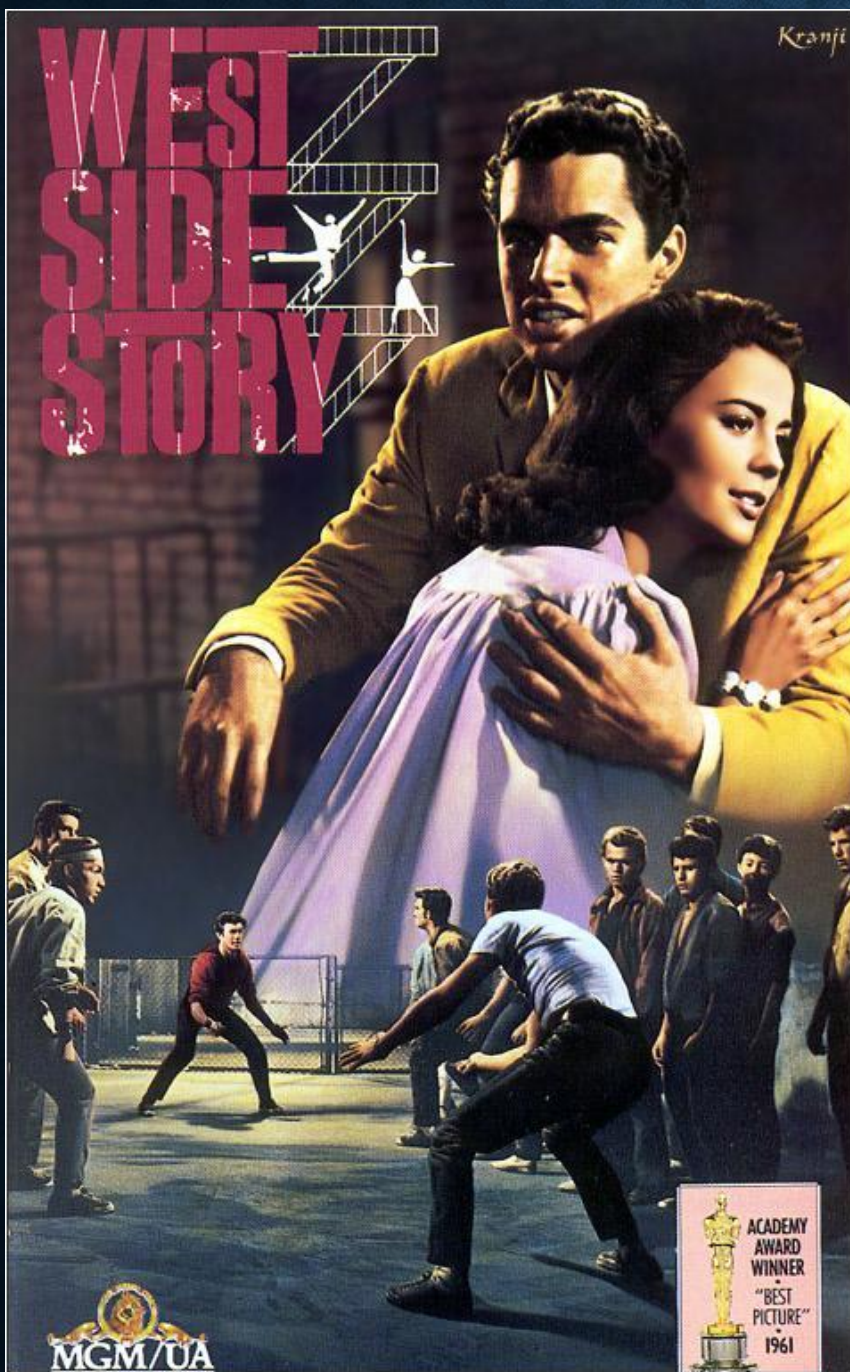


The audience was much closer to the stage.



20th century productions tried to relate Shakespeare's plays to the modern audience –which some theatre goers still find disturbing!





The musical 'West Side Story' which was made into a major film reinterpreted the play for a modern audience.





The death scene was changed to Romeo being stabbed in the street – Juliet surviving.

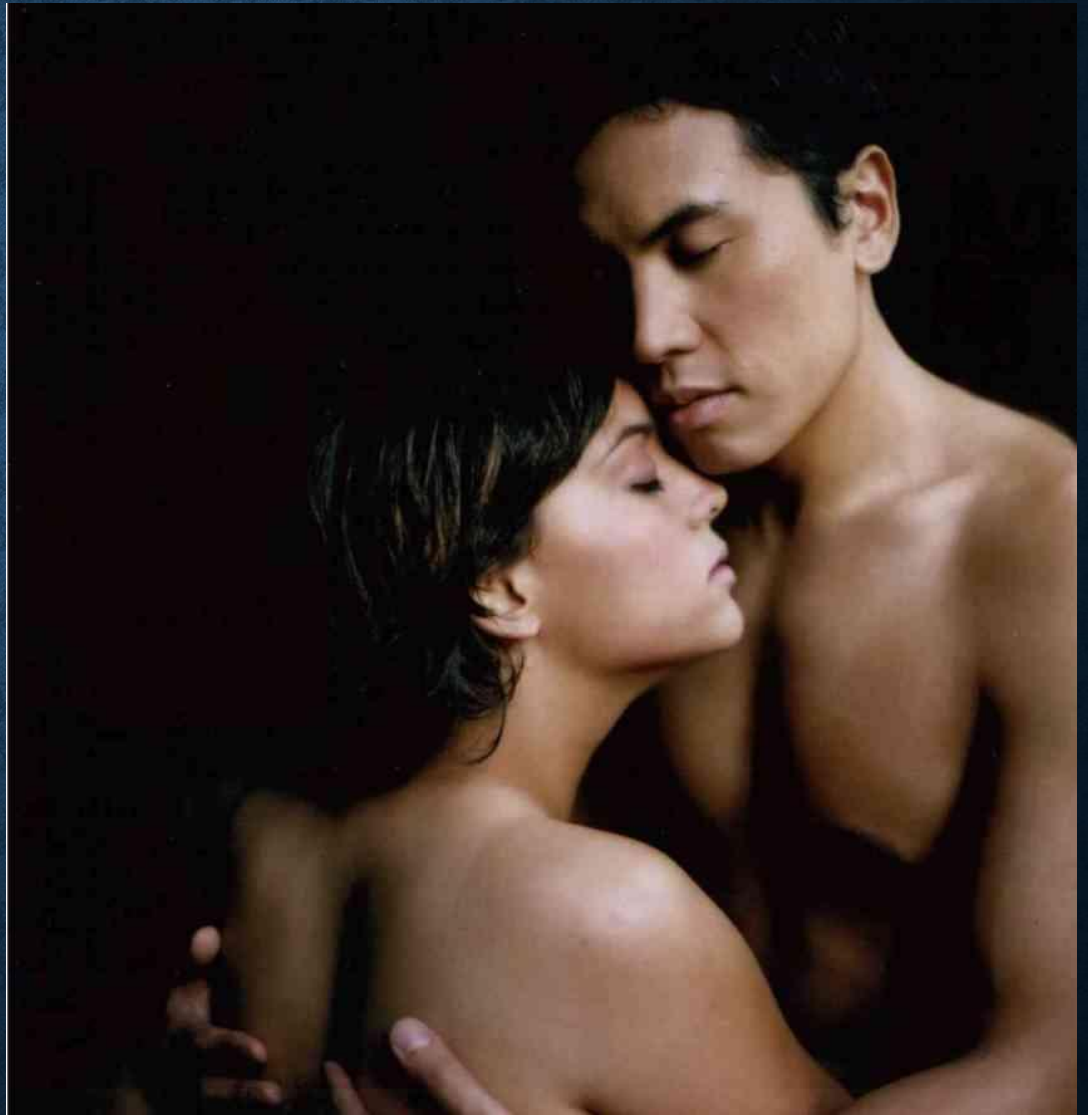
Romeo & Juliet



Franco Zaferelli directed a film version of the play in the 1960s. He used actual Italian locations & believably young actors. The film was a huge hit with a wide audience unfamiliar with Shakespeare.



Directors in the 20th century tried to make the play relevant to modern audiences. Romeo & Juliet were kept apart by racial & cultural barriers – issues that modern audiences can relate to.





Baz Luhrmann's 1996 version starred Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes.



The action was transferred to a modern version of reality, with mafia-style families vying for power.

Again, the film was very popular with people who would not normally go to the theatre.