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# An all-female *Romeo Juliet* musical

Students of St Mira's College for Girls are all set to present a modern-day adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

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William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, is a timeless love story because it appeals to many of our romantic sensibilities. It is the perfect amalgamation of love, passion, commitment, and tragedy. Despite being such an age-old story, it still has a major impact on the younger and older demographics. St Mira's College for Girls, Koregaon Park is now bringing to you this romantic story in a musical. The modern-day adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* includes an 'All Girl' cast.

## MODERN-DAY TAKE

Women were not allowed to act in Shakespeare's plays back in the Elizabethan era. The female roles were also played by males. Contradicting that, the students came up with a completely new version of *Romeo and Juliet* where not just one or two but 100 plus girls will be performing together.

Talking about the idea of this musical, Professor Snober Satarawala, who has written the script, said, "Our students have *Romeo and Juliet* in their syllabus and hence, to make it easier for them to understand, we just planned to make the students perform this play. Initially, it was more of an in-house thing. But day by day, it got greater and grander. Students wanted to make it big, so we incorporated dance, drama, music, and aesthetics and made it a modern-day *Romeo and Juliet* musical. My colleague Professor Suhaile Azavedo and I have done all the grunge work. We have been spending one hour every day with the students and at the rehearsals for the past three months. This musical is not going to be the *Romeo and Juliet* we have read and taught. In fact, the ending of

the play isn't what we have read."

Azavedo added, "No matter what, at the end of the day, we are teachers, hence we can't work on the play technicalities like entry, exit, positions, body language etc, therefore we got in touch with Hina Siddiqui, who is the director of the play. She added a lot to the play, polished the script, twisted it and brought so much more to the play."

## AN ALL-GIRL CAST

Can one imagine the character of Romeo being played by a female?



Well tables have turned now. "Being a girl and then romancing a girl who is a very good friend of mine was really weird initially. Acting like a man is still manageable but feeling like a man is a little tricky. But day by day, it is getting better," said Jake S Thomas, who is playing the role of Romeo.

"It feels great to get all the attention and love," said Iris Lobo, who is playing the character of Juliet, adding, "Playing the character is pret-

ty thrilling. Juliet's character in this play is very different from the way it has been portrayed in Shakespeare's original play. She is a sassy, feisty woman which is what I am in real life, therefore, I don't really have to act much."

## SINGERS AND DANCERS

A musical is impossible without singers and dancers. There are a total of 32 students who are singers and musicians. And there are 40 student dancers. "None of us is a professional singer. We have been practising for the past three months. The entire credit goes to our teacher Roma Das, who taught us so well. She was really patient and calm while handling all 32 girls at once," said Tanisha, member of the choir.

"I aspire to be a dancer, hence this is a great opportunity for me. A musical is a blend of many art forms and I am glad to be a part of it. We are performing on some really peppy numbers like *Swalla* and *Single ladies*. So basically, we are going to have a blast on stage and the credit goes to our choreographer Swapniel Desai. We were awful when we started but what we are now is completely because of him," said Mrinal Desai, member of the dance group.

Apart from music and dance, there's aesthetics; there are no sets for this play. Instead, there is an LED background which will flash artwork done by students. The backgrounds are designed according to the scenes in the play. Effects and animation will be added to it.

## ST READER SERVICE

The *Romeo and Juliet* musical will be held on December 22, at St Mira's College Auditorium, 6 pm onwards