

Matthew McLaughlin

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Section 4

Theater: *Romeo and Juliet*

Jesuit High School's interpretation of the play *Romeo and Juliet*, under the guidance and direction of Ed Trafton, displays an interesting ethnic twist on this classic, dramatic, and intriguing romance story crafted by the literary genius William Shakespeare, arguably one of the best writers and dramatists of all time in the English language. The play itself ultimately revolves around the two universal themes of love and hatred, which both interact and conjointly affect the protagonists, Romeo and Juliet, as their relationship develops throughout the play. Nevertheless, the play still endorses the superiority of love and compassion above all, despite the vast extent of intrinsic wickedness and evil in human society, for it is only through the excessively selfless deaths of Romeo and Juliet as expressions of their devotion to each other that the Montagues, Romeo's family, and the Capulets, Juliet's family, come together in unity and mutual agreement. Clearly, by the end of the play, love has triumphed over hatred and malevolence through the form of these two beautiful yet tragic deaths, sending both an inspirational and poetic message to the audience. The play not only poetically suggests the inherent goodness and selflessness of mankind, but it also implies the feasibility of genuine, intimate, and everlasting commitment between two human beings. In an ever so increasing artificial and shallow society, in which people desire pleasure and immediate gratification, the formation of this kind of devotional love seems to be more and more futile; nevertheless, this play at least remains poetic because, by acting as an illustration of the good and wholesome aspects of human nature, it encourages people to realize their own potential as human beings. Through the relationship between Romeo

and Juliet, the members of the audience are not only forced to recognize their own mediocrity, but they are also opened up to the righteous and virtuous possibilities of their nature as humans.