

& Julietâ?• Review: A Queer, Pop-Feminist Remix Takes Over Salt Lake City

Description

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SALT LAKE CITY, UT â?? Zions Bank Broadway at the Eccles welcomes *& Juliet* to Salt Lake City for a limited engagement from **June 17â??22, 2025**, drawing local audiences into a glittering reimagining of one of Shakespeareâ??s most iconic tragedies. In this playful, pop-infused rewrite, Juliet doesnâ??t dieâ??and this time, the pen belongs not to Shakespeare, but to his long-overlooked wife, Anne Hathaway.

Directed by **Luke Sheppard** and choreographed by **Emmy Awardâ??winner Jennifer Weber**, the production is a rhinestone-laced act of feminist and queer re-vision, glittering with radical heart. With a book by **David West Read** (*Schittâ??s Creek*) and a score of hit songs by **Max Martin**, *& Juliet* is more than a jukebox musical.

Beneath the camp and color lies a sharp cultural critique. The musical challenges patriarchal authorship, compulsory heterosexuality, and canonical rigidity. Through queered temporalities, pop-cultural subversion, and feminist metatheatre, *& Juliet* performs what **JosÃ© Esteban MuÃ±oz** calls a â??utopian performativeâ?•â??not a flawless world, but a world filled with possibility.

This is theatre that glitters toward possibilityâ??sequined, sharp, and gloriously unresolved.

The company of the North American Tour of *& JULIET*

The company of the North American Tour of *& JULIET* â?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

Pop as Feminist and Queer Reclamation

Rather than resting on nostalgia, *& Juliet* redeploys Martinâ??s pop catalogue to tell stories of **liberation, identity, and possibility**:

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- **Baby One More Time** becomes Juliet's lament for lost autonomy/not a boy.
 - **I'm Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman**, sung by May, transforms into a nonbinary coming-of-age ballad of liminality and self-definition.
 - **Stronger** (Kelly Clarkson) emerges as Juliet's rallying cry for independence.
 - **Show Me the Meaning of Being Lonely** (Backstreet Boys) is a tender exploration of queer longing.
 - **Roar** (Katy Perry) serves as Juliet's final act of self-assertion, a campy but cathartic feminist crescendo.

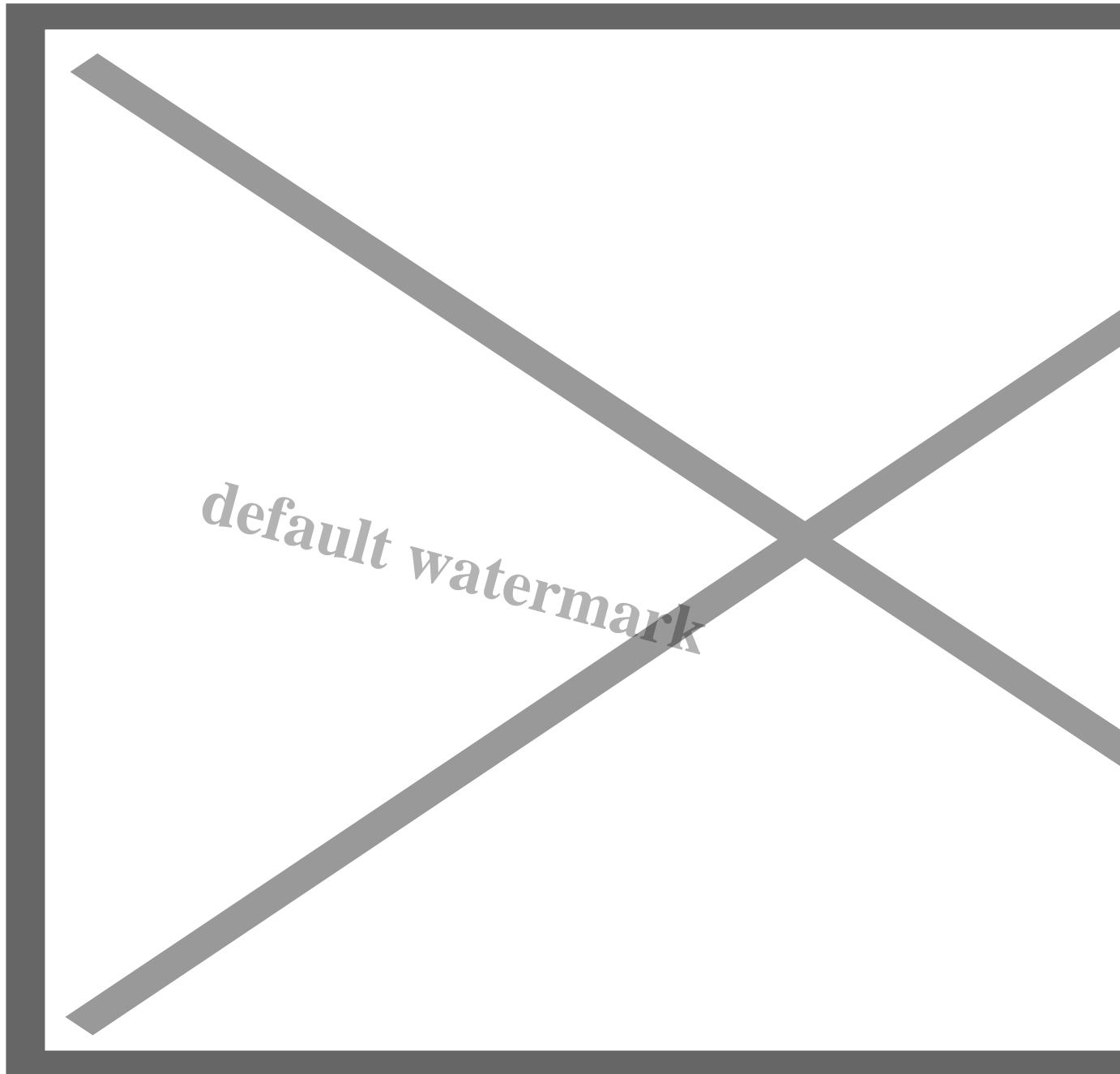
The brilliance of the show lies in how it **reclaims mainstream pop as a vehicle for marginalized narratives**—reframing joy, not as naïve escapism, but as resistant and powerful.

Performance Highlights

Opening night at the Eccles Theater delivered standout performances that elevated the production's already electric energy.

Rachel Simone Webb, as Juliet, commands the stage with soaring vocal power and emotional nuance. Her rendition of **Roar** is unforgettable—channeling the raw strength and charisma of a young Tina Turner. Webb brings not only vocal excellence but the narrative backbone of a character rewriting her fate.

Shelby Griswold steps into the role of Anne Hathaway like she was born to play it—witty, grounded, and vocally radiant. With emotional nuance and sly meta-theatrical charm, she transforms a sidelined historical figure into a commanding literary force. Her rendition of **That's the Way It Is** is both vocally stunning and narratively revelatory, positioning Anne not as a footnote to Shakespeare, but as a co-author of the canon.

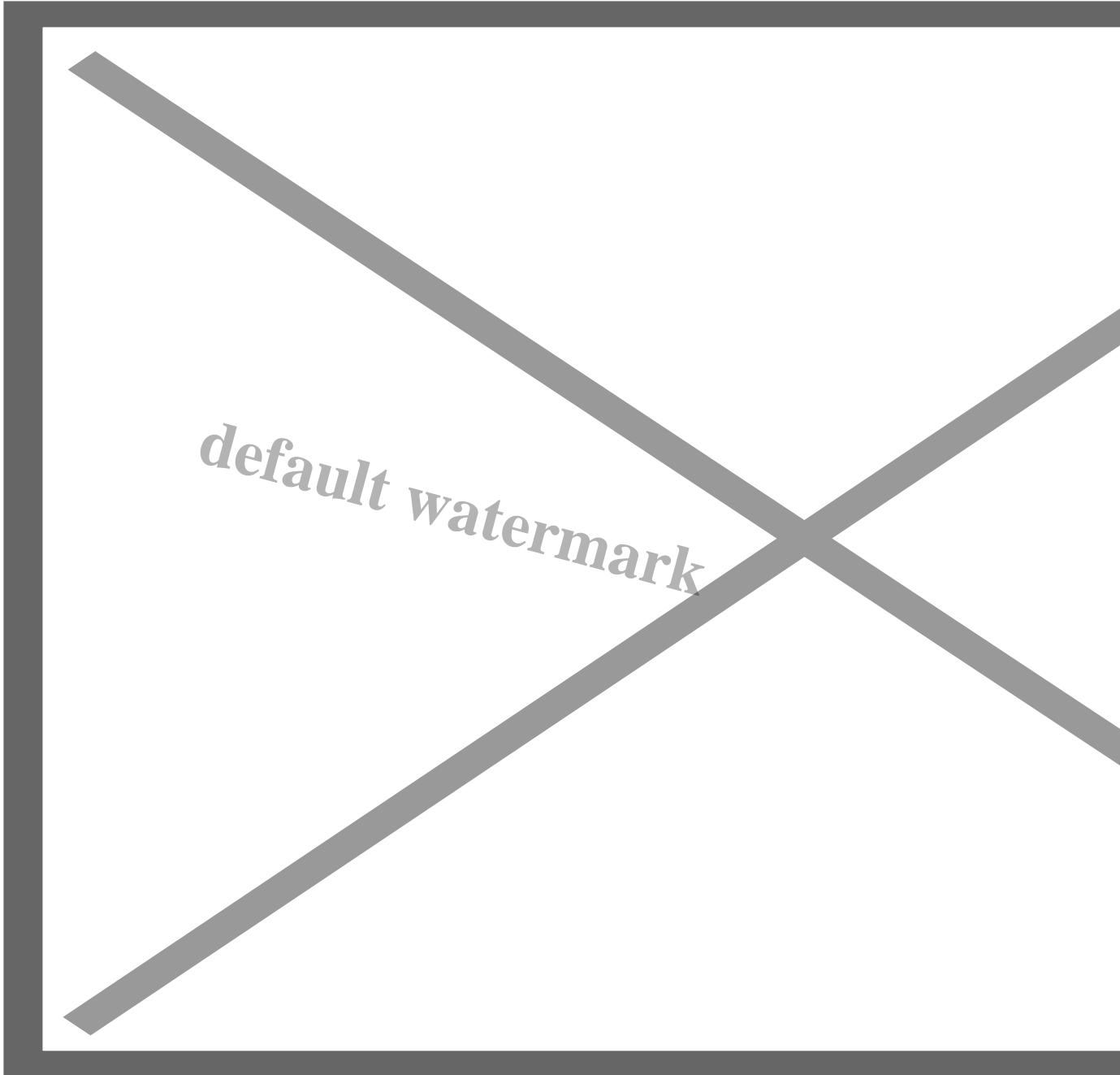


Mateus Leite Cardoso and Nick Drake in the North American Tour of & JULIET ?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

Nick Drake, as May, delivers one of the most resonant arcs of the evening. Their performance of ??I'm Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman? is tender and revelatory?less a cover than a claim to self-definition. Drake balances comedy and vulnerability with ease, allowing May to emerge not as a sidekick or symbol, but as a fully realized character claiming space and love on their own terms. Their scene-stealing vocals had me shifting in my seat to catch every note.

Naima Akham shines as Anglique, pairing powerhouse vocals with impeccable comedic timing?especially in ??Domino? and the hilariously sharp duet ??Oops! I Did It Again.? She's one of those rare comedic performers who makes awkwardness not only work but sparkle??!

couldn't get enough.



Corey Mach in the North American Tour of & JULIET ?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

As William Shakespeare, **Cory Mach** delivers a high-energy performance full of wit and swagger, transforming the Bard into a comically insecure egotist with impeccable timing and vocal agility. His chemistry with **Griswoldâ??s** Anne gives weight to their creative tug-of-war, culminating in a standout ??De Bois Bandâ?• number??where Mach, decked in matching silver, nails the boy band choreography with cheeky charm. **Francisco Thurston** lights up the stage as Lance, bringing suave confidence and comedic flair to every scene, especially his moments with **Mateus Leite Cardosoâ??s** FranÃ§ois. Cardoso, in turn, brings tender sincerity to FranÃ§ois, the sweetly awkward suitor navigating love and identity. His rendition of ??Shape of My Heartâ?• is a quiet emotional highlight, and his

chemistry with **Drakeâ??s** May turns a potential side plot into one of the showâ??s most heartfelt arcs. **Michael Canu** rounds out the comedic ensemble with a hilarious turn as Romeo, strutting in with flawless boy-band bravado. His version of the romantic heroâ??equal parts heartthrob and parodyâ??offers an irresistible foil to Julietâ??s journey of self-actualization.

Notably, many standout roles were performed by understudies on opening night, emphasizing the collaborative strength and depth of this touring production.

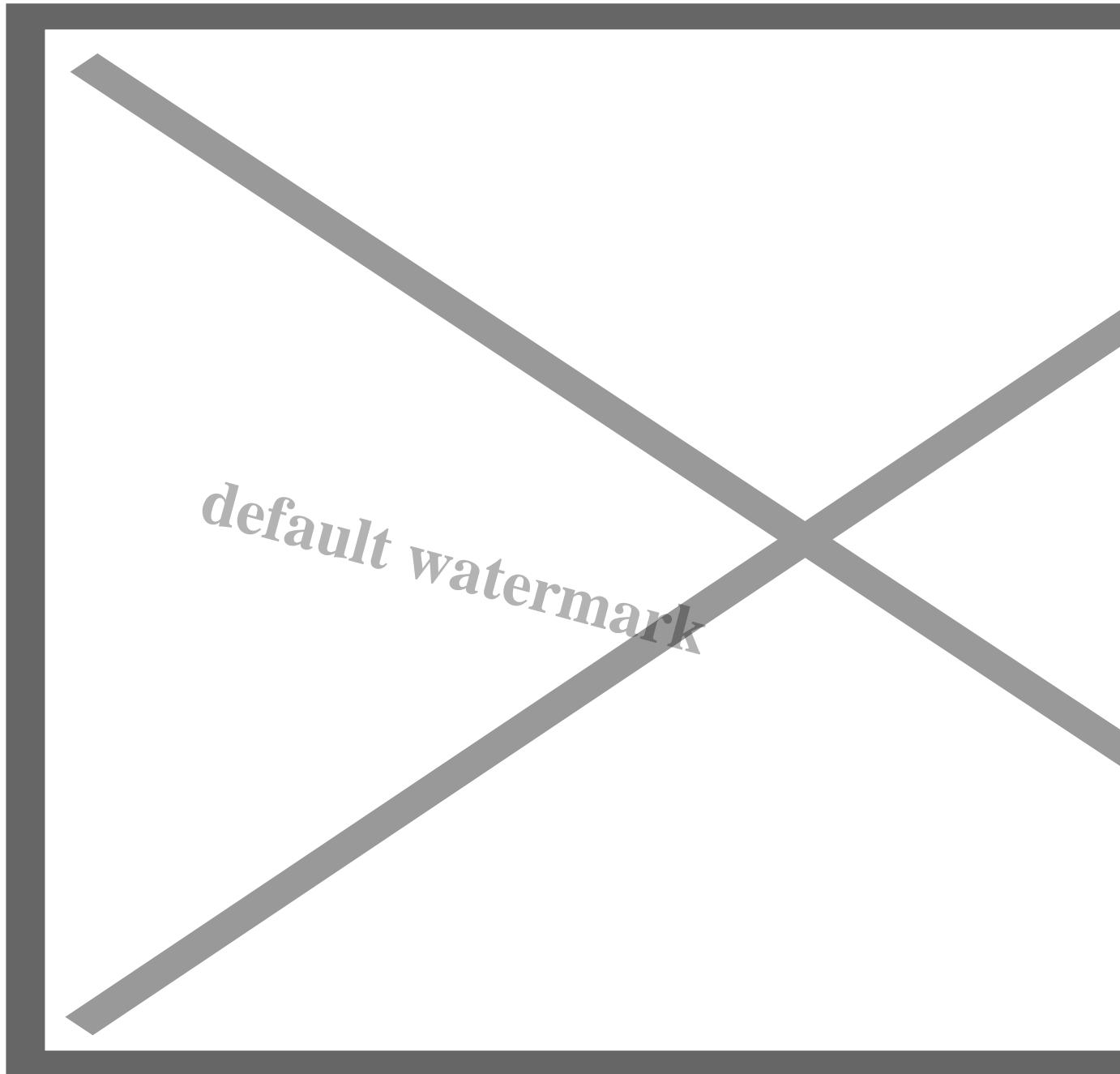
The company of the North American Tour of & JULIET

The company of the North American Tour of & JULIET â?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

Lights and All That Jazz: Design and Production Magic

If Juliet reclaims the story, then the design team reclaims the stage as a site of exuberant resistance. Together, they create a sensory landscape where gender, genre, and history are gloriously remixed.

Lighting designer **Howard Hudson**, Olivier Award nominee (& *Juliet, Six*), crafts a luminous world in saturated huesâ??electric pinks, neon blues, molten goldsâ??that track emotional highs and heartbreaks alike. His lighting doesnâ??t just light the showâ??it punctuates and underscores it, making even solos feel expansive and alive.



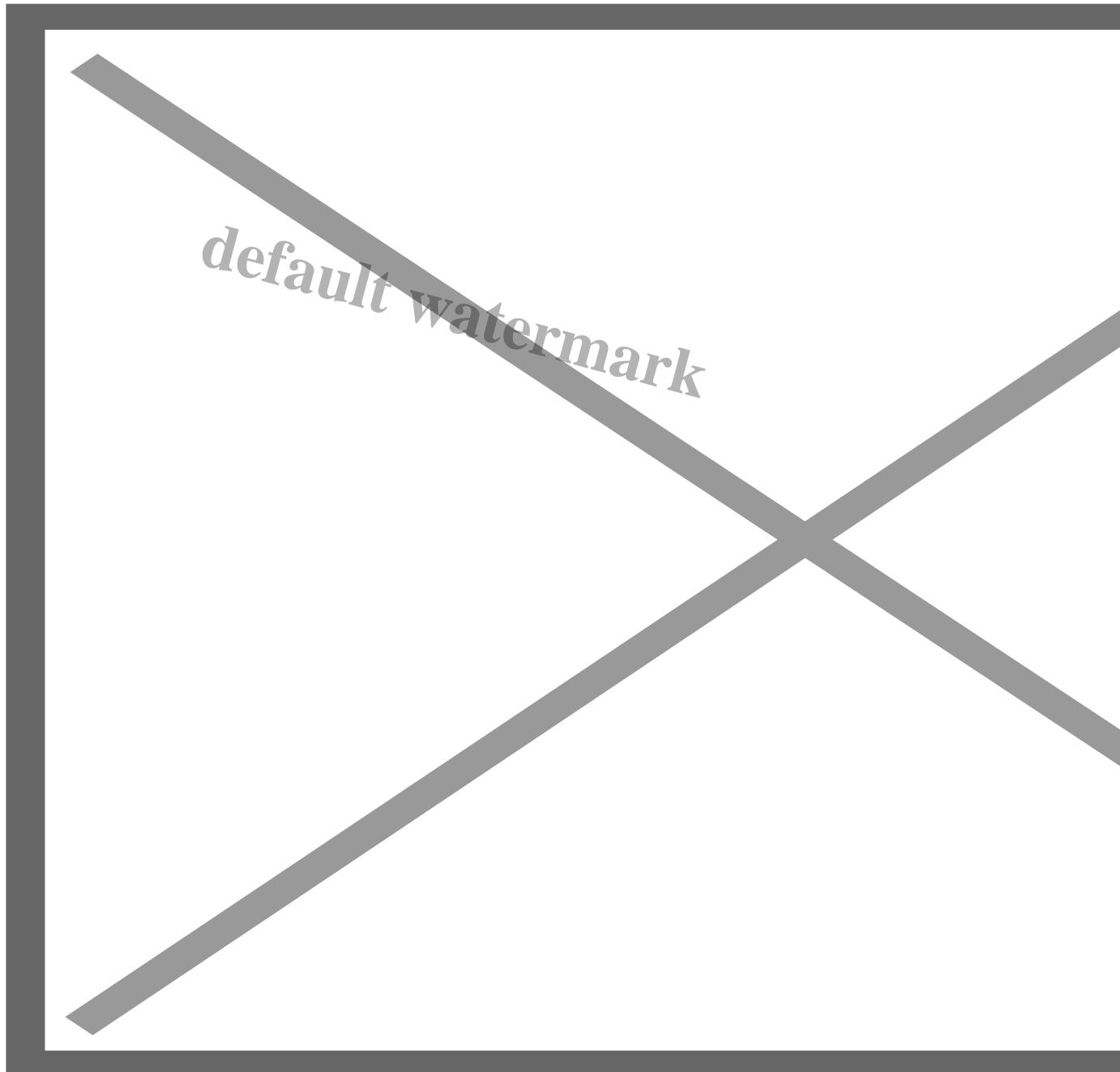
Rachel Simone Webb and Michael Canu in the North American Tour of *& JULIET* ?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

Soutra Gilmour, Olivier Award winner (*Inadmissible Evidence*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*), provides a scenic design that plays with theatrical form: Elizabethan arches collide with pop concert visuals, transforming the stage into a hybrid of old and new, where time bends and genre blurs. Paris is rendered not as realism but fantasy??a projection of reinvention.

Paloma Young, Tony Award winner (*Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*), stitches together centuries and sensibilities through costume. Juliet??s transformation??from soft romantic pastels to glittering armor??is told entirely in fabric. The show??s palette and visual textures echo **Gabriella Slade??s** costumes in *Six the Musical*, with

Renaissance-inspired silhouettes reimaged through a modern pop lens. But where *Six* leans into glam concert fantasy, Young grounds her spectacle in emotional storytelling and character growth.

Paloma Youngâ??s designs donâ??t just dazzleâ??they deepen the narrative, one stitch at a time.



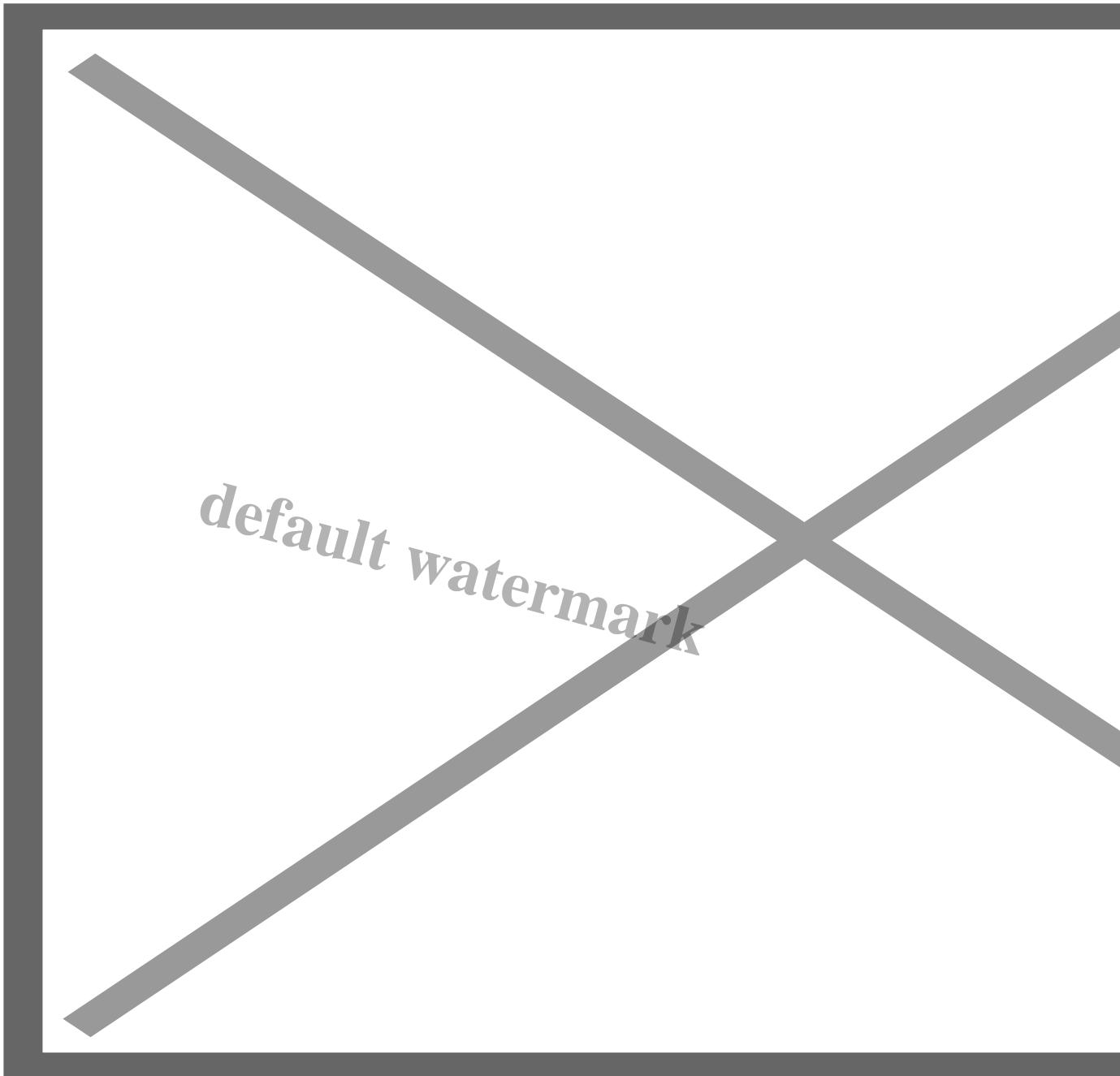
Rachel Simone Webb and the company of the North American Tour of *& JULIET* â?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

My favorite costume of the night was Julietâ??s studded cobalt-blue outfitâ??a striking blend of strength, playfulness, and historical reference. The structured bodice, with its visible seam lines, evokes the hidden boning of Elizabethan corsets, but here those lines shine with metal studs. What was once concealed becomes a proud, glittering display of autonomyâ??perfect for Julietâ??s late-play entrance, when she finally claims control of her own story.

Young pairs the look with voluminous breechesâ??traditionally worn by menâ??which give her swagger, freedom, and theatrical presence. The punk-inspired studs and bold silhouette mark her shift from passive romantic to self-defined hero.

Meanwhile, Mayâ??s gender-fluid wardrobe resists binary expectations with elegance and confidence. Their silhouettes layer softness and structure, modern and historical references, all in service of a character who defies the confines of genre, gender, and costume alike. Youngâ??s designs donâ??t just dazzleâ??they deepen the narrative, one stitch at a time.

Mayâ??s wardrobe resists the binary with elegance and clarityâ??costume as character, not constraint.



Nick Drake in the North American Tour of & JULIET ?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

The scoreâ??s full impact is brought to life by **Gareth Owen, Tony Award winner** (*MJ the Musical, Come From Away*), whose **sound design** ensures every beat and ballad is felt as much as heard. His mixing allows Martinâ??s hits to resonate emotionallyâ??whether in intimate duets or full-throttle anthems. Many of these songs sound dramatically differentâ??rightly so, as theyâ??ve been recontextualized to serve new emotional narratives. Iâ??ve long admired Owenâ??s work, and this production only deepened that appreciation. His design makes Martinâ??s hits feel newly mintedâ??alive with emotional clarity and power.

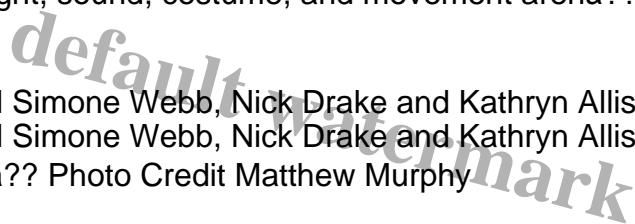
The company of the North American Tour of & JULIET
The company of the North American Tour of & JULIET ?? Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

Video and projection designer **Andrzej Goulding**, **Olivier nominee** (*Life of Pi*), overlays the narrative with playful and poignant digital textures—from stylized cityscapes to emotional flourishes. His work deepens the show's sense of fluid time and layered storytelling. I was deeply impressed by Goulding's work here, as I was in *Life of Pi*. His projection design does much of the heavy lifting in shaping the show's visual language—working in dynamic tandem with Gilmour's set design and Hudson's lighting to conjure a fully immersive, time-bending world.

And finally, **choreographer Jennifer Weber**, **Tony nominee** for *& Juliet* and **Emmy winner** (*Zombies 2*), animates the stage with high-impact movement that fuses hip-hop, street, and musical theatre vocabularies. Her dances don't just entertain—they advance the plot, articulate identity, and embody joy. I sensed early on that dance would be central to this show's energy—and I was not disappointed. Weber's choreography is kinetic, emotionally legible, and perfectly tuned to the rhythms of pop storytelling.

Together, these celebrated designers create a world where pop spectacle meets Shakespearean subversion. In *& Juliet*, light, sound, costume, and movement aren't just decoration—they're declaration.

Teal Wicks, Rachel Simone Webb, Nick Drake and Kathryn Allison in the North American Tour of & JULIET
Teal Wicks, Rachel Simone Webb, Nick Drake and Kathryn Allison in the North American Tour of & JULIET Photo Credit Matthew Murphy



It's My Story Now: Anne Hathaway, Grief, and Feminist Re-Vision

The story opens with Anne Hathaway stepping in—not as muse, but as author—interrupting Shakespeare mid-quill to propose a radical revision: What if Juliet didn't die?

Juliet's survival reframes tragedy as a choice—one previously dictated by patriarchal authorship. It's my story now, she declares. With that, *& Juliet* trades canonical fatalism for speculative freedom. Songs like Britney Spears' "Stronger" are recontextualized not as commercial hits, but as rhetorical interventions. "I'm not your property / As from today" in Juliet's voice becomes both a feminist anthem and a manifesto for narrative agency.

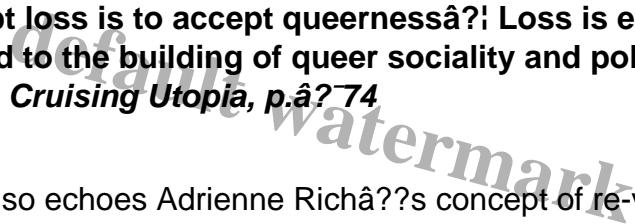
Griswold's Anne is more than Shakespeare's wife. She's his counterpoint, his editor, his emotional equal. In this retelling, she becomes the one who revises the canon, authoring her own voice and daring to write grief, love, and survival into the story itself. In *& Juliet*, this becomes literal: Anne alters the fabula, queering both genre and history to make space for survival.

Anne's authorship enacts what Saidiya Hartman calls "critical fabulation"—disrupting the timeline to imagine what could have been said, felt, or survived.

Teal Wicks and Rachel Simone Webb in the North American Tour of & JULIET

Teal Wicks and Rachel Simone Webb in the North American Tour of *& JULIET*  Photo Credit Matthew Murphy

This revisionary power is never more moving than when Juliet and Anne talk about what it means to lose someone and still go on. Anne confides that she's married to Shakespeare and that they lost their son, Hamnet.  How did you get through that? Juliet asks. Anne replies:  To be honest, I don't think we have.  What follows is a breathtaking rendition of  That's the Way It Is,  seamlessly blended with  I Want It That Way  a pop aria of grief and faith that Griswold delivers with aching clarity. As José Esteban Muñoz reminds us,  To accept loss is to accept queerness  Loss is essential to the queer aesthetic and to the building of queer sociality and politics  (*Cruising Utopia*, p. 74). In *& Juliet*, that loss is not resolved or erased; it becomes a site of connection, authorship, and survival. Grief here is not a final punctuation but a generative refrain  echoing across timelines, bodies, and songs.


 To accept loss is to accept queerness  Loss is essential to the queer aesthetic and to the building of queer sociality and politics 
 Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, p. 74

Anne's intervention also echoes Adrienne Rich's concept of re-vision:  the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction.  She inserts affect, care, and lived knowledge into the bones of a narrative long ruled by masculine authority. In doing so, she reclaims not only Juliet's ending, but literary authorship itself. She becomes an avatar for all those denied a pen  and in her hands, the canon is not closed, but cracked open.

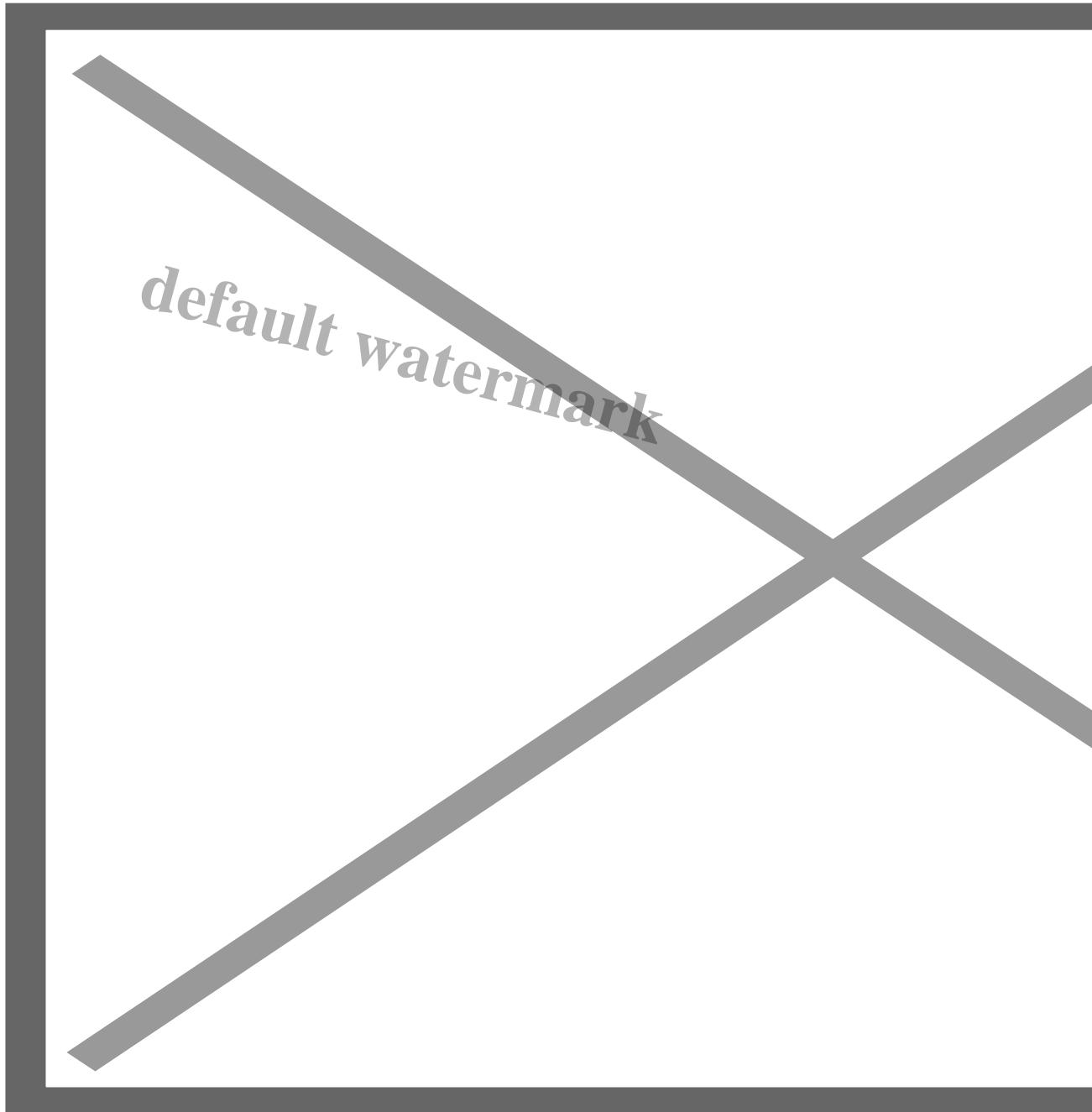
Why Now?

At a moment when gender expression, queer love, and bodily autonomy face renewed political attack, *& Juliet* offers more than escapism  it offers resistance. Its rhinestones don't distract from the stakes; they amplify them. This is theatre that sparkles with survival.

Beneath the rhinestones and pop hooks, *& Juliet* performs what José Esteban Muñoz calls a  utopian performative  a fleeting glimpse of a future that  is not yet here, but nonetheless imaginable  (Muñoz, 2009, p. 97). Through Anne Hathaway's feminist re-vision, Juliet's refusal of tragedy, and May's nonbinary coming-of-age, the show stages what Muñoz calls  queerness as futurity  not simply identity, but a horizon of possibility. As Anne writes new endings and May sings from the in-between, we see not a utopia achieved, but one rehearsed: bold, glittering, and radically unfinished.

Amid societal pressures for conformity *& Juliet* rehearses futurity: messy, joyful, and defiantly open. Yes, some arcs move too quickly, and the pop gloss can sometimes obscure deeper tensions. But this is theatre that glitters toward possibility  sequined, sharp, and beautifully unfinished.

If *Something Rotten!* and *Six* had a glitter-covered, feminist-pop
lovechildâ?it would be *& Juliet*.
â??Rhetorical Reviewâ??



Kathryn Allison in the North American Tour of *& JULIET* â?? Photo Credit
Matthew Murphy

Final Thoughts

& Juliet is not just a jukebox musical. It's a counter-archival act, a glitterbomb of feminist and queer reclamation. It rewrites Juliet's ending and reclaims who gets to write at all.

Like *Something Rotten!*, & Juliet skewers Shakespearean tradition with tongue-in-cheek charm, irreverent meta-theatrics, and over-the-top musical numbers that wink at the audience as much as they wow. Both shows delight in rewriting history with *Something Rotten!* imagining Shakespeare as a rockstar villain and & Juliet giving the Bard's wife the pen (and the last word).

Juliet lives. May loves freely. And Anne Hathaway writes the ending.

But where *Something Rotten!* mines comedy from the *creation* of the musical, & Juliet reimagines the *content* rewriting tragedy into triumph, and heartbreak into power ballads. It's got that same self-aware sparkle, slapstick meets subversion, and a cast that knows when to belt and when to break the fourth wall.

If you loved the anachronistic chaos, ensemble hilarity, and big-hearted joy of *Something Rotten!*, you'll roar for & Juliet.

Juliet lives. May loves freely. And Anne Hathaway writes the ending.

In today's theatre landscape, that's nothing short of radical.

Don't miss this riotous, rhinestoned retelling. Whether you're a Shakespeare devotee, a pop enthusiast, or someone looking for joy in a difficult time, & Juliet delivers.

Michael Canu and the company of the North American Tour of & JULIET
Michael Canu and the company of the North American Tour of & JULIET â?? Photo Credit
Matthew Murphy

• Buy Tickets & Show Info

Presented by: Zions Bank Broadway at the Eccles

Tickets: *Ticket prices begin at \$99.52*

Visit Broadway-at-the-Eccles.com to purchase tickets

Run Time: Approx. 2 hours and 30 minutes (with intermission)

Accessibility:

- ⚡ Audio Described Performance: **Friday, June 20, 2025 at 7:30 PM**
- ASL-Interpreted Performance: **Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 7:00 PM**
- Open Captioned Performance: **Saturday, June 21, 2025 at 1:00 PM**,
- For best caption visibility, select seats in **Orchestra Right** (Main Floor, excluding Pit). Captions also accessible via smartphone (screen remains blank until dialogue begins).
- **Language & Content Advisory:**
& *Juliet* contains strong language, sexual innuendo, and mature themes including gender identity, grief, and sexuality. The show features high-energy pop music, references to queer love and empowerment, and moments of emotional intensity. Recommended for ages 8+, but parental discretion is advised for younger audience members.

⚡ Socials:

Instagram / X / Facebook / TikTok: [@andjulietbway](#)

Hashtags: #AndJulietMusical #JulietLives #BroadwayAtTheEcclesal.com,

<https://andjulietbroadway.com/tickets/#north-american-tour>

References

- Hartman, Saidiya. *Venus in Two Acts*. *Small Axe*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2008, pp. 1–14.
- Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. NYU Press, 2009
- Rich, Adrienne. "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision." *College English*, vol. 34, no. 1, 1972, pp. 18–30.

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