

ROMEO & JULIET: PRESS RESPONSES

Written By: William Shakespeare **Adopted By:** Ahmet Sami Özbudak

Directed By: Serdar Biliş

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A Rising Star in Turkish Theatre

Established by the Municipality of Nilüfer in Bursa during the 2007/2008 season, Nilüfer Sanat 'Theatre' transformed into a resident theatre in the 2014/2015 season under the name Nilüfer Municipality Theatre. This transformation came as a response to growing public interest and the opening of new stages in Nilüfer. The theatre's success soon extended beyond the borders of its district, even its city, establishing it as one of the country's most prominent theatre companies. Its productions have toured other provinces in Turkey, earning widespread acclaim.

In the 2016/2017 season, Nilüfer Municipality Theatre opened with a contemporary adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, directed by Serdar Biliş and adapted into modern Turkish by the award-winning playwright Ahmet Sami Özbudak.

Shakespeare's tragic tale of love, set amidst warring factions, is reimagined in a high school classroom, with rival cliques standing in for feuding families. Özbudak's masterful adaptation preserves the elegance of Shakespeare's language while infusing the story with modern sensibilities. Just as Can Yücel's adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream breathed new life into Shakespeare's work, Özbudak's take on Romeo and Juliet stays true to the Bard's spirit while employing a liberating narrative style.

The result is a tightly crafted 110-minute production that distills the essence of Shakespeare's five-act masterpiece into an intense and captivating performance. This is not just an adaptation; it is a brilliant reinterpretation that seamlessly balances the timelessness of Shakespeare's themes with the immediacy of contemporary storytelling.

A Director's Vision

The Istanbul audience first encountered Serdar Biliş—born in 1977 and a Theatre Directing graduate from Middlesex University—during the 2010 Istanbul Theatre Festival. There, he presented a compelling adaptation of *The Tempest*, featuring three actresses portraying all the characters. Biliş has also staged productions for the Eskişehir and Kocaeli City Theatres and taught numerous student productions at Kadir Has University. His 2014 staging of Lars Norén's *War* earned the prestigious Theatre Play of the Year award.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Biliş employs his signature inventive direction, but this time he subordinates his formal creativity to the service of the two protagonists' tragic fate. The result is a refined and balanced production that never loses sight of the story's emotional core.

A Must-See Performance

Every month, the cast travels from Bursa to Istanbul's Moda Sahnesi, complete with elaborate sets and costumes. No matter where you are in the city, make the effort to attend. You'll experience an outstanding production while discovering the talented young actors from Bursa. After witnessing their performances, you'll leave with a warm sense of optimism for the future of theatre in Turkey.

MİLLİYET SANAT

ASU MARO

LINK: <https://www.milliyetsanat.com/yazar-detay/asu-mar0/dersimiz-imkansiz-ask/7248>

A Lesson in Impossible Love

The path to the tragic ending is fast-paced, vibrant, and thoroughly entertaining in Serdar Biliş's adaptation of "Romeo and Juliet."

Since their creation by Shakespeare in the 16th century, Romeo and Juliet have become synonymous with "impossible" love. The ill-fated children of feuding families have reappeared throughout the ages, sometimes as heroes of their own time and sometimes adapted to reflect the spirit of new eras, as seen in West Side Story or Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film.

One thing remains unchanged across centuries: humanity's baffling penchant for harboring grudges, and love's relentless defiance of such animosity. Whether it triumphs or falters, love continues to challenge enmity, refusing to back down.

This enduring relevance makes Serdar Biliş's decision to bring Romeo and Juliet into the present day particularly apt. A celebrated director known for his remarkable work in both England and Turkey, Biliş staged this production at Bursa's esteemed Nilüfer Municipality Theatre to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

The adaptation is further elevated by the decision to entrust the language to Ahmet Sami Özbudak, a gifted playwright. His contemporary reimagining breathes new life into the story while retaining the depth and elegance of Shakespeare's original work, making this Romeo and Juliet a tale for our time as much as it was for Shakespeare's.

In short, the well-known tragic journey unfolds in Serdar Biliş's *Romeo and Juliet* with an energy that is fast-paced, vibrant, and undeniably entertaining. As the story approaches its inevitable conclusion, those who have played a role in the lovers' fateful destiny step before the camera one by one to confess their sins. These confessions highlight the chain of wrongs and misunderstandings that have spiraled into tragedy, underscoring how hatred becomes a weapon that ultimately turns against its wielder.

In the end, the play leaves us in a world where enmity triumphs and humanity loses, standing alone with Shakespeare's haunting words: "Hell is empty, and all the devils are here."
