1936 (George Cukor)  
1954 (Renato Castellani)

Romeo and Juliet (1968)

Also Known As: Romeo e Giulietta (Italy)
Runtime: 138 min  Country: UK / Italy  Color: Color (Technicolor)
Directed by Franco Zeffirelli
Written by Franco Brusati (screenplay), Masolino D'Amico (screenplay) & Franco Zeffirelli

Plot Outline: When the now famous "star crossed lovers" of two enemy families meet, forbidden love ensues. Filmed on location in Verona, we never have the feeling that we are watching filmed stage production, not a small feat. Sir Laurence Olivier is the narrator.

Cast: Leonard Whiting....Romeo  
Olivia Hussey....Juliet  
John McEnery....Mercutio  
Milo O'Shea....Friar Laurence  
Pat Heywood....The Nurse  
Robert Stephens....The Prince  
Michael York....Tybalt  
Bruce Robinson....Benvolio  
Paul Hardwick....Lord Capulet  
Natasha Parry....Lady Capulet  
Antonio Pierfederici....Lord Montague  
Esmeralda Ruspoli....Lady Montague  
Roberto Bisacco....Paris  
Roy Holder....Peter  
Keith Skinner....Balthazar
Trivia for Romeo and Juliet
A rumor surrounding this film was that Olivia Hussey was really Franco Zeffirelli’s daughter. Not true, of course. Franco Zeffirelli initially turned Olivia Hussey down for the role of Juliet, thinking her overweight. The actress he did choose cut her hair just before filming, ruining the effect she had on Zeffirelli. Hussey came in for another reading but by this time had developed into a beautiful teenager. She got the part. Franco Zeffirelli became concerned by Olivia Hussey’s full figure during filming, and ordered that no more pasta would be served on the set.

The first major film production of this play to actually cast leading actors who were close to the ages of William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Zeffirelli needed to get special permission to show teenaged Olivia Hussey topless in one scene.

During the sword fight scene when Mercutio throws a sword at Tybalt's feet, Mercutio’s shadow is actually Franco Zeffirelli’s shadow standing in for him because John McEnery was sick that day (according to Michael York’s autobiography).

According to Franco Zeffirelli’s autobiography, Paul McCartney was originally asked to play the part of Romeo. Laurence Olivier agreed to play the uncredited role of the narrator because he was so impressed with Zeffirelli’s work for the National Theatre of Great Britain, which Olivier was director of at the time.

Awards: Won 2 Oscars (Cinematography and Costume Design) Nominated for 4 (Best Director and Best Film)

Romeo and Juliet (1976) (TV)
The Thames Shakespeare
Director Joan Kemp-Welch
Writer William Shakespeare (play)

Cast
Christopher Neame Romeo
Ann Hasson Juliet
Laurence Payne Capulet
Mary Kenton Lady Capulet
Peter Dyneley Prince Escalus
Simon MacCorkindale Paris
Clive Swift Friar Lawrence
Michael Macowan Montague
Patsy Byrne Nurse
Robin Nedwell Mercutio
David Robb Tybalt
The acting here is fairly good. It’s not really great as it doesn’t stand out. The thing I really liked about this production is the costuming and scenery. These are important to me to help understand the play as Shakespeare intended. In this production the street scenes take place with street people around to give the feeling that the scene really is on the street. The scenes indoors likewise show what indoors would show in the time period. The dance scene is done showing many people dancing, though Rosaline is not shown as she is in some productions. Costumes were not cheaply done. Nobility are arrayed in very fine apparel. As far as the acting is concerned, I didn’t feel there were any standout performances...The parts of Romeo and Juliet are delivered fairly well, but don’t stand out. Juliet's father, Capulet, seems just a bit effeminate, rather inappropriate for so domineering a father, husband and lord of the house. Tybalt should be much more antagonistic and sly. Here he is certainly willing to fight, but it almost seems as if it was Mercutio that was the antagonist in the fight between he and Tybalt. Mercutio does a good job in his incessant talk at nothing, which is as his character is supposed to be. He rambles and makes it seem natural.

Romeo + Juliet (1996)

Directed by Baz Luhrmann
Written by William Shakespeare (play), Craig Pearce and Baz Luhrmann (screenplay)

Plot Outline: Shakespeare's famous play is updated to the hip modern suburb of Verona still retaining its original dialogue. The gun-toting members of the families wage a vicious war on the streets as the star-crossed lovers, their tragic destiny. An eye-catching, starkly bold and breathtaking update of Shakespeare's great work.

Cast: Leonardo DiCaprio.....Romeo
Claire Danes.....Juliet
John Leguizamo.....Tybalt
Harold Perrineau.....Mercutio
Pete Postlethwaite.....Father Laurence
Paul Sorvino.....Fulgentio Capulet
Brian Dennehy.....Ted Montague
Paul Rudd.....Dave Paris

Vondie Curtis-Hall.....Captain Prince
Miriam Margolyes.....The Nurse
Jesse Bradford.....Balthasar
M. Emmet Walsh.....Apothecary
Zak Orth.....Gregory
Jamie Kennedy.....Sampson
Dash Mihok.....Benvolio

Also Known As: William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet (USA)
MPAA: Rated PG-13 for scenes of contemporary violence and sensuality.
Runtime: 120 min Country: USA Color: Color (DeLuxe)

Trivia: The pool hall that Romeo and Benvolio enter is in a building called "Globe."

In the opening fight scene at the service station, the Montagues are Gregory and Sampson and the Capulets are Abram and Petruchio. In the play, Gregory and Sampson are Capulets who start the fight with the thumb biting and Abram and Petruchio are Montagues.
There are various billboards throughout the movie that contain quotes from other Shakespeare plays: - 'Shoot forth thunder' (the gun advert) is from 'The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth', Act IV, Scene I, Line 109. 'Experience is by industry achiev’d' (in the Capulet lift) is from 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona', Act I, Scene III, Line 25. 'Such stuff as dreams are made on' (another advert) is from 'The Tempest', Act IV, Scene I, Lines 168-169. Prospero (the name of the drink in the advert) is the player who says these lines.

Ewan McGregor auditioned for the part of Mercutio. Director Baz Luhrmann later worked with Ewan in the film Moulin Rouge! (2001). Christian Bale auditioned for the role of Mercutio. Sarah Michelle Gellar and Jennifer Love Hewitt were considered for the part of Juliet, but both were turned down. Sarah Michelle Gellar was committed to "All My Children" (1970), and Jennifer Love Hewitt was rejected because she was not 'old enough' for the role. Both of them would later star alongside each other in I Know What You Did Last Summer (1997). Reese Witherspoon, Kate Winslet, Christina Ricci and Natalie Portman all auditioned for the role of Juliet.

A billboard at Verona Beach bears the sign "L'amour" (it's in red and white, and looks a bit like the Coca Cola logo). The same sign can be seen outside Christian's window in Moulin Rouge! (2001), another Baz Luhrmann film. The sign had also appeared (this time in the form of a Coca Cola logo) in Luhrmann's film Strictly Ballroom (1992), and in his stage production of "La Boheme".

A number of important moments (and a lot of trivial ones) involve water. When we first see Juliet, she is holding her head under water; when Romeo and Juliet first see each other, it's through a fish tank; the balcony scene is moved from a balcony to a swimming pool; Mercutio is killed at the beach; when Tybalt is shot, he falls into a pond; Juliet's wedding date is decided in a sauna (ie steam); when the banished Romeo comes to Juliet's room he is drenched from the pouring rain, and when he leaves the next morning he falls into the pool again.

The majority of sets were built from scratch in order to achieve the film's unique look. The Sycamore Grove theatre and huts on Verona Beach were actually destroyed by a hurricane during filming. The beginning of the hurricane is evident during Mercutio's death scene, and many pick up shots had to be filmed elsewhere.

Claire Danes wears a wig throughout the movie and also had a special aquatic wig for her underwater scenes.

The film runs for exactly two hours, in line with the prologue which states: "Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage".

The music playing as Juliet shoots herself at the end of the film is Isolde's 'Liebestod' from Wagner's opera 'Tristan und Isolde.' The music serves a similar role in the opera, coming at the very end as Isolde dies at the feet of Tristan's corpse in order to be united with him in death.
MY SHAKESPEARE: Romeo and Juliet with Baz Luhrmann
TV Movie, December 2004  (Running time 110 minutes)
Directed by Michael Waldman
With Paterson Joseph and Baz Luhrman
Narrated by Lennie James

Paterson was born and raised in the rough area of Harlesden, London and, since becoming an actor, has decided to return to his streets with the message of Shakespeare. Setting himself a target of four weeks to cast, rehearse and direct a West End production of Romeo & Juliet, Paterson plans to show the world that Harlesden is not what people assume and prove that Shakespeare can be brought to any place, any people and any time by using a cast of all first time actors. In the background director Baz Luhrmann looks on and offers Paterson advice on how to bring Shakespeare alive for modern actors and audiences.

 pretty, but mostly pretty bad
9 November 2013 | by Bologna King

This is the most recent in a series of Italian versions of Romeo and Juliet which starts with the 1955 film directed by Renato Castellani and the 1968 film directed by Franco Zeffirelli. They are all very pretty and this one is the prettiest, with extremely pretty scenery, a pretty Juliet and an even prettier Romeo.

That’s about the best that can be said for it. Fellowes, the screenplay writer, has actually written some new scenes that are not bad examples of blank verse in the Elizabethan style, but they do not have the genius of Shakespeare, and the new scenes don’t add much to the story. Replacing Shakespeare’s words with his own, which he does far too often, invariably results in poorer and less interesting lines.

Unfortunately, the leads aren’t persuading anyone that they are in love, and our attention is drawn instead to some good performances by the supporting cast, especially Damian Lewis’s Capulet, which I think is the best performance by anyone as Capulet on screen ever.

So, generally, apart from Lewis, you are much better off watching Zeffirelli’s film.
**Shakespeare in Love (1998)**

**Directed by** John Madden

**Written by** Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard

Romantic comedy set in London in the late 16th century: Young playwright William Shakespeare struggles with his latest work "Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter". A great fan of Shakespeare's plays is young, wealthy Viola who is about to be married to the cold-hearted Lord Wessex, but constantly dreams of becoming an actress. Women were not allowed to act on stage at that time (female roles were played by men, too), but dressed up as a boy, Viola successfully auditions for the part of Romeo. Soon she and William are caught in a forbidden romance that provides rich inspiration for his play.

**Cast:**

- Geoffrey Rush....Philip Henslowe
- Tom Wilkinson....Hugh Fennyman
- Steve O'Donnell....Lambert
- Tim McMullen....Frees
- Joseph Fiennes....Will Shakespeare
- Steven Beard....Makepeace
- Antony Sher....Dr. Moth
- Patrick Barlow....Will Kempe
- Martin Clunes....Richard Burbage
- Sandra Reinton....Rosaline
- Simon Callow....Tilney
- Judi Dench....Queen Elizabeth
- Bridget McConnell....Lady in Waiting
- Georgie Glen....Lady in Waiting
- Nicholas Boulton....Henry Condell
- Gwyneth Paltrow....Viola De Lesseps
- Imelda Staunton....Nurse
- Colin Firth....Lord Wessex
- Desmond McNamara....Crier
- Barnaby Kay....Nol
- Adam Barker....First Auditionee
- Joe Roberts....John Webster
- Harry Gostelow....Second Auditionee
- Alan Cody....Third Auditionee
- Simon Day....First Boatman
- Jill Baker....Lady De Lesseps
- Nicholas Le Prevost....Robert De Lesseps
- Ben Affleck....Ned Alleyn
- Timothy Kightley....Edward Pope
- Mark Saban....Augustine Philips
- Bob Barrett....George Bryan
- Roger Morlidge....James Armitage
- Daniel Brocklebank....Sam Gosse
- Martin Neeley....Paris/Lady Montague

**MPAA:** Rated R for sexuality.  
**Runtime:** 123 min  
**Color:** Color (DeLuxe)

**Trivia:**  
Edward Alleyn, an actor in Shakespeare's time, ('Ned' in the film, played by Ben Affleck) was the real-life founder of the famous London private secondary schools Dulwich College and Alleyn's School.

The unpleasant little urchin John Webster, who is shown playing with mice, grows up to be a big name of the next (Jacobean) generation of playwrights. His plays are known for their blood and gore, and his most famous title is "The Duchess of Malfi."
In the beginning of the movie, when Henslowe asks Will if he has been working on his play, and Will answers "Doubt thou the stars are fire, Doubt that the sun doth move" he is quoting from Hamlet (Act II Scene 2). The lines are from a letter he wrote to Ophelia while pretending to have gone mad, and are followed by "Doubt truth to be a liar, but never doubt I love." Joseph Fiennes' brother, Ralph, left his then-wife Alex Kingston (of ER) for Francesca Annis' who played his mother in a production of Hamlet.

The scene that show a woman (presumably Viola) nearly drowning in a shipwreck is a direct homage to one of the opening scenes of "Twelfth Night" in which the character of Viola nearly drowns.

About six years before the film was finally made, Julia Roberts was cast as Viola and flew to the UK to try to persuade Daniel Day-Lewis to take the part, but he declined in order to do In the Name of the Father (1993), and Universal Studios dropped the project when no suitable alternative was found. Joseph Fiennes was the only actor ever actually cast in the lead role.

1998 was the only year that two actors were nominated for Academy Awards for playing the same character in two different films in the same year. Dame Judi Dench was nominated (and won) for Best Supporting Actress for playing Queen Elizabeth I in his movie and Cate Blanchett was nominated for Best Actress for portraying Elizabeth I in Elizabeth (1998)

The lines "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships" that the actors recite during the audition come from Christopher Marlowe's play "Doctor Faustus".

Producer Edward Zwick was initially supposed to direct the film when Universal was involved; when Miramax finally went ahead with the project, Zwick was already working on The Siege (1998) and was unavailable. However, his production company - Bedford Falls - remained involved.

Writer Marc Norman got the idea for the film when his son Zachary called him from Boston University and suggested doing something on Shakespeare as a young man in the Elizabethan theatre. It took two years for Norman to come up with the idea of having Shakespeare struggling with writer's block on "Romeo and Juliet."

Tom Stoppard added several characters in his work on the screenplay, including Christopher Marlowe. Some of his additions, including those regarding John Webster, were handled with caution, as it was feared some references would be too obscure.

After initial test audiences had mixed reactions to the ending, a new version of Will and Viola's final scene was filmed in November 1998 (only weeks before release), which expanded upon the previously brief Twelfth Night projections in order to better handle their parting. In order to film the scene, Joseph Fiennes had to interrupt work on a West End play, and Gwyneth Paltrow had to be brought in from filming The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999).

The journeys up and down the Thames in river boats are taken from the puppet play Hero and Leander, which is written by the character Littlewit in Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair. Littlewit adapts the classical story of the lovers divided by the Hellespont to contemporary London.
Although long portions of Romeo and Juliet are used in this film, along with famous lines from many of Shakespeare’s play, William Shakespeare is not credited in the film.

The sonnet Will writes for Viola which begins with "Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?" is Sonnet 18. In reality, this sonnet, along with Sonnets number 1 to 126, were written for a male friend of Shakespeare. Some speculate that this friend is either Henry Wriothesley, earl of Southampton, or William Herbert, earl of Pembroke.

Viola asks Will, "Are you the author of William Shakepeare’s plays?" This is a hint at the modern day speculation whether the works of Shakespeare were really written by him, or whether some nobleman (or another famous author) used his identity as a pseudonym. The film also manages to provide theoretical sources for the two prevailing academic theories about Shakespeare’s inspirations for many of the sonnets: that they were written either for an extramarital mistress or a male lover.

An oft-delayed production, both Kevin Reynolds and Kenneth Branagh were both sought to direct. Kate Winslet turned down the role of Viola after the success of Titanic (1997). She went on to film Jane Campion’s Holy Smoke (1999) instead.

Will is shown signing a paper, with six illegible signatures visible. Several versions of Shakespeare's signature exist, all of which are different. This has led to debate about whether Shakespeare may actually have been illiterate.

In the first scene with Will Shakespeare, we see him crumpling up balls of paper and throwing them around the room which land near props which represent or refer to other works by Shakespeare. The first lands next to a skull - a reference to Hamlet and the second lands in a chest - a reference to the Merchant of Venice.

Awards: Nominated for 13 Academy Awards. Won 7 Oscars for Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, Art Direction, Costume Design, Music, Screenplay and Best Picture.

West Side Story (1961 film)

Runtime: 152 min
Setting: The West Side of New York City during the last days of Summer. 1957.
Directed by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise
Writing credits Jerome Robbins (conception) and Arthur Laurents (play)
Ernest Lehman (screenplay) and William Shakespeare (play)

Cast:
Natalie Wood....Maria
Richard Beymer....Tony
Russ Tamblyn....Riff
Rita Moreno....Anita
George Chakiris....Bernardo
Simon Oakland....Lieutenant Schrank
Ned Glass....Doc
William Bramley....Officer Krupke
Tucker Smith....Ice
Tony Mordente....Action
David Winters....A-rab
Eliot Feld....Baby John
MAJOR NEW YORK STAGE PRODUCTIONS

**Music by** Leonard Bernstein  **Book by** Arthur Laurents  **Lyrics by** Stephen Sondheim.
**Based on:** *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

**Original production**
- Starring Larry Kert and Carol Lawrence
- Sep 26, 1957 - Jun 27, 1959
- Winter Garden Theatre, Later the Broadway Theatre

**New York Revivals**
- Starring Larry Kert and Carol Lawrence
- Apr 27, 1960 - Dec 10, 1960
- Winter Garden Theatre

- Starring Don McKay and Julia Migenes (limited run)
- Apr 8, 1964 - May 3, 1964
- City Center

- Starring Ken Marshall and Debbie Allen
- Feb 14, 1980 - Nov 30, 1980
- Minskoff Theatre

- Bi-lingual Revival
- Starring Matt Cavenaugh and Josefina Scaglione
- Mar 19, 2009 - Jan 2, 2011
- Palace Theatre

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**WEST SIDE STORY**

**Plot Summary**

The Sharks and the Jets are two feuding street gangs in 1950's New York, the Jets being White and the Sharks being Puerto Rican. At a dance at a gym, Jet Tony falls in love with a Shark's sister, Maria. They know they can't be together because of the gang's war, but that doesn't stop them.

Meanwhile, The two gangs prepare for a rumble, and Tony tries to stop it out of love for Maria. In the process, his best friend and Jet leader Riff is killed by Maria's brother, Bernardo. In anger, Tony kills Bernardo. HE then realizes his mistake (killing his love's brother) and begs for forgiveness, which, of course, Maria gives him. They decide they have to leave the city, and the pointless hate, behind them. They plan to meet at Doc's Candy Store and take a bus to the country.

Chino, the Shark Maria is supposed to marry, vows to kill Tony. Maria begs Anita, Bernardo's fiancé, to tell Tony she will be a little late meet him at Doc's Candy Store. \ Anita is prevented from reaching Tony by the ethnic prejudice of the Jets. The gang's verbal taunting of Anita gets physical and is turning into rape when she is saved by Doc. In her fury and humiliation, Anita lies and tells Tony's buddies Chino has killed Maria.

Doc tells Tony, who is hiding in his cellar, Maria and his dreams for the future are dead because she is dead. Tony runs out to find Chino. On the street, Tony sees Maria. Chino appears and kills Tony. As Maria kneels over Tony's body, the Jets and Sharks enter. Maria takes Chino's gun, but is unable to bring herself to fire it. The cycle of violence ends with her.
ROMEO AND JULIET (2014)

Stage Director:  David Leveaux
Film Director:  Don Roy King

Orlando Bloom  Romeo
Condola Rashad  Juliet
Donte Bonner  Sampson
Christian Camargo  Mercutio
Joe Carroll  Balthasar
Brent Carver  Friar Laurence
Chuck Cooper  Lord Capulet
Justin Guarini  Paris
Corey Hawkins  Tybalt
Jayne Houdyshell  Nurse
Sheria Irving  Juliet's Servant
Maurice Jones  Gregory
Conrad Kemp  Benvolio
Geoffrey Owens  Prince Escalus
Spencer Plachy  Abraham
Roslyn Ruff  Lady Capulet
Tracy Sallows  Lady Montague
Thomas Schall  Friar John

Presented on Broadway during the fall of 2013, the production was filmed for presentation in movie theatres for Valentines Day in 2014. Not rated by the MPAA (it was not made as a film) it has a running time of 135 minutes.