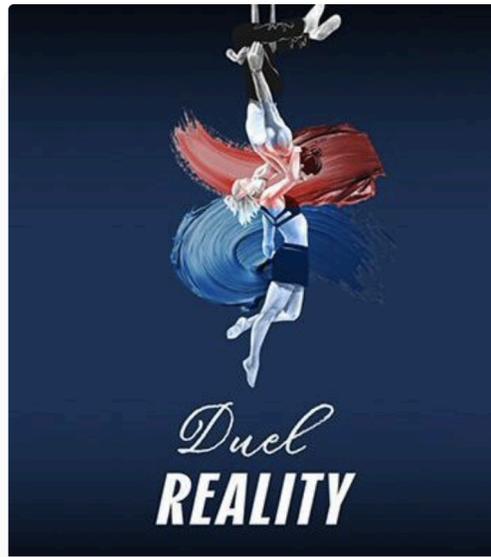


# Alliance Theatre

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*institute*

Study Guide  
Duel Reality



By The 7 Fingers  
Directed by Shana Carroll  
February 5 - March 1, 2026  
Coca-Cola Stage

**Created through a Dramaturgy by Students residency by**  
Avery Sharpe-Steele, Teaching Artist, Alliance Theatre  
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8th Grade drama class of Champion Theme Middle School

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Photo Source: [alliancetheatre.org](http://alliancetheatre.org)

### Considerations for Application

**Accessibility:** Incorporate accommodations and/or adjustments to physical directions, including language regarding seating, standing, and/or moving, as needed.

**Social / Emotional:** Be mindful of the sensitivity of content/prompts related to personal experiences; avoid required sharing, as needed.

## Who Are the 7 Fingers?

### Standards

<b>GSE – English Language Arts</b>	<b>9.T.CI.</b> Students investigate the relationships between authors, purposes, and audiences of texts, and analyze the influence of contextual factors.
<b>GSE – Fine Arts</b>	<b>TAHSFT.CN.1</b> Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content. a. Examine how theatre reflects real life. d. Explore various careers in the theatre arts (e.g. performance, design, production, administrative, education, promotion).

### Who are the 7 Fingers?

The 7 Fingers are a cirque-inspired, multimedia collective of artists who aim to break the norms of both storytelling and circus performance. Started in Montreal, Canada in 2002, 7 owners (hence the name 7 Fingers) wanted to pursue the mission of “telling human stories with superhuman abilities” and they have gone on to do just that. They have performed all over the world from science centers to Broadway and continue to blow audiences away with their unique blend of athletics and soul-stirring original stories.

**Founders from left to right:** Isabelle Chassé, Sébastien Soldevila, Patrick Léonard, Shana Carroll, Samuel Tétreault, Nassib El-Hussein (C.E.O.), and Gypsy Snider



**Photo credit:** Alexandre Galliez

## Meet the Director: Shana Carroll

### Standards

GSE – English Language Arts	<p><b>9.L.V II</b> Students engage in a wide range of written and spoken activities during which they expand and deepen their vocabularies, build word analysis skillsets (morphology), and determine or clarify the meanings of words and phrases.</p> <p><b>5.T.T.1</b> Explain, analyze, and use narrative techniques to shape understandings. b. Analyze how setting, events, conflict, and characterization contribute to the plot.</p>
GSE- Fine Arts	<p><b>TAHSFT.CN.2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures.</li><li>b. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre.</li><li>c. Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development.</li><li>d. Interpret cultural and historical research for use in a production.</li></ul>

### Biography

Shana Carrol is one of the co-founding artistic directors of the 7 Fingers, and is the director of the Alliance Theatre’s production of *Duel Reality*. Since 2002, she has written, choreographed, and directed 12 of their resident and/or touring shows. After 20 years of performing as a trapeze artist and Cirque du Soleil soloist, she’s gone on to collaborate with some of the biggest entertainment venues in the world, including *Water for Elephants* on Broadway (which showed at the Alliance Theatre in 2023).



Source: [7fingers.com](https://www.7fingers.com)

## About the Source Material: *Romeo & Juliet*

### About Devised Theater

*Duel Reality* is a devised piece of theatre, which means it was created by using a source material as a template or a springboard to create a brand new work. The source material for this show is one of the most famous love stories of all time: *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare.

### Synopsis: *Romeo & Juliet*

Because *Duel Reality* is a story told mostly without speaking, it can be helpful to know the basic storyline of the source material. Our dramaturgy team gathered the ten most pertinent plot points of *Romeo and Juliet* (see below).

1. A fateful tale of hate and love, the Montagues and the Capulets are two families who have an ancient feud with one another.
2. Juliet is a Capulet who is having an arranged marriage to Paris. Meanwhile, Romeo Montague is in love with another girl named Rosaline.
3. Juliet's family throws a masquerade ball to celebrate the marriage to Paris. Romeo and his friends crash the ball. Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love.
4. Romeo sneaks to her balcony as Juliet is declaring her love. Romeo reveals himself. They make a plan to get married through a secret wedding.
5. They find a priest to do the ceremony.
6. Meanwhile, Tybalt Capulet (Juliet's cousin), kills Mercutio (Romeo's friend). Romeo then kills Tybalt.
7. Because of this, Romeo is banished by Prince Escalus, and Friar Lawrence with Juliet comes up with a plan to run away with Romeo after faking her death by taking a potion that would mimic death. Romeo doesn't hear about the plan because a plague breaks out and shuts down the streets, but Balthazar (Romeo's servant) gives Romeo mistaken news about Juliet's "death".
8. Devastated, Romeo buys poison from an apothecary and drinks it after visiting Juliet at her grave.
9. Juliet wakes up and discovers that Romeo is dead.
10. Juliet stabs herself with a dagger.

**Source:** Shakespeare, William, and John Crowther. *No Fear Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Spark Pub., 2003. *SparkNotes*, <https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/romeojuliet/>

## Activity: Shakespearean Sonnet

### Directions:

- **Step 1:** Freely write a poem (in any format) that tells the story of *Romeo and Juliet*
- **Step 2:** Then, re-shape your writing to create an original “Shakespearean Sonnet”
- See example brainstorm and “Shakespearean Sonnet” modeled below

### Step 1: Free Write [example]

#### **Romeo and Juliet: the Remix**

It's a tale of two loves doomed from the start,  
Romeo and Juliet - kindred hearts.  
Two rival families are fueled with hate,  
and their faithful feud seals their fates.

Romeo and Juliet are both engaged to another,  
but their souls aren't fed until they find each other.  
Juliet's parents throw a masquerade ball,  
and Romeo still sees her in the midst of it all.  
She looks from the balcony with eyes full of stars,  
oh so close but oh so far.

“Wherefore art thou Romeo” so simple and so sweet,  
the love they share can't possibly be beat  
Romeo finds a priest with amazing haste,  
getting wedded to Juliet is going to be great.

Tybalt Capulet's anger lights a fatal prize,  
he stabs Mercutio, bringing tears to Romeo's eyes.  
Then Romeo, in revenge for his friend,  
slays bold Tybalt, bringing him to an end.  
The Prince decrees not death, but exile.  
Juliet and Friar Lawrence make a plan to run away for a while.

Romeo with a shattered heart,  
buys poison to mend what fell apart.  
Juliet's death – he finds her distinct grave,  
He ends his life – darkening the day.

**Activity: Shakespearean Sonnet  
(continued)**



**Image Source:** poetryfoundation.org

**What is a Shakespearean Sonnet?**

According to the Poetry Foundation ([poetryfoundation.org](http://poetryfoundation.org)), a Shakespearean Sonnet is “comprised of three quatrains [4-line stanzas] and a concluding couplet, rhyming *abab cdcd efef gg*.”

**Shakespearean Sonnet [example]**

Title	<b><u>Romeo and Juliet: the Remix</u></b>
<b>Quatrain 1</b> Rhymes <i>abab</i>	It’s a tale of two loves doomed from the start, Of two rival families are fueled with hate. Romeo and Juliet - kindred in heart - Their families’ feud will seal their fate.
<b>Quatrain 2</b> Rhymes <i>cdcd</i>	Juliet’s parents throw a masquerade ball And she looks from the balcony with eyes full of stars. Romeo still sees her in the midst of it all Oh, so close, but oh, so far.
<b>Quatrain 3</b> Rhymes <i>efef</i>	Romeo finds a priest with amazing haste, But Tybalt Capulet’s anger lights a fatal prize. Getting wedded to Juliet is going to be great, But Mercutio’s death brings tears to Romeo’s eyes.
<b>Concluding Couplet</b> Rhymes <i>gg</i>	“Wherefore art thou Romeo” – so simple and so sweet. The love they share can't possibly be beat.

## The Daring Feats of *Duel Reality*

### **“An epic, *cirque-infused performance*”**

The most impressive thing about 7 Fingers is their circus and acrobatic stunts. In *Duel Reality*, there are so many different forms of breathtaking styles of circus that it’ll make your head spin. It is not just the number of various stunts, but also the sheer skill that it takes to successfully pull off what they do is mind-boggling. Below, we have identified a few of the most dynamic acts.

Description	Image
<p><b>Human Pyramid</b></p> <p>A human pyramid is a physically demanding demonstration of the endless bounds of human strength, balance, and agility. For the human pyramid to be successful, performers balance upon one another to create various formations. It’s showmanship, teamwork, and trust all rolled into one.</p> <p><b>Photo credit:</b> Alexandre Galliez</p>	
<p><b>Duo Trapeze</b></p> <p>Different from “flying trapeze” which most people associate with circus acrobats, duo trapeze tends to emphasize elegance and flowing movement sequences instead of the raw athleticism of flying trapeze. However, performers still typically work in pairs, a porter and a flyer, to create impressive formations and sequences that require the highest level of trust.</p> <p><b>Photo credit:</b> Kristen Theodore</p>	
<p><b>Teeterboard</b></p> <p>This is one of the most daring stunts because two performers take turns propelling each other into the air (sometimes 30 feet) by jumping on opposite sides of a board. They often add additional flips and tricks that ups the degree of difficulty to absurd yet jaw-dropping levels.</p> <p><b>Photo credit:</b> Mats Bäcker</p>	

**Sources:**

- *Cirkus Cirkör*. “Teeterboard – Circus Disciplines.” *Cirkus Cirkör*, <https://www.cirkor.se/en/circus-disciplines/teeterboard/>
- *Cirkus du Soleil Blog*. “Circus Acts and What Makes Them So Interesting.” *Cirque du Soleil Blog*, 26 June 2024, <https://blog.cirquedusoleil.com/circus-acts>

## Activity: Dare to Dance

### Standards

<b>GSE- Fine Arts</b>	<b>TAHSFT.CR.1</b> Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.  <b>TAHS.2.a:</b> Develop and apply acting techniques (e.g., voice, body, imagination) for character development in a variety of styles.  <b>TAHSFT.RE.1</b> Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
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### Dare to Dance: How To Create Your Own Dance

*Duel Reality* primarily uses music and movement to tell its story. While a lot of that movement is acrobatic or cirque, a good bit of the storytelling is done through dance, so we thought it would be meaningful to share this opportunity for others to step into the dancing shoes of 7 Fingers.

#### Step 1

Name of the dance =

(Setting in Romeo and Juliet) (Favorite Shakespearean object)

#### Examples

- The (Fair Verona) (Poison)
- The (Balcony) (Stars)
- The (Apothecary) (Lute)

**Activity: Dare to Dance  
(continued)**

**Step 2: Build the Dance**

Add two components from the lists below together to create your shiny brand new dance! Feel free to interpret the movements in a way that makes sense for you and your body. Then, turn on some music and show your dance to the world! Perhaps you can teach a whole group your dance and you perform it together like a true 7 Fingers performer!

**First Component**

<b><u>Biggest color in your outfit</u></b>	<b><u>Movement (à la R&amp;J Inspo)</u></b>
Red	Make an angry face (à la Tybalt)
Orange	Swing arms side to side with care (à la Nurse)
Yellow	Make X's with arms (à la "star-crossed")
Green	Snap and point with a smile (à la Romeo)
Pink	Shoulder pops with swagger (à la Mercutio)
Blue	Courageous, circular arm rolls (à la Juliet)
Any other	Double fist pumps (à la entering the Masquerade Ball)

**Second component**

<b><u>First letter of last name</u></b>	<b><u>Movement (with One Shakespearean Actor Technique)</u> <i>With Precision, Physical Freedom, or Heightened Expression</i></b>
A-D	Jump and down
E-H	Two-step
I-L	Kick one leg at a time across your body
M-P	Butterfly legs
Q-T	Do high knees one at a time
U-Z	Heel toe