

CULTURE VULTURE



Is this an adaptation which I see before me?

We are all familiar with Shakespeare. Whether it be Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth or Sonnet 18, Shakespeare's writing is something which is firmly placed into the canon of English Literature, with it being studied in schools around the country. But, Shakespeare's work hasn't only featured on exam specifications; it is also the basis for many well-known films. Here are just a few, and the famous plays which inspired them.

She's The Man (2006)

This 2006 film is a cult classic for many fans. It follows Viola Hastings (Amanda Bynes) – an American teen who wishes to play football for her school's team. When they deny her a place due to her gender, she pretends to be her twin brother Sebastian and take his place at Illyria school to play football and beat those who forced her out in the first place. Of course, she slowly falls in love with her roommate, Duke Orsino (Channing Tatum), which is made all the more confusing by her disguise. Throw in a few more incidences of confused identity, miscommunication, and love triangles, and the 2006 adaptation does Shakespeare's c.1601 comedy Twelfth Night justice.

10 Things I Hate About You (1999)

A timeless romance film, 10 Things I Hate About You can be seen as the break-through performance for many young actors, giving Julia Stiles, Heath Ledger and Joseph Gordon-Levitt some of their earlier screen time. It follows sisters Bianca – young, pretty and popular – and Kat – ill-tempered and reserved. The only issue? Bianca isn't allowed

to date until Kat dates. A perfect mix of comedy, romance and excellent 1990s music, this film is a loosely based adaptation of Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew, one of Shakespeare's lesser performed plays, with the original c.1590 work sparking debate about misogyny and possessiveness in a modern era.

West Side Story (1957, 1961, 2021)

In 1957, composers Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim put together the music for a stage show which is still widely enjoyed today. In 1961, this musical was adapted into a ground-breaking film, with it again being adapted in 2021. West Side Story follows two rival gangs – the Jets and the Sharks on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Maria, a Puerto Rican whose brother runs the Sharks, and Tony, who is seen to be the leader of the Jets with his friend Riff, quickly fall in love, and what follows is a heart-breaking race war as the two gangs fight out for control of the West Side in an evolving New York City. A tragic love story, this adaptation follows Shakespeare's world-famous 1595 play Romeo and Juliet. Both the adaptation and source text require tissues when watching!

There are some more notable mentions, including The Lion King, a Disney adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet (c.1601), Gnomeo & Juliet – no prizes for guessing what this is based on – and finally The King – a 2019 adaptation based on the characters and stories in Shakespeare's 'Henriad' plays.

Midnights Review

Lily Wells examines Swift's breakthrough album



MR EASTWOOD SUGGESTS: Two-Lane Black Top (Film)

I went to see this film in a lecture theatre in the early 1990s at a local uni film club. It was the first alternative film I had seen exposing me to US countercultures.



**TAYLOR SWIFT
THE ERAS TOUR**

Presented By
Capital One

TAYLOR SWIFT
TOURING

Whether you like her or not, it is evident that Taylor Swift is a record-breaking artist. This album has launched itself into a new league from a five-star 'Instant Classic' review by Rolling Stone to holding all Top 10 spots on the Billboard Top 200.

Midnights is her tenth studio album and marks a key shift: it encompasses the lyricism of her sister albums folklore and evermore with upbeat synth-pop sounds reminiscent of 1989, Reputation and Lover. It is all based upon the question: 'What keeps you up at night?' Swift revealed the key five things that kept her up at night: self-loathing, fantasising about revenge, wondering what might have been, falling in love and falling apart. It is a therapy session and a love letter bundled all into one.

Throughout this album she lets her intrusive thoughts spill into the lyrics giving a brutally true and honest album.

Swift has long been known for her storytelling and all 13 songs on this album each tell an intricate tale. I have hand-selected five tracks on this album that I truly love and believe represent the album at its core form.

The first single and chart-topping song Anti-Hero magnifies her self-loathing; it has painful lyrics cushioned by an upbeat synth sound. The principal meaning of the song is about feeling like you are the problem ("I'm the problem, it's me") which inevitably plummets you down into a depressing and haunting rabbit hole.

My favourite on the album is Snow on the Beach (featuring Lana Del Rey). This is about the rarity of two lovers both falling in love with each other simultaneously. It is as dreamy and whimsical as they come, echoed with Del Rey's vocals floating in and out of the song just like the flutters of falling in love. When people first came to listen to this song, many were upset about Lana only being 'backing vocals' but with a second and careful listen you can hear her spill through the song as well as her incredible work in the writing of the song.

Picking up the ideas about revenge, Karma takes centre stage. Swift has toyed with the theme of Karma numerous times throughout her career. This song focuses on how Karma is everything positive in her life: her boyfriend, cats and relaxing thoughts. She wants her foe to know that Karma never forgets and they will pay for what they have done. However, to her 'Karma is a god' and to those who have wronged her 'Karma's gonna track you down'.

This album is hard-hitting yet relatable with subtle melodies and vintage synthesizers. The vocal delivery of the album has rap and hip-hop influences as well as electronically manipulated vocal effects. Paste described Midnights' overall sound as "mov[ing] fairly effortlessly between the discotheque and moonlit boulevard."

To create mayhem, at 3am on the day after the release of the original Midnights album Swift released a 3am Edition with 7 more tracks, thereby sharing even more sleepless nights. She continues to outdo herself as she powers through the music industry. The question is: what will she do next?



Listen on Spotify
here!



Student suggestion: Town Called Malice (The Jam)



"The song was released in 1982. Written in the first years of Thatcherism, the song was a protest against the era; an era the lyricist, Paul Weller, would be very vocally opposed to for his entire career. The song was written about Weller's hometown of Woking - however was also poignantly meant to describe most British towns at the time. It discussed the hardships people faced at the times 'either cut down on beer or the kids new gear' referencing tightening financial circumstances for the working class in Britain. The term 'town called malice' described what he felt as a disintegration in communities within British towns and a disgruntled hit to individualism in the Thatcher years.

The song became a Number 1 hit on the UK charts with over 150 million Spotify streams and would largely define the entire band. This song, along with others such as 'down in the tube station at midnight' or 'going underground' showed a very harsh perspective on the era and politics of the times. As much as the song is enjoyable, it's also deeply relevant and poignant."

THIS WEEK'S WIT AND WISDOM:

'LIFE ISN'T ABOUT FINDING YOURSELF. LIFE IS ABOUT CREATING YOURSELF'
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

If you like Taylor Swift, why not try:

Lana Del Rey



Sugarland



Kacey Musgraves



Cian Ducrot



Phoebe Bridgers



Sam Hunt



Olivia Rodrigo



Joshua Bassett



WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

As the weeks progress, we are hoping Culture Vulture will become jam-packed with student articles, recommendations and reviews. If you would like to make your own creative suggestion, or have a piece of work that you would like to see in the next magazine, scan the QR code.



Make sure to encourage your tutors and friends to get involved, and let's make creativity central to the Gordano Sixth Form experience!

Alternatively, if you would like to contribute an article, film, album, book or podcast review, or have an itching to write a features piece about a current cultural affair, email either theysham@gordanoschool.org.uk or pramsay@gordanoschool.org.uk with your idea and they can point you in the right direction. Who knows - you may see your name in print!

