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## Press Release

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# Vermont Commons School Presents: Romeo and Juliet: Pirates vs. Ninjas

April 11, 12 and 13 at Contois Auditorium in Burlington

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Vermont Commons School is taking an unusual tack in portraying Shakespeare. For their annual spring play, they are producing *Romeo and Juliet: Pirates vs. Ninjas*.

**Why Pirates vs. Ninjas?** According to director Jana Beagley, “They’re the coolest villain/heroes in fantasy. They also have a natural antipathy for each other.” Movies such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Pirates of the Caribbean* have focused imagination on pirates and ninjas. The superiority of either group, whose values are so clearly at odds, has spawned a huge, viral response from the Internet. Websites and blogs dedicated to the debate have multiplied. Several science fiction and fantasy conventions around the country are now choosing the conflict as a theme.



This seemed like a natural fit for the hatred between the two warring families in *Romeo and Juliet*. “It also gives us an excuse for fabulous costumes and stage combat,” admits Beagley. “I’m not embarrassed to make Shakespeare fun. He gets the stuffy treatment a lot.”

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VT Commons School's reinterpretation involves Juliet's family as a rowdy group of pirates, and Juliet herself as a spirited, knife-wielding Captain's daughter. Romeo and his family are land-bound Ninjas, headed by Lady Montague as a formidable geisha. Another twist to the script is Romeo's pal, Mercutio, as a rough and tumble female ninja. It becomes obvious that she has a secret crush on Romeo, fueling an undercurrent of pathos in her joking and jesting.

**If you go:** Performances are April 11 and 12 at 7:00 pm and April 13 at 2:00 pm at Contois Auditorium in Burlington. Tickets are \$10 adults and \$5 students.

**Come early!** Arrive one hour before each performance to partake in a dessert reception and silent auction to support the Vermont Commons drama program. Silent auction items are listed online at [www.vermontcommons.org/spring-play/silent-auction](http://www.vermontcommons.org/spring-play/silent-auction).

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**About Vermont Commons School:**

Vermont Commons School is an independent day school for college-bound students in grades 7 – 12. The school offers a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum that includes a focus on community service and experiential education. The mission of the Vermont Commons School is to provide a vision of education that crosses traditional boundaries and develops ecological citizenship, with the goal of empowering students with the knowledge, character, skills, and moral vision necessary to become responsible, proactive members of the world community. For more information, please visit [www.vermontcommons.org](http://www.vermontcommons.org).

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