

Northwest Florida Ballet

Presents

Romeo & Juliet



Study Guide

This guide can also be downloaded online at www.NFBallet.org

NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Ballet

The Main Characters

The House of Capulet

Juliet

Young Juliet is the only daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet. About to turn 14, Juliet is attending her first ball. Though youthful and innocent, Juliet, like many girls in Renaissance times, must choose a husband to marry. Though brought up as a noble and dignified young woman, she is also strong willed. Her rebellious nature propels her to fall in love at first sight with Romeo, a Montague whose family is feuding with hers.



Lord Capulet

The father of Juliet, Lord Capulet is the head of a very important Veronese family of the 14th century. Though a loving father, Lord Capulet is very authoritarian and demanding. He is serious and steadfast and will not be rebuked.

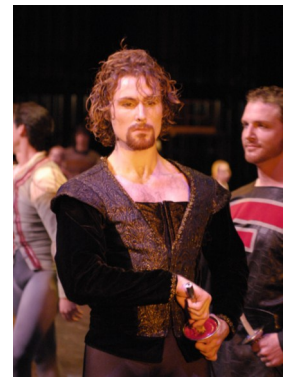


Lady Capulet

The mother of Juliet, Lady Capulet is a regal and noble woman. She was very young when she gave birth to Juliet and is still only about 28 or 30 years old. Lady Capulet is rather cold hearted and formal and doesn't seem to understand the needs of her romantic young daughter. Probably forced into an arranged marriage herself, Lady Capulet is unsympathetic to what true love is all about. She is also very ambitious and calculating and wants above all for her daughter to marry a wealthy nobleman. Lady Capulet despises the Montagues, almost as much as her nephew Tybalt does.

Tybalt

Tybalt is Juliet's cousin. He is not a very likeable character, for he is hot-tempered enjoys provoking others. Tybalt is full of hatred toward all the Montagues, including Romeo, and is always ready to start a fight. As his name implies, this man is tyrannical, cruel and powerful. Shakespeare calls him the "prince of cats."



Nurse

Since she was a baby, Juliet has been reared by her Nurse, who is not only motherly to Juliet, but is also her friend and confidante. The Nurse is a rolly-polly older woman who is talkative and lively and who loves gossip and intrigue. Loyal to young Juliet, the Nurse acts as the go-between for the lovers.

Paris

Count Paris is betrothed to Juliet. He is a young, handsome and rich nobleman. In Renaissance times, arranged marriages were not uncommon and more often than not the young couple didn't even have a chance to meet before their wedding day. By marrying Juliet to Paris, her parents mean to assure her wealth and a position in society. Luckily, Juliet does have an opportunity to meet Paris before their wedding day; she dances with Paris at the ball and finds that he is kind, but rather dull and cardboard-like, with no real personality.

The House of Montague

Romeo

Almost 20 years old, Romeo is a rather idle young man with no true purpose in life. The aristocratic son of Lord and Lady Montague, Romeo is not only a romantic, but also rather moody and melancholic. He is very introspective and spends his time moping about Verona. Romeo lives lost in a dream world and, like the true idealist, is in love with love. When we first meet Romeo, he is flirting with Rosalind, but his attraction to her is nothing but a diversion of the moment and is lost when he sets eyes on Juliet. He is suddenly intoxicated by a love that transforms this handsome and passionate youth into a man filled with tenderness, generosity and love. But Romeo's passion and high-strung energy prove dangerous and bring him much sadness through the deaths of his best friend, Mercutio, and his bride, Juliet.



Lord Montague

The father of Romeo, Lord Montague is an older man, wise and calm. Though for many years his family has been feuding with that of the Capulets, Lord Montague is not a violent man and he would much rather see peace in Verona.

Lady Montague

The mother of Romeo and wife of Lord Montague, Lady Montague is calm, quiet, regal and dignified. Unlike the haughty and domineering Lady Capulet, Lady Montague is peace-loving.

Mercutio

Mercutio's name is very revealing of his character. As William Shakespeare notes in his play *Love's Labour's Lost*, "the words of Mercury are harsh." And like his namesake, the Roman god Mercury, Mercutio is wild, witty, impulsive and quick with his tongue. Above all, Mercutio is Romeo's best and truest friend. All of Mercutio's wonderfully spirited energy causes him to be rather volatile and fiery, which gets him into trouble. He seems flippant and light-hearted about everything, acting as if nothing is very serious, yet he has a heart of gold and is a loyal friend.



Benvolio

Benvolio's name also gives a clue to this man's nature, for he is truly a do-gooder. He is benevolent, wise, moderate and peace loving. It is Benvolio who is constantly cautioning his friends Romeo and Mercutio and acting as a pacifist in their quarrels with Tybalt.

Duke of Verona

A stately older man, the Duke rules over the people of Verona and represents law and order. He does not take sides in the family feud, but even this upholder of justice cannot stop the bloodshed in Verona, which he calls a "cankered hate."

Friar Laurence

Friar Laurence is a Franciscan monk. The Friar lives a good and simple life of prayer and meditation. He is a calm, affectionate and wise holy man, who takes no side in the feud of the Montagues and Capulets and is therefore a friend and confidant to all. The Friar would like to see an end to the feud and is therefore willing to marry Romeo and Juliet in the hope that their love will end the bloodshed and hatred in Verona. Friar Laurence, like many monks of his day, is a scholar, scientist, philosopher and medicine man, a healer who works with herbs. He truly represents the spiritual nature of a torn community.



The Story



ACT I

Scene 1 - The Marketplace

Romeo, son of Lord Montague, tries unsuccessfully to declare his love for Rosaline, and is consoled by his friends, Mercutio and Benvolio. At daybreak the townspeople meet in the marketplace, and a quarrel develops between Tybalt, nephew of Lord Capulet and Romeo and his friends. The Capulets and Montagues are sworn enemies and a fight begins. The Lords Montague and Capulet join in the fray, which is stopped when the Prince of Verona appears and commands the families to end their feud.

Scene 2 - Juliet's Bedroom

Juliet is engrossed in teasing her nurse when her parents tell her that Count Paris has asked for her hand in marriage. She is flattered.

Scene 3 - Outside the Capulet House

Guests arrive for a ball. Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio, disguised in masks, join in pursuit of Rosaline.

Scene 4- The Ballroom

Romeo and his friends arrive at the height of the festivities. Juliet is introduced to Paris and told she is to marry him. The guests watch Juliet dance and Romeo is thrilled by her beauty. Mercutio distracts the guests when Paris becomes suspicious. Romeo and Juliet now dance and Romeo takes his mask off so that Juliet can see him. Tybalt recognizes him as a Montague and only with difficulty does Juliet's father prevent an embarrassing scene.

Scene 5- The Gardens of the Capulet House

Juliet stands on the balcony of her room after the ball. Romeo appears in the garden below, Juliet goes to join him and they declare their love.

ACT II

Scene 1- The Marketplace

Romeo dreams of the day when he will marry Juliet. Juliet's nurse enters in search of Romeo to give him a letter from Juliet saying that she secretly consents to marry him.

Scene 2- Friar Laurence's' Cell

Romeo arrives and asks the Friar to marry them. Juliet enters and they are married.

Scene 3- The Marketplace

As the Guests dance, an argument erupts and Tybalt kills Romeo's friend Mercutio. Romeo takes his revenge and stabs Tybalt. The Capulets appear and grieve over the body.

Scene 4- Juliet's Bedroom

Romeo and Juliet are together but Romeo must leave by dawn. Juliet's parents enter with Paris and her nurse to announce Juliet's imminent marriage to Paris. They are puzzled by Juliet's refusal and she is left alone. Juliet rushes to Friar Laurence.

Scene 5- Friar Laurence's' Cell

Juliet falls at the Friar's feet and begs his help. He gives her a vial of sleeping potion, which will make her fall into a death-like sleep. Her parents, believing her dead, will bury her in the family tomb. Meanwhile, Romeo will be warned by Friar Laurence and return under the cover of darkness and take her away from Verona.

Scene 6- Juliet's Bedroom

Juliet agrees to marry Paris, her parents are delighted. Left alone, Juliet drinks the potion, and when her parents arrive with Paris the next morning they think she is dead.

Scene 7- The Capulet Family Crypt

Romeo fails to receive the Friar's message and returns to Verona consumed by grief by Juliet's death. Romeo enters and himself drinks poison at Juliet's side. When Juliet awakens from her death-like sleep, she sees her dead lover and stabs herself in the heart.



The Composer

Sergei Prokofiev



Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev was a Russian composer who mastered numerous musical genres and came to be admired as one of the greatest composers of the 20th century.

Sergei Prokofiev was born on April 23, 1891, the centenary of Mozart's death, in a small village in the Ukraine, Sontsovka. Prokofiev's father, originally from Moscow, was an agricultural engineer in this important region, his mother was, in Gliere's words, "a tall woman with magnificent, intelligent eyes... who knew how to create around herself a warm, natural atmosphere." Having lost two daughters she devoted her life to music and spent two months a year in Moscow or St. Petersburg taking piano lessons. It was she who was the musical influence on young Sergei, beginning to teach him the piano at age 3. He wrote his first composition when he was six, The Indian Galop. After a trip to Moscow at age 8 where he was exposed to The Sleeping Beauty, Faust and Prince Igor, he declared "I want to write an opera." Three or four months later he presented his parents with The Giant, an opera in three acts and six tableaux for solo piano. Prokofiev eventually was tutored by young Reinhold Glière for whom he developed a great affection, especially after he had accepted Prokofiev's challenge to a duel with pistols. From time to time he also took trips to Moscow to visit Taneyev (a composer and the future director of the Bolshoi Theater).

By age twelve it was decided that Prokofiev should continue his studies at a Conservatoire. Eventually, in 1904 he was sent to the St. Petersburg Conservatoire so that his mother could be close to him. The Conservatoire at this time was under the direction of Rimsky-Korsakov. He was also introduced to Glazounov. Despite a faltering first meeting Glazounov dedicated his Fantasy Waltz "To my dear colleague, Sergei Prokofiev, from Glazounov."

Against the established thinking of the Conservatoire, Prokofiev became a committed anti-Romantic, not liking the music of Chopin and Liszt. In 1914, despite not playing one of the prescribed Classical concertos, he won the Rubenstein Prize for piano performance playing his own composition.

The year of the Russian Revolution, 1917, turned out to be a creative time for Prokofiev producing the Violin Concerto in D major and the Classical Symphony. Prokofiev moved to the United States in 1918 where he gave his first recital November 11th. In America he was greatly discussed, somewhat admired but little liked being variously described as "the Bolshevik pianist" or "Steel fingers, steel biceps, steel triceps - he is a tonal steel trust." The lack of success for his opera The Love of Three Oranges, commissioned by the Chicago Opera in 1921, was enough to spur Prokofiev's relocation to Europe.

On return trips to Russia in 1927 and 1929 Prokofiev was enthusiastically received. Following a comparative lack of success in Europe and the United States, he returned to Stalin's Soviet Union for good in 1932. The next years produced Lieutenant Kijé, Romeo and Juliet, War and Peace and Cinderella. In his homeland he was celebrated and honored until the 1948 crackdown on Soviet composers by the Central Committee under Stalin's orders. (This was also the year of his marriage to Mira Mendelson.) After that time all music had to conform to strict criteria to "advance Soviet musical culture so as to lead to the creation, in all fields of music, of high-quality works worthy of the Soviet people." The result was uncontroversial music of artistic in consequence.

Prokofiev died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Moscow, March 5, 1953, the same day that Stalin died. He was buried near Scriabin and Chekov.



Costumes

When we think of a ballerina we usually picture a lovely woman with a sparkling crown on her head wearing a beautiful costume of satin and jewels. The costumes' skirt is short, full and flares outward. This is a tutu. Ballerinas have worn the tutus that we know today for more than a hundred years. In the earliest days of ballet, when members of the royal courts of Europe danced ballet, dancers wore variations on the formal clothing of their day. As ballerinas were able to perform more interesting and difficult footwork, skirts became lighter and shorter so the audience could see their legs and feet.

However, the tutu is only one kind of ballet costume. There are many different types of costumes for both the ballerina and the danseur, the male ballet dancer. There are tights and leotards, long romantic dresses, jackets and peasant skirts, to name just a few. Costumes often describe the character a dancer is portraying – a prince or a princess, sailor or a beautiful white swan. Costumes add a feeling or mood to the dance by their color or design. A costume can give you a sense of the time and place of a ballet. Are the dancers wearing colorful Chinese pajamas, elegant ball gowns with long white gloves, or bright military uniforms?

After talking to the choreographer, it is the job of the costume designer to draw sketches, choose fabrics and create all of the costumes for the ballet. The Costume Shop will buy material, dye it, sew it and decorate it. The designer must always remember that the dancers need to move freely and easily in their costumes.

Dancers try on their costumes before they perform in them to be sure that they fit securely. Since many different dancers often perform the same role, costumes have rows of snaps and hooks so that they can be easily adjusted for each dancer.

Costumes add to the spectacle of a ballet. But most importantly they must help us see the choreography and the dancer's movements.



Student Activities

PRE-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSIONS:

1. Prior to attending the performance, students should discuss audience etiquette. Common etiquette rules include:
 - a) Turning off cellphones or electronic devices;
 - b) No video or other recordings are allowed inside the theatre;
 - c) Audience members should remain seated and should not leave or enter the auditorium during the performance;
 - d) There is no talking during the performance; and
 - e) Clapping should be polite and appropriate.

Please see page 10 for further etiquette guidelines.

Discuss why these rules exist. Consider a short role-playing exercise during which students can experience what it is like if an audience is disruptive during class time.

2. Through discussion or written response, reflect on the following:
 - What are some plays or live theatre productions you have seen?
 - Have you seen ballet performed before?
 - How is a story told through dance?
 - What is a ballet? What makes it different from other dancing?
 - Compare and contrast: How is telling a story through ballet the same/different from a live theatre play? A movie in a theatre? A television show at home? A book? Which do you prefer? Why?
 - Who decides how the dancers tell the story?
 - How do the dancers learn their parts?
3. Through discussion or written response, reflect on the following:
 - Are you familiar with William Shakespeare?
 - Have you read the play *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare?
 - Have you ever seen any of the movie adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*?
4. In a ballet performance there are typically no words spoken on the stage. The dancers must tell the audience the story using only their body movements and gestures, which they execute to the accompaniment of music. Often mime is used to relay specific elements of the story. Divide students into groups of two or more. Using the gestures, students can create their own stories using mime and perform them for the rest of the class. Can the audience follow the story?

POST-PERFORMANCE DISCUSSIONS:

1. *But ballet is just for girls....*

Ballet can be enjoyed by boys, girls, men and women. It is very hard work and requires great athletic ability, coordination and strength. Many dancers perform a 2 ½ hour ballet with only a few short breaks. Are you able to lift a person above your head and have it appear effortless? Are you able to perform several gravity-defying leaps?

Compare and contrast qualities of professional dancers to those of professional athletes. Make a list of qualities that are similar between a ballet dancer and any of the following types of athletes: football player, hockey player, basketball player, figure skater.

2. Write a response to *Romeo and Juliet* commenting on various elements in the ballet (e.g. the dancers, music, costumes, special effects)

- What did you like and dislike about the performance?
- Are you interested to see the full-length performance?
- How does the ballet compare to what you had pictured before the performance?
- How was it different or similar to other ballets or shows you have seen?
- How did the choreographer use dance to show emotions or tell the story?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

1. *Romeo and Juliet* has many interesting characters. Choose a character and discuss what makes this character important to the story. Does the character have any unique qualities? Does the character's movement and costume enhance their personality? How does the music contribute to your feelings about the character? Talk about each character in the story. Have students move as a specific character. Allow them to think, move, feel and interact with each other as they imagine that character would.
2. Make a masquerade mask that you would use if you were invited to the masquerade ball in *Romeo and Juliet*. Discuss why people use masks and what they represent. How much of their face it is going to cover and why? What are they hiding with their mask and what are they revealing?

INTERNET LINKS:

Information about William Shakespeare

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare

Information on Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prokofiev_romeo_and_juliet

Additional information on composer Sergei Prokofiev

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prokofiev>



Ballet Vocabulary



Accent – A strong movement or gesture.

Balance – A state of equilibrium referring to the balance of weight or the spatial arrangement of bodies.

Ballet – A classical Western dance form that originated in the Renaissance courts of Europe. By the time of Louis XIV (mid-1600s), steps and body positions underwent codification.

Ballerina – A female ballet dancer of the highest ranking.

Barre [*bar*] – The place where a dancer goes to begin his/her class work. The barre is a long pole that gives the dancer support. After the dancer has done barre work to warm up, he/she will move to the center the classroom or studio to practice increasingly complex steps.

Choreographer – One who creates and composes dances by arranging or inventing steps, movements, and patterns of movements.

Composer – One who writes music.

Corps de ballet [*kawr duh ba-LAY*] – A group of dancers who work together as an ensemble. They form the background for the ballerina and her partner and are the backbone of any ballet company.

Gesture – The movement of a body part or combination of parts, with emphasis on the expressive aspects of the move. It includes all movements of the body not supporting weight.

Libretto – The text on which a ballet is choreographed; the story of a ballet.

Motif – A distinctive and recurring gesture used to provide a theme or unifying idea.

Pantomime – The art of telling a story, expressing a mood or an emotion or describing an action without words.

Pas de Deux [*pah duh DU*] – a dance for two people, traditionally between a ballerina and the male dancer of the highest ranking.

Pointe Shoes – Shoes worn by female dancers that enable them to dance on the tips of their toes. The area covering the toe is made of layers of fabric glued together in the shape of a “box” covered in satin and hardened. The sole is made of hard leather to prevent the shoe from breaking when bent. To keep the shoes on tightly, the dancers sew satin ribbons and elastic to the sides and tie the ribbons securely around their ankles. A pair of pointe shoes may only last for 3 to 4 days of work.

Rehearse – to practice.

Technique – The physical skills of a dancer that enable him or her to execute the steps and movements required in different dances. Different styles or genres of dance often have specific techniques.

Tempo – The speed of music or a dance.

Turnout – The ability of the dancer to turn their feet and legs outward from the hip joints to close to a 180-degree position.

Tutu – Ballet skirt, usually made of net or tulle. Tutus may be of varying lengths. While the style and mood of the ballet help to determine the preferred tutu length, the dancer’s technique is most clearly visible when she wears a short tutu.

More ballet terms can be found at www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index.html

Theatre Etiquette

General Information:

- Please plan to arrive at Mattie Kelly Arts Center at least 30 minutes prior to the performance.
- The performance will begin promptly and lasts approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.
- Let your students know in advance what behavior is expected of them. This is a LIVE performance. Unlike television or the movies, the people on stage are there at that moment and are dancing for the audience's pleasure. Any noise distracts them. The performance will be exciting, but let your students know that they will be required to sit quietly in their seats for a fairly long period of time.
- School clothes are appropriate dress, however, some students may choose to "dress up."

Once you arrive at the theatre, please....

- No food, drink, chewing gum, cameras or recording equipment is allowed inside the theatre. Please leave these items at home as we do not have provisions for storing these items at the theatre.
- It is important to accompany your students to the restrooms before the performance begins. It is inappropriate to visit the restrooms during a live performance, unless there is an emergency. Ushers will direct you to restrooms.
- We recommend that you provide your students with some guidelines of things to look and listen for during the performance. You may also want to encourage your students to add to the following list.

Students should be encouraged to:

- a. Watch the dancers
- b. Listen to the music
- c. Look at the costumes and set designs
- d. Laugh when they see the dancers doing something funny
- e. Clap when the dancing has finished to show the dancers that they are enjoying the performance. It is customary to applaud when the dancers take a bow.

Students should be encouraged not to:

- a. Talk or make noise because they might miss something important.
- b. Chew gum or eat because it is disruptive to others and makes a mess in the theatre.
- c. Leave their seats before the lights go on because this is very disruptive to their neighbors.
- d. Bring cameras, ipods, or headphones to the theatre because this is disruptive to the dancers and other members of the audience.