



ROMEO AND JULIET

The activity addresses PA Academic Standards 9.3.12.A, 9.3.12.B, 9.4.12.C and National Core Arts Standards MU:Re9.1.8a, MU:Cn10.0.8a, MU:Re 7.1.8a

You Be the Judge

Critical Review

All artists make choices. Each time an artist makes a decision about how to present their art, they are making a choice for a specific time, place, and purpose. When the PSO decided to explore Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* for Schooltime, we had to make lots of choices! Among the factors we considered were student age, learning objectives, concert length, instrumentation, financial resources, and artistic themes.

One of the first decisions we had to make was whether to present a complete telling of the story *Romeo and Juliet* or to organize the concert in another way. We decided not to focus on telling the complete story from beginning to end. Instead, we chose to highlight certain scenes where Prokofiev and Shakespeare make specific artistic choices:



- How Prokofiev and Shakespeare each start the story
- How the character of Juliet is introduced
- How the plot is moved forward
- How falling in love is represented
- How conflict is represented
- How Prokofiev and Shakespeare each end the story

Other choices we had to make were:

- **Presentation:** Do we include any of Shakespeare's original script? Which lines? When? How? Performed by actors? Read by the conductor? Projected on a screen? How should the conductor interact with the audience?
- **Repertoire:** Which movements of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* should we perform? Which version of which movement – from the original ballet or from one of the suites? Should each movement be played in full or should we prepare shorter excerpts? Why?
- **Staging:** How much space do we have to use? Where should the actors be? What should we do with the lighting? Do we want to use video or visuals on the screens? Should we include dance? Does any action happen off stage?

Now it's your turn to weigh in. Think about your experience at Schooltime: *Romeo and Juliet*. Write a critical review of the performance. Include discussion of the artistic choices made in presenting Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet*, as well as any other elements that impacted your experience.

- What choices were most effective?
- Why do you think the PSO made the choices it made?
- What would you do differently? Why?

Cite specific examples in your review and provide an overall critique of the concert.



Your feedback is a gift! Let the PSO know what you think. Send your critical review to us at LCE@pittsburghsymphony.org or via mail to:

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