

PROKOFIEV

Romeo and Juliet: selections



***Romeo and Juliet Suite (selections)* by Sergei Prokofiev**

Stage 5 & 6 Teaching Resource

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Acknowledgements

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“Your life can be changed and enriched through all sorts of music; music from now, music from the past, music from the very distant past and music from as recently as yesterday.

Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.

As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music.”

Richard Gill AO

(1941-2018)

Conductor, notable educator and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at the Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generation of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.

Syllabus Links

NSW Curriculum

Romeo and Juliet Symphonic Suites Op.64 by Sergei Prokofiev cover a range of topics from the NSW Curriculum:

Years 7-10 Elective (2003)

Art Music of the 20th and 21st Centuries

Music of a Culture

Music for Large Ensembles

Theatre Music

Music 1 Preliminary and HSC (2009)

Music and the Related Arts

Music for Large Ensembles

Music of a Culture

Music of the 20th and 21st Centuries

Theatre Music

Music 2 Preliminary (2009)

Music of a Culture

Music 1900-1945

Music 2 HSC (2009)

Music of a Culture

Music 1900-1945

Syllabus Outcomes

Stage 4 and Stage 5 Elective Music

| Activities | Syllabus Outcomes | Ideas for assessment |
|------------|--|--|
| 1 | 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.12 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.12 | Performance of classroom arrangement Music video using classroom performance |
| 2 | 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.12 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.12 | Aural responses Composition using Juliet's music |
| 3 | 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 4.12 5.1, 5.4, 4.6, 5.7, 5.9, 5.12 | Identification of Prokofiev's composition ideas Composition using Prokofiev's technique |
| 4 | 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.11 5.1, 5.4, 4.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.11 | Notes on texture and timbre Composition highlighting texture and timbre |
| 5 | 4.7, 4.9, 4.10 5.7, 5.9, 4.11 | Research project Essay |

Stage 6 Music 1

| Activities | Syllabus Outcomes | Ideas for assessment |
|------------|--|---|
| 1 | P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10, P11 H1, H2, H4, H5, H6, H8, H10, H11 | Performance of classroom arrangement Music video using classroom performance |
| 2 | P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P9, P10, P11 H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H9, H10, H11 | Accuracy of aural responses Composition using concepts studied |
| 3 | P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P10, P11 H2, H4, H5, H6, H7, H10 | Choreographing this movement Composition in the Prokofiev style |
| 4 | P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P9, P10 H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H9, H10 | Analysis of the use of texture and timbre Composition using techniques of texture and timbre |
| 5 | P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6 | Research project Essay |

Stage 6 Music 2

| Activities | Syllabus Outcomes | Ideas for assessment |
|------------|--|---|
| 1 | P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P6, P9, P10, P11, P12 H1, H2, H5, H6, H7, H6, H9, H10, H11, H12 | Musical elements creating mood Performance of classroom arrangement |
| 2 | P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P11, P12 H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H11, H12 | Aural responses to themes Composition using themes |
| 3 | P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P10 H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H10 | Identifying harmonic and melodic dissonance Using Prokofiev's technique for original composition |
| 4 | P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P10, P11, P12 H2, H3, H4, H5, H7, H10, H11, H12 | Use of texture and timbre Composition emphasising texture and timbre |
| 5 | P2, P5, P6, P7 H2, H5, H6, H7 | Research project Essay |

Resources

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- Breidenbach, K. (2021). *Prokofiev: The Young Juliet (w. Full Score)*. Retrieved from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37XW2vgLlrU>
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- Robinson, H. (1987). *Sergei Prokofiev. A Biography*. Northeastern University Press.
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- Shulman, L. (2019). *Winter Festival: Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet - Notes on the program*. Retrieved from New Jersey Symphony Orchestra: <https://www.njsymphony.org/assets/doc/1920-S5-Winter-Festival-Prokofievs-Romeo-and-Juliet-online-extended-notes-174222582b.pdf>
- Taruskin, R., & Nestyev, I. V. (2024). *Sergey Prokofiev*. Retrieved from Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sergey-Prokofiev>
- Tobias, M. W. (2016). *Suite from Romeo and Juliet*. Retrieved from Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra: <https://www.indianapolissymphony.org/backstage/program-notes/prokofiev-suite-from-romeo-and-juliet/>

Audio Excerpts



Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet - The Montagues & Capulets* (Emilia Hoving/Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q817PeBk7Mc>



Sergei Prokofiev *Masks* from *Romeo and Juliet*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POoAht_HRsE



Prokofiev - *Tybalt's Death* from *Romeo and Juliet* (Gewandhausorchester & Andrey Boreyko)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVm3J6kHClc>



Yuri Botnari. Prokofiev ,*Romeo and Juliet –The child Juliet*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5SGA67FDC4>

Work: *Romeo and Juliet Symphonic Suites 1 and 2* by Sergei Prokofiev

Selections:

Montagues and Capulets (Suite 1, no.1)

Juliet as a Young Girl (Suite 2, no.2)

Masks (Suite 1, no.5)

Death of Tybalt (Suite 1, no.7)

Composer Background

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Saturday, 9th November 2024: Russian forces entered the village of Sontsivka “as part of their drive westward to capture all of the Donbas region” (theguardian.com). Sontsivka, Ukraine, is the birthplace of Sergei Prokofiev, the most famous of Ukrainian composers. It is interesting that his village had its name changed to Krasne by the Soviets in 1927, and back to Sontsivka in 2016 due to decommunization policies of modern Ukraine. This political regime turmoil has lasted more than a century and had a huge impact on Sergei Prokofiev and his music in his lifetime.

Sergei spent most of his life in Soviet Russia. He was a legendary chess player, probably a legacy of his father who was a soil engineer. But he owed his musical interest and emerging genius to his mother, a dedicated pianist who studied in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

Prokofiev composed his first piano piece at age 5 and learned chess by age 7. In 1900, aged 8, he composed his first opera, “*The Giant*”. He was given music by Grieg on his 13th birthday which sparked a lifelong exploration of unconventional harmonies. He was a clever and motivated child.

While studying in the conservatory of St. Petersburg (1904-1914), Prokofiev’s interest took him into explorations of the new Modernist influences in art, literature, theatre and music outside of the conservatory. This began his decided inclusion of the angular, discordant aspects of harmony and rhythm in musical design that grew in complexity year by year. He was influenced by Diaghilev and Mussorgsky and his “*Scythian Suite*” and “*The Gambler*” of 1915-1916 expressed his growing synthesis of lyricism with satire, rhythm with malice. Then came the Russian Revolution of 1917. Sergei celebrated on the streets with everybody else, but it only took a few years for him to discover that music, especially his kind, had no place in the new regime.

So, he went abroad, in what would be some 20 years in wanderings from London to Japan, from the United States to France, and Western Europe. From 1918 to 1933, the USSR blockade prevented him returning to Russia permanently, although he did tour in 1927.

In New York City he was received with “delight and denunciation” and this duality somewhat followed Prokofiev wherever he went. It caused some distress for him, and he altered his style to be more audience-friendly, while continuing his modernist explorations.

This period is characterised by his opera, *The Love of Three Oranges*, *Piano Concerto No.3*, *Violin Concerto No.1* and *Symphony No.2 in D minor*.

His piano performances were highly celebrated with marvels such as his *Piano Concerto No.4 for Left Hand* and *No.5 in G major*, with characteristic “impulsiveness and virtuosic brilliance”.

Even with all his international highlights he kept on being drawn back to Russia, to home. He returned permanently in 1938 and became a leading figure in Soviet culture. The constraints of the Stalinist regime led Sergei to a new synthesis of tonal and melodic elements with modernist stylistic innovations. Of his many compositions in this period, the most celebrated are probably: *Violin Concerto No.2 in G minor*, the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, film music for *Lieutenant Kije*, *Egyptian Nights* and *Peter and the Wolf*. Interestingly, Prokofiev died of a brain haemorrhage on 5th March 1953, aged 61, just 50 minutes before the death of Joseph Stalin. Their lives were intertwined to the end!

Although Prokofiev found some solace in the Christian Science movement, he recognised the danger of losing his creativity in the turbulence of the Stalin era, in which several of his colleagues lost their lives. He trod a precarious path but remained true to what he wanted in his music to the end.

His compositions include: 7 operas, 7 symphonies, 8 ballets, 5 piano concertos, 1 cello concerto, 2 violin concertos, 1 symphony-concerto for cello, 9 piano sonatas and 1 symphonic fairy-tale (*Peter and the Wolf*).

Sources

Books

Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography by Harlow Robinson (the prologue has an interesting account of his death)

Sergey Prokofiev and His World ed. Simon Morrison

Online

Encyclopaedia Britannica – Sergey Prokofiev (very comprehensive)

Sergey Prokofiev: Revolutionary composer who gave us some of the 20th Century's most dazzling music by Daniel Jaffé Publ. Sept 13, 2024

Journalist and Critic, BBC Music Magazine

(An excellent classroom resource with written commentary and relevant YouTube examples of Prokofiev's music).

Work Background

The ballet *Romeo and Juliet* by Sergei Prokofiev had a most successful premiere performance in Leningrad on January 11, 1940. At the supper reception that followed, the Juliet dancer, Galina Ulanova, said this as she toasted Sergei: “Never was a story of more woe than this of Prokofiev’s music for Romeo”. A clever parody of Shakespeare’s lines, but a very true summary of the backstory of Sergei’s ballet.

First, **his music**: consisting of dissonant, angular progressions in the melody lines, but also memorable song-like lyricism; then the bold, rhythmic energy of the music, with heavy use of syncopation, irregular accents and unexpected twists and turns and in addition, his innovative harmonies experimenting with frequent dissonance, strange tonalities and fluid harmonic centres.

Second, **the dance companies**: First, the Kirov Theatre of Leningrad rejected it, then the Bolshoi Theatre of Moscow signed a contract for it, but when they saw the score, decided it was impossible to dance, so they tore up the contract. Then a storm erupted over Prokofiev’s altered ending with Juliet not dying and living “happily ever after”. Prokofiev said he did this because “Living people can dance, the dying cannot”. So, Prokofiev salvaged the music in two orchestral suites, distributing them throughout Europe, hoping to promote public interest, which he did! This resulted in Kirov of Leningrad taking it on, but only after the humiliating world premiere of it by the Brno Opera of Czechoslovakia in 1938. Finally, Kirov gave it its Russian Premiere in 1940.

Thirdly, **choreography**: the dancers did not consider the ballet to be danceable! It just didn’t sound like dance music. The dancers said the music was too quiet in places to even hear and invited Sergei on stage to listen himself. They were right and he altered the score. He did compose additional music for the Bolshoi production of 1946 and the choreographers got the gist of how his music could be represented in dance. The 1946 Bolshoi premiere was a resounding success, and the ballet has been considered one of the greatest from Russia ever since.

It seems that Sergei Prokofiev lived most of his adult life composing with three tensions that he was always trying to reconcile: the new modernist music he fell in love with on the streets, in the cafes, and alternate performance spaces of St Petersburg; the political expectations of the Soviet Stalinist regime; and the ability of audiences to receive his music. He strove to meet the expectations of the latter two (political and audience) without compromising what *he* imagined the music should sound like.

Prokofiev’s music has been described as “at once modern and traditional, nostalgic and mocking, lyrical and savage” ... a style amounting to “grotesque contradictions” resounding with “the cruel and gentle ironies of his life”. In the context of ballet, this was like nothing that had gone before. The dancers needed to act, to express a character’s feelings, not merely to use formal dance technique. But once choreographers and dancers got the hang of it, they were satisfied, audiences were satisfied, and the expected conventions of 19th century ballets were superseded with an exciting new medium.

But none of this success would have happened if Prokofiev didn’t have the brilliant idea of making three Symphonic Suites from the music of the ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*, to inspire interest and expectation in the public, who were largely responsible for a push resulting in its production.

Sources

Books

Sergei Prokofiev, A biography by Harlow Robinson

Listen to the Music by Jonathan D Kramer

Online

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, *Suite from Romeo and Juliet*, by Marianne William Tobias, 2016

Suite from Romeo and Juliet, Boston Symphony Orchestra by Harlow Robinson

Instrumentation of Work

| Woodwind | Brass | Percussion | Strings |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 piccolo | 4 horns | timpani | violin I |
| 2 flutes | 2 trumpets | glockenspiel | Violin II |
| 2 oboes | 1 cornet | tubular bells | Viola |
| 1 cor anglais | 3 trombones | xylophone | Cello |
| 1 bass clarinet | 1 tuba | triangle | Double Bass |
| 1 tenor saxophone | | tambourine | |
| 2 bassoons | | tymbals | |
| 1 contrabassoon | | maracas | Harp |
| | | wood block | Piano |
| | | snare drum | Celeste |
| | | bass drum | |

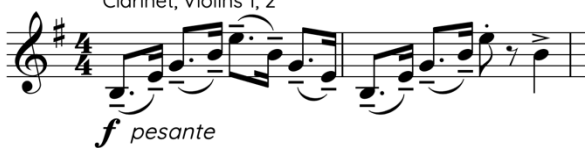


Listening Guide

Montagues and Capulets (Suite 2, Movement 1)

YouTube: Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet – The Montagues and Capulets* 2024 (Emilia Hoving/Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra) 5.41

Form: Prelude & Ternary Form

Key: E minor – F minor – E minor

| Section | Bars | YouTube | Features/Themes |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------|--|
| <i>Prelude – Andante</i> | 1-16 | 0.10 - 1.33 | Fortissimo brass, winds above shimmering, soft background strings with a slow andante tempo combined with dramatic harmonic dissonance. This sets the mood for tragedy of the lovers amidst the conflict of their families. |
| <i>Allegri pesante</i> | 17- 62 | 1.33 - 3.23 | A <i>pesante</i> minor 3 rd bass theme from low brass and low strings introduces the hideous war-stomp of the Montagues & Capulets introduced by clarinets and violins (bar 19-34) in the key of E minor. |
| | 19 - 34 | | <p>Clarinet, Violins 1, 2</p>  <p><i>f pesante</i></p> <p>A haughty countermelody from the horn accompanies the rhythm of the main theme.</p> |
| | 35 - 38 | | <p>Horns (all 4 in octaves)</p>  <p><i>f</i></p> |
| | 45 - 48 | | The main theme moves up a semitone to F minor. |
| | 52 - 62 | | The main theme returns to the original key, E minor. |
| <i>Moderato tranquillo</i> | 63 - 93 | 3.23 - 4.44 | Feigned relief from the main theme in this slow, soft but equally grotesque waltz, from the flute with full orchestral accompaniment. |
| | | | <p>Flute 63 - 70</p>  <p><i>p dolce</i> <i>p espressivo</i></p> |
| <i>Allegro pesante</i> | 94 -111 | 4.44 - 5.27 | A shortened, more intense return of the war-stomp concludes the movement with a final crashing <i>fortissimo</i> . |

Juliet as a Young Girl (Suite 2, Movement 2)


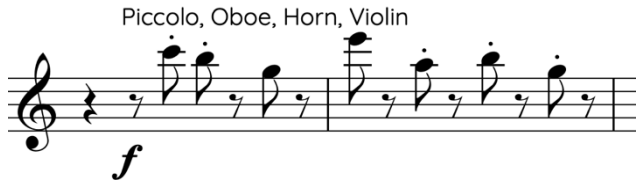

YouTube: Yuri Botnari. Prokofiev, *Romeo and Juliet*, "The child Juliet" (George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra) (4.12)

Form: Theme and Episodes

Key: C major, A^b major, A major, C major, E minor

The theme is quick and energetic, representing childish exuberance.

The episodes are often slower, reflective, romantic, representing mood changes, but with a hint of the theme.

| Section | Bars | YouTube | Features/themes |
|--|---------|-------------|--|
| Theme(1 st) <i>Vivace</i> | 1 - 8 | 0.08 - 0.21 | <p>The theme is announced in the first 8 bars, pf the vivace. A rising figure followed by a matching descending figure, in C major.</p>  |
| Episode 1 | 9 - 18 | 0.21 - 0.37 | <p>A staccato quaver melody mostly on winds accompanied by staccato arpeggiated semiquavers from the violins.</p>  |
| Theme (2 nd) | 19 - 26 | 0.37 - 0.49 | <p>The theme modulates to E major, returning to C major in bar 26 to conclude.</p> |
| Episode 2 | 27 - 34 | 0.49 - 1.06 | <p>A short, slow, ascending and descending lyrical theme reminiscent of the theme and played by solo clarinet, in A flat at a slower tempo.</p>  |
| Theme (3 rd) | 35 - 42 | 1.06 - 1.25 | <p>A shortened, quieter theme in A major with a dreamy ending using theme fragments.</p> |
| Episode 3 | 43 - 63 | 1.25 - 2.49 | <p>A rhapsodic episode featuring solo flute, solo cello, solo saxophone, horns and harp.</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---------|-------------|--|
| <i>Piu tranquillo</i> (<i>quasi andantino</i>) | | | |
| Episode 4 <i>Piu animato</i> | 64 - 71 | 2.49 - 3.08 | A faint echo of the theme in this animated episode that is based on Episode 2. Solo flute (<i>con eleganza</i>). |
| Theme (4 th) <i>Piu Animato</i> (<i>Vivacet</i>) | 72 - 79 | 3.08 - 3.22 | A restatement of the theme in 8 bars. |
| Coda <i>Andante doleste</i> | 80 - 88 | 3.22 - 4.10 | A quiet, lyrical ending based on phrases from Episode 3 and the Theme. |



Also see YouTube: Prokofiev: *The Young Juliet* (with full score) (3.42). Students can listen to the whole movement and follow the orchestral score.

Masks (Suite 1, Movement 5)

YouTube: Sergei Prokofiev *Masks from Romeo and Juliet* (conductor Maxim Rysanov) (2.14)

Form: Ternary (A A B A)

Key: B flat major, A major, B flat major





| Section | Bars | YouTube | Features/themes |
|--|---------|-------------|--|
| Section A (repeated) <i>Andante marciale</i> | 1 - 21 | 0.06 - 1.10 | In the style of a march, the movement commences with drums introducing Theme A in the violins:  |
| Section B | 22 - 29 | 1.10 - 1.35 | A merry tune with interesting accidentals moving from B flat major to A major. Featuring solo instruments: cornetto, clarinet, oboe:  |
| Section A | 30 - 39 | 1.35 - 2.13 | The conclusion of Section B serves for the introduction of Section A (28-29). The movement concludes with 2 rhythmic bars, finally <i>lento</i> . |

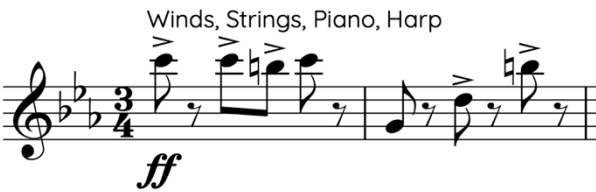
Death of Tybalt (Suite 1, Movement 7)

YouTube: Prokofiev – *Tybalt's Death from Romeo and Juliet* (5.04) (Gewandhausorchester & Andfey Boreyko, 2003).

Form: Programmatic, i.e. follows the storyline.

Key: A flat major, G major, A flat major, E major, A flat major, C major/A minor, C minor.

| Section | Bars | YouTube | Features/themes |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--|
| Section 1 <i>Precipitato</i> | 1 - 71 | 0.00 - 1.21 | <p>Romeo and Juliet have secretly married. Now on the streets, the youth of the rival families encounter each other. Finally, Tybalt challenges Romeo to a duel, but Romeo refuses.</p> <p>Two themes predominate: a 'threatening theme', in A flat major:</p> <p>Bars 9 – 12:</p>  <p>And a 'vigorous posturing' theme, A flat major:</p> <p>Bars 12 – 15:</p>  |
| Section 2 <i>Presto</i> | 72 - 144 | 1.21 - 1.49 | <p>Mercutio accepts the challenge and turns the duel with Tybalt into a farcical dance. The 'threatening theme' morphs into completely vigorous action with ascending and descending semiquaver passages:</p>  |
| | 108 - 119 | 1.50 - 2.02 | <p>A section with sword jabs, sharp action, less posturing, more serious threat; short, semiquaver and quaver 2-note phrases from different sections at different times (C major).</p>  |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|--|
| | 120 - 148 | 2.02 - 2.28 | The previous semiquavers ascending and descending, but this time with offbeat accompaniment in winds and brass plus percussion. This concludes with punctuated semiquaver phrases, 138-142, and finally fortissimo semiquavers in the same semitone interval for 4 bars as the danger climaxes. |
| Section 3 | 149 - 163 | 2.28 - 2.45 | 15 bars with just one accented quaver per bar depicts the final moments of Tybalt's agony. Timpani, winds and horns sound the death-knell. |
| Section 4 <i>Adagio drammatico</i> | 164 - 196 | 2.45 - 4.43 | <p>A slow, searing, funereal theme depicts the Capulet procession through Verona's streets as the body of Tybalt is borne to the prince demanding justice. This music also foreshadows the even greater tragedy that will follow.</p> <p>The section consists of this rhythm throughout bars 156-166 (C minor):</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Winds, Strings, Piano, Harp</p> |

Learning Activities

Activity 1 Aural/Musicology/Performance

Montagues and Capulets

At the end of this activity, students should be able to:

1. Describe the mood of an orchestral movement.
2. Identify musical features that contribute to the creation of this mood.
3. Perform a section of this movement with a small ensemble.
4. Record the performance of the classroom arrangement by the ensemble.
5. Represent the mood of the music using computer graphics to create a music video.

This activity: Explores the musical elements that create the **mood** of *Montagues and Capulets*, as well as a performance accompanied by creative adaptation using technology.

- Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet – The Montagues & Capulets* (Emilia Hoving/Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q817PeBk7Mc>
- Full orchestral score available at www.free-scores.com
- Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet Suite No. 2, Op. 64* (with Score) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LVmH4bwH3Q>

Background: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is the romance of two teenagers from two families that have a history of disagreement and antagonism: the Montagues (Romeo's family) and Capulets (Juliet's family). This movement portrays a ball with the two families in attendance.

The music is presented in four main sections: Bars 1 – 16: Prelude; bars 17 – 62: *Allegri Pesante*; bar 63 – 93: *Moderato Tranquillo*; bar 94 – 111: repeat of *Allegri Pesante*.

Task 1

Listen to bars 1 – 93 of *Montagues and Capulets* once and describe your immediate response to what you perceive is the mood of each section.

Task 2

Listen to bars 1 – 93 another 6 times, each time distinguishing one feature of the musical elements listed that significantly contributes to the mood you described in Task 1.

| Musical Element | Bars 1 – 16 | Bars 17 – 62 | Bars 63 – 93 |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Duration/rhythm | | | |
| Pitch/melody | | | |
| Dynamics | | | |
| Articulation | | | |
| Tonality/key | | | |
| Texture | | | |

Task 3

The Classroom Arrangement *Families at War!* uses an excerpt of bars 17 – 62 to experience Prokofiev's famous music firsthand!

Preparation: Study *Families at War!* to answer these questions about the score:

1. Find the meaning of *Allegro pesante*.
2. What is the tonality/the key?
3. How would you perform notes with these markings?



4. Describe the roles of Parts 1 and 2 compared to Parts 3 and 4.
5. Use guitar tablature to identify the harmonic structure and progression from bars 1-20.

Task 4

Performance: Plan the details of how you will perform *Families at War!*

1. Determine the sound source: on a keyboard, or available instruments suitable for each of the four parts.
2. Decide which group member(s) will play each part.
3. Practice parts separately, until they can be played accurately at speed. Give attention particularly to articulation.
4. Rehearse your ensemble's performance.
5. Record your performance.

Task 5

Use your recording to produce a music video using computer graphics you choose to help express the mood(s) you first identified in this exciting movement from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* suite.

Task 6

Evaluating your music video:

1. Construct a feedback form to seek viewer response to your group's music video.
2. From the responses make a list of **positive responses**.
3. Also from the responses, make a list of **constructive criticisms**.
4. As a group identify ways you could improve your music video musically and visually.

Montagues & Capulets (Families at War!)

Allegro pesante

1

2

3

4

7

1

2

3

4

12

1

2

3

4

16 (8)-----|

1

2

3

4

20

1

2

3

4

8^{va}-----|

8^{vb}-----|

25

1

2

3

4

8^{va}-----|

ff *f*

ff *f*

Activity 2 Aural/Composition/Performance

Juliet as a Young Girl

At the end of this activity, students should be able to:

1. Identify a theme by listening to an orchestral work without a score.
2. Identify the main instrument(s) playing the theme.
3. Determine tempo, dynamics and articulation markings for the theme.
4. Suggest an overall form for the movement.
5. Use the themes from *Juliet as a Young Girl* to create a composition that also depicts a human or animal character.
6. Collect feedback and use it in the composition process.

This activity: Requires listening to themes, identifying themes and marking themes with indications for performance. Students then use these ideas to create their own compositions.

For this activity, students use either of these YouTube videos:

- Yuri Botnari, Prokofiev, *Romeo and Juliet* – *The Child Juliet* (4.12s)
- *The Young Juliet* (w. full score) (3.42s)

Task 1

Notable themes from *The Child Juliet* are quoted below.

1. Listen (but don't watch) either of the YouTube performances and identify the main instruments you can hear playing the themes quoted:





| Theme | Instrument(s) playing the theme |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| A | |
| B | |
| C | |
| D | |

2. Listen to *The Young Juliet* again and match the tempo/style of each theme with the word list.

| Theme | Tempo/Style |
|-------|----------------------|
| A | Dolce/piu tranquillo |
| B | Vivace |
| C | Con eleganza |
| D | Vivace |

3. Listen to *The Young Juliet* again and indicate **articulation** for accents, phrasing and touch (staccato etc.) using appropriate markings.

4. Listen to *The Young Juliet* again and write in markings indicating **dynamics**.

5. Suggest a **form** that would fit this movement. Give reasons for your suggestion.

6. Watch the YouTube video: *The Young Juliet* (with full score) and correct your answers to 1 – 5.

Task 2

Using all the aspects of these themes you have studied, suggest how each theme could depict *The Young Juliet*.

Task 3

Use these themes, in any order, to create your own composition to portray a character from a movie, cartoon or fairy tale (e.g. Scrat from *Ice Age*) or an animal (e.g. a Meerkat). Note: *Bluey* often uses themes from classical music to portray character activity.

Task 4

Perform your composition on a suitable instrument for your colleagues. Issue a **Feedback Form** seeking audience response. **Amend** your composition after analysing feedback responses.

Task 5

Assess your final composition in a paragraph, including an evaluation of how this process for composition was worthwhile.

Activity 3 Score Reading/Musicology/Composition

Masks

At the end of this activity, students should be able to:

1. Study a score to determine its stylistic features without having heard the music.
2. Identify main themes and how they are used in the overall structure of the form.
3. Define orchestra markings used in this score.
4. Identify the melodic and harmonic progressions of an early 20th century orchestral score.
5. Use the ideas of a historical orchestral work to create a 21st century composition.

This activity: Studies Prokofiev's synthesis of conventional and modernist idioms to construct understandable and satisfying music. Students also use Prokofiev's ideas to create their own compositions.

For this activity, students use either of these YouTube videos:

- Sergei Prokofiev, *Masks from Romeo and Juliet* (Maxim Rusanov) (2.14s).
- Prokofiev: *Masks* (with Full Score) (2.58s).

Story background: The three Montague "larrikins", Romeo, Benvolio and Mercutio arrive at the Capulet Masked Ball. It is a stealthy, mischievous arrival at the "enemy-stronghold". Romeo wears a clown mask, to incite Tybalt with this mockery.

Music background: This music belongs to Prokofiev's so-called "Soviet Period". He is blending his modernistic tendencies (or is he disguising them?) with the "realistic and epic" expectations of the Soviet State cultural expectations.

The "Prokofiev Style" has been summarised by some musical scholars to have the following features:

- **Melodic lyricism:** distinctive memorable melodies that occasionally plunge into dissonance.
- **Rhythmic drive:** energetic, sharp rhythms of classical forms that incorporate syncopation and unexpected contrast.
- **Innovative harmonies:** departure from conventional tonalities and harmonic progressions with dissonant modulations.

However, with all of Prokofiev's progressive leanings, he managed to please a brutal regime's expectations. This was his genius!

Task 1

Study these features of the orchestral score **before** you listen to the *Masks* movement:

1. Describe the **tempo** you can expect in this movement. Does it vary at any stage? Give reasons for your responses to tempo and variation.
2. Describe the **style** you can expect in this movement. Give reasons for your expectations, especially from bars 1-4.
3. Describe the **rhythm** and **pulse** that is established in the first four bars. Do these change during the movement?
4. Write out the main motive established in the first opening bars. Place an asterisk above the score wherever you find this motive throughout the movement.
5. How would you describe this motive in terms of pitch/melody, duration/rhythm, harmony, style/mood?
6. List any evidence you can find of the “Prokofiev Style” in bars 1-11: melodic lyricism incorporating modernist tendencies, rhythmic drive, innovative harmonies with changing harmonic centres, inclusion of dissonance.

Task 2

Listen to the first 11 bars while following the score and note any features you did not expect from your review in Task 1 (questions 1-6). Now follow the score with the YouTube performance, especially noting the following as you proceed:

1. Check your asterisks above the appearance of the **main motive**.
2. Mark the appearance of any motives.
3. Write out the second motive and list features that are similar and those that are **variant** when compared to the main motive.
4. How would you describe the **form** of the movement.

Task 3

Prokofiev takes a great deal of care to indicate how he wants the music to be played. Find the meanings of these indications in the score of *Masks*:

- *Andante marziale*
- $\text{♩} = 72$
- *Un poco cresc.*
- *Pizz.*
- *Gettando l'arco*
- *Spiccato*
- *Rit.*
- *Lento*

Task 4

This movement of Prokofiev's orchestral suite was originally intended to be accompanied by dance and movement portraying emotions, actions, intentions and character.

Work in groups of 2-3 to determine how you would choreograph movement, considering the story background outlined earlier. Pencil in your directions above the orchestral score.

Task 5

Take a closer look at Prokofiev's melodic and harmonic dissonance by playing through this simple reduction of the main theme:

The musical score is a reduction of the main theme from Prokofiev's 'Masks'. It is written for piano and features a complex interplay of melodic and harmonic dissonance. The score is organized into three systems of staves. The first system consists of a bass staff and a treble staff. The bass staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a crescendo (*un poco cresc.*), and then a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The treble staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, followed by a forte (*f*) dynamic. The bass staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The third system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic, followed by a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, and then a crescendo (*cresc.*). The bass staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

(Note: It's difficult to include every dissonant tone)

1. Circle *conventional* harmonies and melodic phrases in **blue**.
2. Circle *unconventional* harmonies and melodic phrases in **red**.
3. Comment on how Prokofiev could incorporate modernist early 20th century techniques with conventional classical style, using this keyboard reduction of the *Masks* theme as an example.

Task 6

1. Work in pairs to use Prokofiev's conventional and non-conventional melodies and harmonies to create your own "Prokofievan" music. Start with a melody line and add a bass line.
2. Perform your "Prokofievan" composition for the class and explain how you have used his ideas.
3. Comment on the value of studying Prokofiev's music for 21st century compositions.

Activity 4: Score Reading/Composition/Performance and Aural

Death of Tybalt

At the end of this activity, students should be able to:

1. Listen to orchestral music and determine the role of **texture** in conveying character, emotion and action.
2. Listen to orchestral music and determine the role of **timbre** in conveying character, emotion and action.
3. Deduce the interaction of **texture** with **timbre** to convey character, emotion and action.
4. Use these ideas to create a composition or improvisation utilising **texture** and **timbre**.
5. Perform and evaluate the composition/improvisation.

This activity: Is a study of the use of **texture** and **timbre** in the movement *Death of Tybalt* to convey action, character, emotion, even words.

For this activity, students will use the following YouTube video:

Prokofiev – *Tybalt's Death from Romeo and Juliet* (Gewandhausorchester, Andrey Boreyko).

Some Considerations

What was Prokofiev thinking when he chose *Romeo and Juliet*, the great work of *words*, for the *wordless* medium of ballet?

It would be up to the orchestra to be the *words* – he literally had to put text into the instrument's sounds.

We have studied ways how he did this in Activities 1, 2 and 3 – largely through melody, harmony, tone, articulation, dynamics and so on. But some of the great features Prokofiev also used were almost hidden in plain sight: these included *texture*, the layering of instruments; and *timbre*, the tone colour, the exquisite sound of instrument combinations, and the intersection of texture with timbre.

This activity explores the way texture and timbre are used by Prokofiev to give the instruments the *words* of the great bard.

The Story

The music is **programmatic**: it describes actions. For the purpose of this activity, it is divided into 5 sections:

Bars 1 - 18: The two mobs, the Montagues and the Capulets meet on the streets of Verona on the morning of Romeo and Juliet's secret marriage. It is strutting before the fighting.

Bars 19 - 68: Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, challenges Romeo to a duel. Romeo refuses because they are now related. Mercutio accepts the challenge, a sword fight ensues. Tybalt stabs Mercutio, who dies (pause at bar 68).

Bars 69 - 144: Romeo pursues Tybalt. A furious, more frantic duel follows, ending in the fatal stabbing of Tybalt by Romeo.

Bars 145 - 164: The death agony of the dying Tybalt.

Bars 165 - 196: The Capulet mob carries the slain body of Tybalt through Verona's horrified streets, seeking justice from the prince.

Task 1

Either with or without the score listen to each section *at least three times* making notes on **texture** and **timbre** as you listen.

Work in pairs to discuss how the instruments separately and together “speak” describing action, emotions and works. Use the following grid to record what you hear and the inferences you make (the grid may take up to 1-2 pages):

| Bars | Texture (layering of sounds) | Timbre (quality of sound combinations) | Inference ("words" ... the portrayal of action and emotion) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 - 18 Strutting | | | |
| 19 - 68 Duel Mercutio dies | | | |
| 69 -144 Duel Tybalt dies | | | |
| 145 - 164 Tybalt's death knell | | | |
| 165 - 196 Procession | | | |

Don't know where to start?

Hint: Listen for what each instrument group (strings, winds, brass, percussion) is doing itself and in combination with the other instrument groups. Both layering of sound and quality of sound.

Task 2

When a large goanna climbs a eucalypt tree with its sights on a bird's nest, the birds go berserk, screeching and attacking to protect the eggs. Choose two or more instruments or different qualities, one (at least) to represent the goanna, and one (at least) to represent the bird. Create at least 8 bars that use **texture** and **timbre** to portray the action.

Note: This may also be an *improvisation*.

Task 3

Perform your composition/improvisation for your colleagues and evaluate the success or otherwise of your performance.

Activity 5: Research Assignment/Essay

Research Topic

“Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet is a carefully moulded musical and emotional structure in which the music is not only intimately related to the stage’s action but is also a self-referential dramatic construct which can readily stand on its own.”

– Howard and Jim Svejda, LA Philharmonic

Discuss the veracity of this assessment of *Romeo and Juliet* including relevant research you have conducted in these activities.

Essay Topic

Throughout his musical composition career, Prokofiev balanced society’s expectation, political stringencies and his own ideas in almost all his published work. How much should society, culture and politics be allowed to determine creative output? Discuss using examples from Prokofiev’s work amongst others.

Suggested Answers

Activity 1

Montagues and Capulets

Task 1

Mood (suggestions):

1 - 16: foreboding, dread, terror.

17 - 62: menacing, intimidating, angry, aggressive.

63 - 93: simmering, snarling, cynical.

Task 2

Musical elements (suggestions)

| Musical Element | Bars 1 – 16 | Bars 17 – 62 | Bars 63 – 93 |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| duration/rhythm | sustained chords | dotted rhythms | like a waltz |
| pitch/melody | not well defined | arpeggios – ascending and descending | ascending and descending phrases |
| dynamics | both very loud, very soft | relentlessly loud | soft |
| articulation | sustained legato | all notes heavily accented | legato |
| tonality/key | minor | minor | minor |
| texture | thick, uniform | unison melody crotchet beat base | thin melody line above thick accompaniment on the beat |

1. This is a prelude that sets the tone, the mood, and the anticipation of the action to follow. It does this with a combination of dynamics and dissonant harmonics.

Task 3

1. *Allegro*: fast, lively, *pesante*: heavy, weighty.
2. E minor to F minor.
3. Parts 1, 2: the melody.
4. Parts 3, 4: the bass harmony and rhythm.
5. **Note**: legato accent **Note**: mezzo staccato **Note**: long accent
6. Bars 1 – 4: Em; bars 5 – 6: Bm; bars 7 – 8: F-sharp/A-sharp - Bm
Bars 11 – 14: Dm; bars 15 – 16: Am; bars 17 – 20: E/G-sharp - Am
Bars 19 – 20: G

Task 4

Student activity.

Task 5

Student activity.

Task 6

Student activity.

Activity 2

Juliet as a Young Girl

Task 1

1. Theme A: violins (every bar), with woodwinds (alternate bars).

Theme B: piccolo, oboe, glockenspiel.

Theme C: clarinet.

Theme D: flute.

2. Theme A: *vivace*.

Theme B: *vivace*.

Theme C: *con eleganza*.

Theme D: *dolce/piu tranquillo*.

3. See score excerpt below

4. See score excerpt below





5. **Form:** students may suggest **Rondo** with justification: consider it “theme with episodes”, because it is not quite a standard rondo.

6. Student activity.

Task 2

Student responses – suggestions:

Themes A/B – vitality and energy of a young girl.

Themes C/D – quieter moments of reflection, contemplation.

The variability of youthful moods and activities.

Task 3

Student activity.

Task 4

Student activity.

Task 5

Student activity.

Activity 3

Task 1

1. *Andante*: at a moderately slow tempo, a walking pace; *Marciale*: in the style of a march. The movement proceeds without any variation in tempo until the last few bars, where it has the indications: *rit*, *ritardando* – gradual slowing down of tempo: and *lento*, slowly.

2. Bars 1 - 4 with side drum, cymbals, and triangle sets up a military-style rhythm and soundscape. This gives the strong impression of a **march**.

3. A strong 4-beat pulse, with quaver “fill-ins”. There is no variation in this throughout the movement.

4. Found at bar 5, 14, 30.



5. Pitch: first 2 beats a flourish concluding a 4th above the tonic, then finishing with 2-note phrase at an interval of an 8th (Bar 1 – 2).

Rhythm: opening demi and semiquavers flourish followed by quavers and crotchets.

Harmony: 2 bars on the tonic B-flat, then it moves through F-sharp to D and back to B-flat (quite an effective sequence, typical of Prokofiev).

6. All of these elements are present here and have been mentioned in suggested responses above.

Task 2

1. Student activity.

2. Student activity: there is another motive commencing bar 22:



3. Similar to main motive:

- i. Strong crotchet/quaver pulse.
- ii. Unexpected note progression (to E natural).
- iii. Semiquaver flourish.

Difference from main motive: this is a descending motive, whereas the main motive is ascending.

4. Ternary: A A B A

Task 3

- *Andante marciale*: at a slow pace in the style of a march.
- Metronome speed.
- *Un poco. cresc.*: a little gradually getting louder.
- *Pizz.* = *pizzicato*: pluck the strings with fingers.
- *Gettando l'arco*: an extremely energetic staccato.
- *Spiccato*: bowing technique involving a light bouncing of the bow on the strings.
- *Rit.* = *ritardando*: gradually slow the speed/tempo.
- *Lento*: slowly.

Task 4

Student activity.

Task 5

1. Student activity.

2. Student activity.

3. Student response. This could include: the use of F[#] in a B^b chord in bar 4 (an augmented triad); the accidental in the melody, bars 5, 6.

Task 6

1. Student activity.
2. Student activity.
3. Student activity.

Activity 4

The Death of Tybalt

Task 1

Student response.

Task 2

Student activity.

Task 3

Student activity.