

Enriching the Humanities Through Opera

Title: Production Design Adaptation

Grade Level: 9-12th

Length: 45 minutes

Literary Work: *Romeo and Juliet* (William Shakespeare)

Opera: *Roméo et Juliette* (Charles Gounod, composer; Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, librettists)

Inquiry Question: How does production and visual design aid in storytelling?

Lesson Focus: Students will use critical thinking, creativity, social-emotional learning, and collaboration while exploring stage design and the visual world of storytelling in opera.

Prior Knowledge: Students have read *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare), analyzed characters and can name the Who, What, When, and Where, participated in the Exploring Story Adaptation lesson, and created an opera adaptation pitch.

Materials: Copies of *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare), presentation slides (includes *Roméo et Juliette* short opera synopsis with photography and video examples), libretto excerpts of key scenes, completed opera adaptation pitch worksheets (from Exploring Story Adaptation lesson), production design definitions handout, elements of design definitions handout, costume design worksheet, set design worksheet, production design questionnaire, student laptops/tablets, paper, interactive board, pens/pencils, and colored pencils.

Key Vocabulary: Production Design (set design, props, costume design, lighting design, projection design, and hair/makeup design), Elements of Design (color, line, texture, shape, texture, form, space, value, and pattern), and Overture.

Definitions

- **Production Design:** The process of creating the visual aesthetic and environment for a film, television show, commercial, or other forms of media. It involves creating sets, props, as well as costumes, projections, and other visual elements that help bring the story to life and immerse the audience in the narrative. The Production Designer is responsible for overseeing the creation of these elements, working closely with the director, producers, and other key creatives to ensure that the visual style of the production aligns with the overall vision and tone of the project.
 - **Set Design:** The art and practice of creating the physical environment in a theatrical production, film, television show, or other visual medium. This includes scenic elements and design layout for sets, lighting, props, and

furniture to bring the story or concept to life. It involves arranging these elements in a way that enhances the audience's visual and aesthetic experience. Set design may also involve creating technical elements such as sound systems, special effects, and rigging to support the production. Set designers work closely with other production team members to create a cohesive and visually appealing environment complementing the production's overall vision.

- Props: A term commonly used in live performance and film production to refer to objects or items used on stage or on set to enhance the performance or scene. Props can include anything from furniture, decorations, weapons, hand-held objects, and more. Props are used to add realism and detail to a production and help bring the world of the play or film to life for the audience.
- Costume Design: The process of creating costumes and outfits for characters in theatre, film, television, or other visual media. It involves researching the time period, setting, and character traits to develop pieces that help bring the character to life. Costume designers work closely with directors, actors, and other production team members to ensure that the costumes accurately reflect the vision of the production. This can involve sourcing or creating garments, accessories, and props, as well as coordinating fittings and alterations. Costume design plays a crucial role in storytelling and character development, helping to enhance the overall visual and emotional impact of a production.
- Lighting Design: Refers to the art and practice of creating and controlling the lighting for a performance. This includes designing the placement and intensity of the lights and using different colors and effects to enhance the performance's mood and atmosphere. Lighting designers play a crucial role in enhancing the storytelling and emotional impact of the production, helping to set the stage, highlight performers, create a sense of place and time, and evoke different emotions in the audience. It is an integral part of the overall visual and artistic design of the production.
- Projection Design: The art of creating and manipulating projected images and videos to enhance the visual elements of a live event, such as a concert, theater production, dance performance, or installation. It involves using specialized software and hardware to project images, videos, or other visual content onto a surface, such as a screen, wall, or even the audience itself.
- Hair and Makeup Design: Refers to the planning and execution of hairstyles and makeup looks for performers and actors. This creative process involves analyzing the characters or themes in the performance, researching historical or cultural references, and designing hair and makeup that enhances the overall aesthetic and storytelling of the production. Hair and makeup designers work closely with directors,

costume designers, and performers to create a cohesive and visually impactful presentation on stage or screen.

- **Elements of Design:** The basic components or building blocks that make up a visual composition. These elements include color, line, shape, texture, form, space, value, and pattern. Each element plays a critical role in creating a successful design and influencing how the viewer perceives and interacts with the artwork. By manipulating and combining these elements, designers can create visually appealing and cohesive compositions that effectively communicate their intended message or evoke a specific emotional response.
 - **Color:** The visual sensation produced by the reflection or absorption of light. Colors can be categorized as primary (red, blue, yellow), secondary (orange, green, purple), or tertiary (colors created by mixing primary and secondary colors).
 - **Line:** The path of a moving point, created by a pencil or brush. Lines can be straight, curved, thick, thin, or dotted, and can be used to create shapes, patterns, and textures.
 - **Shape:** A two-dimensional object with a defined boundary. Shapes can be geometric (such as squares, circles, and triangles) or organic (such as leaves, flowers, and animals).
 - **Texture:** The surface quality of an object, which can be visual or tactile. Textures can be smooth, rough, shiny, matte, or any combination thereof.
 - **Form:** A three-dimensional object that is geometric or free form. Like shape, form has length and width, but also has depth.
 - **Space:** The area around, within, or between objects. Space can be positive (the actual objects in a composition) or negative (the empty or empty areas).
 - **Value:** Refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. It is a critical aspect of visual communication, as it can greatly affect the mood, contrast, and overall aesthetic.
 - **Pattern:** A repeated decorative design or motif. Patterns can be created through the repetition of lines, shapes, colors, or textures.
- **Overture:** A musical composition that is typically played at the beginning of a performance, such as a concert, opera, or ballet. It is usually a short, instrumental piece that sets the story and characters as well as the tone and mood for the rest of the performance, often including themes and motifs that will be repeated throughout.

Objective(s): At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Respond to the musical and storytelling elements of opera to develop criteria for visual artistic choices.
- Refine an adaptation pitch to demonstrate critical understanding of the visual elements of stage design and opera to tell a story.

- Create visual representations of their set and costume designs based on their opera adaptation pitches.

Assessment: Evaluate the production design questionnaire, which explains the choices in set and costume design visual representations created by each group, looking for evidence of critical thinking, creativity, and their ability to successfully communicate their adaptation pitches.

Assessment Rubric

4: Displays exceptional critical thinking and creativity in set and costume design choices. Clearly and effectively communicates adaptation pitch. Uses at least three elements of design in a highly impactful way.

3: Demonstrates critical thinking and creativity in set and costume design choices. Effectively communicates adaptation pitch. Uses at least three elements of design.

2: Shows some evidence of critical thinking and creativity in set and costume design choices. Partially communicates adaptation pitch. Uses at least two elements of design.

1: Does not demonstrate critical thinking or creativity in set and costume design choices. Does not effectively communicate adaptation pitch. Uses less than three elements of design.

Learning Standards:

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

National Core Arts Standards

VA:Cr1.1.IIa. Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.

VA:Cn10.1.IIIa. Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

MU:Cn11.0.T.Ia. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

TH:Re7.1.I.a. Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choice.

TH:Cr1.1.I.a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr.2-II.a. Refine a dramatic concept to demonstrate a critical understanding of historical and cultural influences of original ideas applied to a drama/theatre work.

Procedure:

Introduction/Hook (5 minutes):

- Begin with a multi-sensory listening activity of an excerpt of the overture from the opera *Roméo et Juliette*.
 - [PBS LearningMedia™](#): Roméo et Juliette | Act I | The Metropolitan Opera 03:28 – 05:30
 - As they listen, ask students to use their senses and invite them to write down any colors, mood, spaces/places, textures, foods, etc. they can associate with the music.
 - Have students share their findings as a class or with partners.
 - An example of a finding could be a student sees the color green which reminds them of the smell of fresh cut grass and the feel of grass under their feet.
 - Ask students to ponder how this all relates to storytelling.

Main Narrative/Sequence (10 minutes):

- Discuss how artistic processes often begin this way and inspiration comes from many different sources, often our own experiences, perspectives, and prior knowledge and research.
- Define Production Design as the visual world of the opera - enhancing the storytelling, context, emotional experience, and communicates mood.
 - Display the elements of production design and definitions, including:
 - Set design, costume design, props, lighting design, projection design, and hair/makeup design.
 - Creative team: collaboration of designers
- Show examples of set designs from multiple productions of the opera. (Found in presentation slides.)
 - When highlighting the multiple ways the opera has been designed, discuss color, costume, props, sets, location, etc.
- Introduce/define Elements of Design and discuss their use in provided examples.
- Explain we will be curating design ideas for our opera adaptation pitches we created in the Exploring Story Adaptation lesson.
 - Reference this lesson's introductory listening activity and ask students to consider all that was discussed when designing their adaptations: color, mood, textures, spaces/places, etc.
 - Students should use at least three elements of design in their work.
- Encourage students to find inspiration through the literary work, opera libretto, and research on their computers and/or tablets, but to be mindful of intellectual property laws.

Activity/Practice (20 minutes):

- Students collaborate to visually represent set designs and costume designs using their opera adaptation pitches. Instructor may choose one pitch for the whole class to adapt or have students work with their group's pitch from the Exploring Story Adaptation lesson.

- Students break out into their Exploring Story Adaptation lesson groups or may choose to work independently.
- Pass out groups' previously completed opera adaptation pitch worksheets.
- Each group or independent student should receive a production design questionnaire to fill out and help guide the process.
- Students can be assigned designer roles within their groups.
- Students may use the set design and costume design worksheets to sketch out their designs or create collages using magazine cuts. Students may also choose to engage with the worksheets digitally by adding images.

OR

- Students may use a school district approved AI image creator to craft mood/concept boards.

Present/Share (8 minutes):

- Willing groups share their set and costume design sketches with the class using the questionnaire as a guideline for presentation.

Reflection (2 minutes):

- Ask students to reflect on the process of refining their opera adaptation pitches by developing set and costume designs in collaboration with their group or independently. Ask and discuss:
 - “How has your experience with adapting a story visually change your perspective on storytelling or your approach to developing ideas?”

Extension/ Follow-up/Next steps:

- Discuss the connections to professions in the opera industry and to other artforms, such as fashion, architecture, etc., and other music genres. Delve deeper into how designers get inspiration – how do they research and find imagery that connects to the storyline.
- Students can take their set and costume designs to the next level and create set models, involving scale, and use recycled materials and fabrics to make costumes.

***Roméo et Juliette* (1867)**

Charles Gounod, composer; Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, librettists

Romeo and Juliet is a turducken of adaptation, an Italian poem, to an English poem, to a play, to an opera and more! Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is in itself an adaptation. Written circa 1594–6, *Romeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare's earliest tragedy other than the remarkably violent *Titus Andronicus*. For his source material, he turned to an earlier narrative poem by the English writer Arthur Brooke, "The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet" from 1562. Brooke in turn had been inspired by a story by the Italian poet Mateo Bandello—some of whose other tales made their way into Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*.

Gounod's librettists, Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, closely followed Shakespeare's text, often using direct translations of the original's expressions and metaphors. As a whole, the opera condenses the action of the play and focuses it more tightly on the story of the two lovers.

Short Synopsis

The opera *Roméo et Juliette*, based on Shakespeare's play, tells the story of Romeo and Juliet, two teenagers from the feuding Montague and Capulet families. They meet at a ball, fall in love, and secretly marry, knowing their families will never approve. After Romeo kills Juliet's cousin in a street fight, he is forced into hiding to escape the Capulets' vengeance. Meanwhile, Juliet fakes her own death to avoid an arranged marriage, but the plan goes tragically wrong. Within a few days, the drama culminates in the tragic deaths of both Romeo and Juliet.

ROMÉO ET JULIETTE SYNOPSIS

Charles Gounod, composer; Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, librettists

PROLOGUE

A chorus tells of an endless feud between two great families, the Montagues and the Capulets, and the young Roméo and Juliette, whose tragic love brought the feud to an end.

ACT I *Verona.*

A lavish masked ball is taking place at the Capulet palace. Tybalt, a Capulet gentleman, assures the wealthy Count Pâris that his cousin Juliette's beauty is beyond compare. When Juliette arrives, Lord Capulet presents his daughter to the guests. Roméo, a Montague, sneaks in with his friends Mercutio and Benvolio. Roméo is nervous about entering the Capulet residence: He has had a strange dream that he thinks may be a premonition of some great misfortune. Mercutio dismisses the dream as mere fancy, the work of the fairy Queen Mab. Soon, however, Roméo sees Juliette. He is instantly entranced. Juliette, meanwhile, knows that her father wants her to marry Pâris, and she confides in her nurse, Gertrude, that she has no interest in marriage. But when Juliette sees Roméo, she is deeply intrigued by this handsome stranger. They find a moment to speak alone. Although they are both shocked to discover that the other is a member of the rival family, they cannot deny their mutual attraction. Tybalt appears. Roméo puts on his mask to avoid being recognized and rushes off, but the proud, quarrelsome Tybalt has already recognized the intruder as Montague's son. He wishes to chase after Roméo, but Capulet restrains him, ordering the party to continue.

ACT II *Juliette's garden, that evening.*

Roméo enters the Capulets' garden looking for Juliette. When she appears on her balcony, he steps forward and declares his love. Servants briefly interrupt their encounter, but once they are alone again, they make plans for a secret wedding.

ACT III *Frère Laurent's church, dawn the following morning.*

Roméo comes to Frère Laurent's cell, followed shortly by Juliette and Gertrude. At first, Frère Laurent is shocked to see Montague and a Capulet together. But finally, convinced of the strength of their love, the priest agrees to marry them. He hopes that the union will end the fighting between their families.

A street in Verona.

Outside the Capulets' palace, Roméo's page, Stéphano, sings a song mocking the Capulets, provoking the Capulets to attack him. Mercutio intercedes to protect Stéphano, and soon the skirmish escalates into a violent swordfight between Mercutio and Tybalt. Just then, Roméo arrives on his way home from the church. He begs Tybalt and Mercutio to forget about the hatred between their families, but when Tybalt kills Mercutio, Roméo furiously stabs and kills him. The Duke of Verona arrives, with the Montagues and Capulets hot on his heels. Both of the families are outraged and demand justice—the Montagues for Mercutio, the Capulets for Tybalt. The Duke, for his part, is primarily concerned with preventing future skirmishes from destroying the city's peace.

He refuses to execute Roméo, but he does banish the young man from the city, declaring that if Roméo is seen again inside Verona's walls, he will die.

ACT IV *Juliette's bedroom, early the following morning.*

Roméo and Juliette have spent a secret wedding night together. She forgives him for killing Tybalt, and they promise to love each other forever. Then, as a lark outside the window announces the arrival of day, Roméo reluctantly leaves for his exile. Capulet enters and tells his daughter that she must marry Pâris that very day. She tries to argue with her father, but, unmoved by his daughter's tears, Capulet angrily tells his daughter to prepare for the wedding. Juliette is left alone with Frère Laurent, whom she desperately begs to help her. Although he is at first reluctant to meddle, Frère Laurent finally gives Juliette a sleeping potion that will make her appear dead. He promises to write a letter to Roméo explaining the potion and his plan to help Juliette avoid her marriage. The letter will also invite Roméo to return secretly to Verona; when Juliette awakens, Roméo will be by her side. Together, they will flee the city and embark on a new life. Juliette is terrified, but she drinks the potion. When Capulet and the guests arrive to lead Juliet to the chapel for her wedding, she collapses.

ACT V *The Capulets' family tomb.*

Despite Frère Laurent's careful planning, his letter has gone astray, and when news reaches Roméo of Juliette's burial, he believes that she is truly dead. Crazed with grief, Roméo arrives at the Capulet crypt carrying a bottle of deadly poison. He has no desire to continue living, and he drinks the poison. At that very moment, Juliette wakes up. She is overjoyed to see Roméo, and together the young lovers imagine a happy future. Just as they are about to leave the crypt, however, Roméo staggers and falls. With horror, Juliette realizes that he is dying. Drawing a dagger from Roméo's belt, Juliette stabs herself.

Synopsis courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera.

Key Scenes in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*

Video excerpts and timestamps are pulled from the Metropolitan Opera on Demand and PBS LearningMedia™. Performance Date: Jan. 21, 2017

KEY SCENE #1: Act I: Scene 1, No. 4 - Romeo and Juliet meet

[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #15. ACT I: Ange adorable
00:00 – 04:43

OR

[PBS LearningMedia™](#): Roméo et Juliette | Act I | The Metropolitan Opera
32:21 – 37:04

Romeo and Juliet meet at the ball and are both captivated by each other. Romeo, being more experienced, tries to woo Juliet, while Juliet, who is more innocent, is intrigued by Romeo despite the conflict with her beliefs.

Libretto Excerpt

ROMÉO
Ange adorable,
Ma main coupable
Profane, en l'osant toucher,
La main divine
Dont j' imagine
Que nul n'a droit d'approcher!
Voilà, je pense,
La pénitence
Qu'il convient de m'imposer.
C'est que j'efface
L'indigne trace
De ma main par un baiser!

JULIETTE
Calmez vos craintes!
À ces étreintes
Du pèlerin prosterné,
Les saintes même,
Pourvu qu'il aime,
Ont d'avance pardonné;

ROMEO
Adorable angel,
my guilty hand
profanes, by daring to touch it,
the divine hand
which I imagine
no one has the right to approach!
Here, I think,
is the penance
proper to impose on me –
it is that I efface
the unworthy trace
of my hand by a kiss!

JULIET
Calm your fears!
These handclasplings
of the pilgrim on his knees
even the saints –
provided that he loves –
have pardoned in advance;

(Elle retire sa main.)

Mais à sa bouche
La main qu'il touche
Prudemment doit refuser
Cette caresse
Enchanteresse
Qu'il implore en un baiser!

ROMÉO

Les saintes ont pourtant une bouche
vermeille...

JULIETTE

Pour prier seulement!

ROMÉO

N'entendent-elles pas la voix qui leur
conseille
Un arrêt plus clément?

JULIETTE

Aux prières d'amour leur cœur reste
insensible,
Même en les exauçant!

ROMÉO

Exaucez donc mes vœux, et gardez
impassible
Votre front rougissant.
(Il baise la main de Juliette.)

JULIETTE *(souriant)*

Ah! Je n'ai pu m'en défendre!
J'ai pris le péché pour moi!

ROMÉO

Pour apaiser votre émoi,
Vous plaî-t-il de me le rendre?

(She withdraws her hand.)

but the hand that he touches
to his lips
ought prudently to refuse
that enchanting
caress
he implores in a kiss!

ROMEO

Yet the saints have rosy lips...

JULIET

Only for praying with!

ROMEO

Do they not hear the voice which counsels
them
a more merciful decree?

JULIET

Their hearts remain unmoved by the
prayers of love
even as they grant them.

ROMEO

Then do you grant mine and keep
unmoved
your blushing face.
(He kisses Juliet's hand.)

JULIET *(smiling)*

Ah! I could not help it!
I have taken the sin upon myself!

ROMEO

To allay your anxiety
would you like to give it back to me?

JULIETTE
Non! je l'ai pris! laissez-le moi!

JULIET
No! I have taken it! Leave it with me!

ROMÉO
Vous l'avez pris! rendez-le moi!

ROMEO
You have taken it away! Give me back my
sin!

JULIETTE
Non! je l'ai pris! laissez-le moi! *etc.*

JULIET
No! I have taken it! Leave it with me! *etc.*

ROMÉO
Vous l'avez pris! rendez-le moi! *etc.*

ROMEO
You have taken it away! Give me back my
sin! *etc.*

KEY SCENE #2: Act III: Scene 1, No. 10 - Meeting Friar Lawrence

[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #27. ACT III: Mon père! Dieu vous garde!
00:00 – 03:32

OR

[PBS LearningMedia™](#): Roméo et Juliette | Act III | The Metropolitan Opera
1:42 – 5:30

At the climax of the opera, a fierce street fight erupts between the two rival families. Romeo, desperate to stop the violence, pleads for peace, but neither side listens. During the chaos, Romeo's best friend, Mercutio, is killed by Juliet's cousin, Tybalt. Overcome with grief and rage, Romeo seeks revenge and kills Tybalt. This act seals Romeo's fate, deepening the Capulets' hatred for him and leading to his exile.

Libretto Excerpt

ROMÉO
Mon père! Dieu vous garde!

ROMEO
Father! God keep you! God keep you!

FRÈRE LAURENT
Eh ! quoi ! le jour à peine
Se lève, et le sommeil te fuit?
Quel transport vers moi te conduit?
Quel amoureux souci t'amène?

FRIAR LAURENCE
Eh, what's this! Day has scarce
dawned, and sleep eludes you?
What distemperature leads you to me?
What lover's care brings you?

ROMÉO
Vous l'avez deviné, mon père! c'est
l'amour!

FRÈRE LAURENT
L'amour! encor l'indigne Rosaline?

ROMÉO
Quel nom prononcez-vous?
Je ne le connais pas.
L'œil des élus s'ouvrant à la clarté divine
Se souvient-il encor des ombres d'ici-bas?
Aime-t-on Rosaline ayant vu Juliette?

FRÈRE LAURENT
Quoi? Juliette Capulet?
(Juliette paraît, suivie de Gertrude)

ROMÉO
La voici!

JULIETTE
(s'élançant dans les bras de Roméo)
Roméo!

ROMÉO
Mon âme t'appelait!
Je te vois! ma bouche est muette!

JULIETTE *(à Frère Laurent)*
Mon père, voici mon époux!
Vous connaissez ce cœur que je lui donne!
À son amour je m'abandonne,
Devant le ciel unissez-nous!

ROMEO
You have guessed right, Father, it is love!

FRIAR LAURENCE
Love! Still the unworthy Rosaline?

ROMEO
What name is this you utter?
I know it not!
Does the eye of the elect opening upon the
divine light still remember the shadows of
this earth?
Does one love Rosaline, having seen
Juliet?

FRIAR LAURENCE
What, Juliet Capulet?
(Juliet appears, followed by Gertrude.)

ROMEO
Here she is!

JULIET
(rushing into Romeo's arms)
Romeo!

ROMEO
My soul was calling you!
I see you! My mouth is dumb!

JULIET *(to Friar Laurence)*
Father, this is my bridegroom!
You know the heart I give to him!
To his love I surrender myself,
unite us before Heaven!

FRÈRE LAURENT

Oui! dussé-je affronter une aveugle colère,
Je vous prêterai mon secours.
Puisse de vos maisons la haine séculaire
S'éteindre en vos jeunes amours!

ROMÉO (*à Gertrude*)

Toi, veille au dehors!
(*Gertrude sort.*)

FRÈRE LAURENT

Témoin de vos promesses,
Gardien de vos tendresses,
Que le Seigneur soit avec vous!
À genoux! (*gravement*)
À genoux!

FRIAR LAURENCE

Ay, though I should face a blind rage
I will lend you my help.
May the ancient hatred between your
houses be extinguished in your young
love!

ROMEO (*to Gertrude*)

Do you keep watch without!
(*Gertrude goes out.*)

FRIAR LAURENCE

The witness of your promises,
the guardian of your love,
may the Lord be with you!
Kneel down! (*gravely*)
Kneel down!

KEY SCENE #3: Act IV: Scene 2, No. 13 - Romeo kills Tybalt

[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #32. ACT III: Allons! tu ne me connais pas, Tybalt,
00:06 – 05:39

OR

[PBS LearningMedia™](#) : Roméo et Juliette | Act III | The Metropolitan Opera
19:32 – 25:04

The climax of the opera. In the midst of a street fight between the two rival families, Romeo tries to stop the fighting, but neither side respects his arguments for peace. In the fighting Romeo's best friend Mercutio is killed by Juliet's cousin Tybalt, and in an emotional rage Romeo kills Tybalt for revenge, thus sealing his fate of the Capulets hate for him and his exile.

Libretto Excerpt

ROMÉO (*contenu et digne*)

Allons... tu ne me connais pas,
Tybalt, et ton insulte est vaine!
J'ai dans le cœur des raisons de t'aimer

ROMEO (*restrained and dignified*)

Come now...you do not know me,
Tybalt, and your insult is useless!
I have in my heart reasons to love you

Qui, malgré moi, me viennent désarmer!
Je ne suis pas un lâche! Adieu!
(*Il fait un pas pour s'éloigner.*)

which despite myself come to disarm me!
I am no coward! Farewell!
(*He moves as though to go.*)

TYBALT
Tu crois peut-être
Obtenir le pardon de tes offenses, traître?

TYBALT
You think perhaps
to obtain pardon for your injuries, traitor?

ROMÉO
Je ne t'ai jamais offensé, Tybalt;
Des haines le temps est passé!

ROMEO
I have never injured you, Tybalt;
the time for hatred is past!

MERCUTIO
Tu souffrirais ce nom de lâche,
Ô Roméo! T'ai-je entendu?
Eh bien, donc! Si ton bras doit faillir à sa
tâche
C'est à moi désormais que l'honneur en est
dû!

MERCUTIO
Will you suffer this name of coward,
O Romeo? Did I hear you alright?
Very well then, if your arm is to fail in its
task
henceforward the honour belongs to me!

ROMÉO
Mercutio! – je t'en conjure!

ROMEO
Mercutio! – I entreat you!

MERCUTIO
Non! Je vengerai ton injure!
Misérable Tybalt! en garde,
et défends-toi!

MERCUTIO
No! I shall avenge your insult!
Tybalt, you rat-catcher, on guard and
defend yourself!

TYBALT
Je suis à toi!

TYBALT
I am for you!

ROMÉO
Écoute!

ROMEO
Listen to me!

MERCUTIO
Non! Laisse-moi!

MERCUTIO
No, let me be!

CHŒUR (*Montaigus*)
Bien sur ma foi!

CHORUS (*Montagues*)
Excellent, in faith!

(Capulets)

En lui j'ai foi!

STÉPHANO, BENVOLIO, MERCUTIO

Capulets! Capulets! race immonde!

Frémissez de terreur?

Et que l'enfer seconde

Sa haine et sa fureur!

ROMÉO

Haine, haine, en malheurs féconde!

Dois-tu toujours par ta fureur

Donner au monde

Un spectacle d'horreur?

TYBALT, PÂRIS, GRÉGORIO

Montaigus, Montaigus! race immonde!

Frémissez de terreur!

Et que l'enfer seconde

Ma/sa haine et ma/sa fureur!

CHŒUR

Capulets! Capulets! race immonde!

Montaigus! Montaigus! race immonde!

Frémissez de terreur!

Et que l'enfer seconde!

Sa haine et sa fureur i

(Tybalt et Mercutio croisent le fer.)

MERCUTIO

Ah! blessé!...

ROMÉO

Blessé!...

(Capulets)

I trust in him!

STEPHANO, BENVOLIO, MERCUTIO

Capulets! Capulets! Foul brood!

Shake with terror!

And may hell assist

his hatred and his fury!

ROMEO

Hatred, hatred fruitful in miseries!

Must you always through your fury

give to the world

a spectacle of horror?

TYBALT, PARIS, GREGORIO

Montagues! Montagues! Foul brood!

Shake with terror!

And may hell assist

my/his hatred and my/his fury!

CHORUS

Capulets! Capulets! Foul brood!

Montagues! Montagues! Foul brood!

Shake with terror!

And may hell assist

his hatred and his fury!

(Tybalt and Mercutio begin to fight.)

MERCUTIO

Ah! I am hurt!...

ROMEO

Hurt!...

MERCUTIO
Que le diable
Soit de vos deux maisons!
Pourquoi te jeter entre nous?

ROMÉO
Ô sort impitoyable!
(à ses amis)
Secourez-le!

MERCUTIO (*chancelant*)
Soutenez-moi!

(*On emporte Mercutio qui succombe. Roméo, après l'avoir suivi des yeux pendant quelques instants, redescend la scène et, s'abandonnant tout entier à sa rage, s'écrie.*)

ROMÉO
Ah! maintenant remonte au ciel, prudence infâme!
Et toi, fureur à l'œil de flamme,
Sois de mon cœur l'unique loi!
(*tirant son épée*)
Tybalt! – Il n'est ici d'autre lâche que toi!
(*Ils croisent le fer.*)

ROMÉO
(à Tybalt, en lui portant un coup.)
À toi!
(*Tybalt est touché et chancelle : Capulet entre en scène, court à lui et le soutient dans ses bras. On cesse de se battre.*)

CAPULET
Grand Dieu! Tybalt!

MERCUTIO
A plague
o' both your houses!
Why came you between us?

ROMEO
O pitiless fate!
(*to his friends*)
Help him!

MERCUTIO (*staggering*)
Hold me up!

(*Mercutio is carried away, and dies. Romeo, having gazed after him for a few moments, comes back downstage and, giving himself up wholly to his rage, cries.*)

ROMEO
Ah! Now away back to heaven, infamous caution!
And thou, fire-ey'd fury,
be my conduct now!
(*drawing his sword*)
Tybalt! – there's no other coward here but you! (*They cross swords.*)

ROMEO
(*to Tybalt, as he thrusts at him.*)
For you!
(*Tybalt is hit and staggers; Capulet enters, runs up to him and supports him in his arms. The fighting stops.*)

CAPULET
Great God! Tybalt!

BENVOLIO (*à Roméo*)
Sa blessure est mortelle!
Fuis sans perdre un instant!

ROMÉO (*à part*)
Ah! qu'ai-je fait? Moi! fuir! maudit par elle!

BENVOLIO
C'est la mort qui t'attend!
ROMÉO (*avec désespoir*)
Qu'elle vienne donc! Je l'appelle!

TYBALT
(*à Capulet d'une voix expirante*)
Un dernier mot! et sur mon âme...
exaucez-moi!

CAPULET (*solemnement*)
Tu seras obéi, je t'en donne ma foi!
(*Une foule de bourgeois a envahi la scène.*)

CHŒUR
Qu'est-ce donc?
Qu'est-ce donc? c'est Tybalt!
Il meurt.

CAPULET (*à Tybalt*)
Reviens à toi!

BENVOLIO (*to Romeo*)
His wound is mortal!
Escape without losing a moment!

ROMEO (*aside*)
Ah, what have I done? I – to flee – cursed by her!

BENVOLIO
'Tis death that awaits you!
ROMEO (*in despair*)
Let it come, then, I summon it!

TYBALT
(*to Capulet, in a dying voice*)
One last word!...and upon your soul...fulfil my wishes!

CAPULET (*solemnly*)
You shall be obeyed. I give you my solemn word!
(*A crowd of townspeople have invaded the stage.*)

CHORUS
What's this then?
What's this then? – It's Tybalt!
He is dead.

CAPULET (*to Tybalt*)
Come to yourself!

Libretto excerpts courtesy of [DM's Opera Site](#).