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BARD SUMMERSCAPE

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The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Cover Image: *Portrait of Producer Vsevolod Emilievich Meyerhold, 1916, by Boris Dmitrievich Grigoriev, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia/The Bridgeman Art Library*

Welcome to SummerScape

A legendary ballet, suppressed by censors and bowdlerized by bureaucrats, miraculously reconstructed. Two works—a rarely performed opera and the U.S. premiere of a pastoral dance—by a composer revered as the father of contemporary Polish classical music. A Pulitzer Prize-winning musical comedy devilishly relevant to the presidential election year. Welcome to Bard SummerScape 2008, a festival unlike any other.

Now in its sixth incarnation, this annual arts festival on Bard College's Hudson Valley campus has evolved into a cultural landmark of great distinction. Its offerings—music, opera, dance, theater, film, and cabaret acts that tally with the theme of the Bard Music Festival—are lauded by critics, scholars, and festivalgoers alike for their unparalleled degree of intellectual heft and artistic innovation.

Last year's SummerScape fare was interwoven with the Bard Music Festival's celebration of Edward Elgar and his world. (Pictured at left is a scene from last summer's production of *A Florentine Tragedy*, an opera by Alexander von Zemlinsky.) This year, Sergey Prokofiev is the focal point of the music festival, and SummerScape offerings will provide an unprecedented view of the career and cultural contexts of that great Russian composer, whose fortunes as an artist were inextricably tied to the repressive regime of Joseph Stalin. Once again, orchestral and chamber concerts and theatrical, dance, and other events take place at the superb Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, designed by Frank Gehry; the glittering Spiegeltent; the intimate confines of Olin Hall; and various other locations on campus.

Highlights include the world premiere of Prokofiev's original version of *Romeo & Juliet*, fully restored by Bard Music Festival scholar in residence Simon Morrison, in a new production with choreography by Mark Morris and performed by the Mark Morris Dance Group, with Leon Botstein conducting the American Symphony Orchestra; a sumptuous operatic double bill—*King Roger (The Shepherd)* and *Harnasie*—by Karol Szymanowski; and a production of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, directed by Erica Schmidt and starring Peter Dinklage in the title role.

Also on tap is a frothy musical satire, *Of Thee I Sing*, with music and lyrics by the Gershwin brothers and a book by two of the most mordant wits of their generation, George S. Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind; a film festival of Depression-era comedies, musicals, and historical epics from the United States, Russia, and France; and another dazzling array of happenings in the Spiegeltent, which features cabaret, circus, and dance for the run of the festival—including performances of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, the lost ballet *Trapèze*, and nine programs in honor of the 25th anniversary of New Albion, the California-based record label that has been a champion of new music.

Crowning the summer is the 19th Bard Music Festival, with its concerts, symposia, lectures, and special events illuminating the life and times of Sergey Prokofiev, whose music was embraced not only by the Soviet masses, but by equally enthusiastic audiences in the West. With materials newly available from Prokofiev's recently opened historical archives, the Bard Music Festival's performers and scholars will be able to reconsider this composer's career as never before, offering fresh insights into both his work and his views on art and politics.



World Premiere

ROMEO & JULIET, ON MOTIFS OF SHAKESPEARE

Music by Sergey Prokofiev

Scenario by Sergey Prokofiev and Sergey Radlov

CHOREOGRAPHY

Mark Morris

PERFORMED BY

Mark Morris Dance Group

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR

Leon Botstein, *music director*

SCENIC DESIGNER

Allen Moyer

COSTUME DESIGNER

Martin Pakledinaz

LIGHTING DESIGNER

James F. Ingalls

SOSNOFF THEATER

July 4, 5, 8, 9 at 8 pm

July 5 at 2 pm, July 6 at 3 pm

Tickets: \$25, 55, 75

Tuesday and Wednesday Performances: \$20, 45, 65

A Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College/Mark Morris Dance Group production in association with barbican-bite08, London; Cal Performances, Berkeley; Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Millennium Park, Chicago; Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; Virginia Arts Festival; and The Shelby and Frederick Gans Fund.

Sergey Prokofiev's Romeo & Juliet, on Motifs of Shakespeare, Op. 64, restored by Simon Morrison, is performed with exclusive permission of the Prokofiev Estate and G. Schirmer Inc., the bearers of the rights to the music. Source materials used in this production are provided by the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art.

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Image: costume sketch for Lady Montague by Martin Pakledinez, courtesy of MMDG.

Romeo & Juliet: A Love Affair between the University and the Arts with a Happy Ending

By Leon Botstein

On behalf of Bard College and The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College, I want to welcome you to this first production in the College's sixth season of SummerScape. This historic occasion, which features the first version of Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet* in a new production featuring Mark Morris's choreography, is perhaps the most prominent vindication of the premise on which the Fisher Center was built. That premise points to a potential love affair between the American university and the arts that is only in its beginning stages. That relationship is vital for both parties, and it is crucial that we in this country, as citizens, ensure that, unlike the star-crossed lovers of Shakespeare's play, the relationship has a happy ending in which the two live happily ever after. The noncommercial arts in the United States—which include classical and concert music, classical and contemporary dance, theater, independent cinema, and poetry—are almost exclusively dependent on private philanthropy, and therefore on patronage. Although there was some hope in the 1960s that America would turn in the direction of the European system, where certain of the arts are privileged and receive taxpayer support, the admirable egalitarian strand in American political life, particularly in the diverse, multiethnic, and multicultural context of today, renders calls for public subsidy of certain art forms unrealistic. What remains is only a tax incentive for philanthropy by individuals. The argument has it that if people want something in the arts to exist, they should pay for it. The market, therefore, reigns supreme, balanced only by philanthropy.

However, there is a recalcitrant and awkward fact that not all things are equal, and that not all art forms are justified by a mass audience and profits. By the standards of success in popular culture, no choreographer, dancer, musician, or composer has become fabulously wealthy, not even Copland or Stravinsky. It is in this reality that the university has begun to play a crucial role. We in the academy are accustomed to supporting and subsidizing enterprises that have neither utility nor popularity. We teach languages that are no longer spoken. We preserve traditions of learning that are not fashionable. And we pursue lines of research in science that engage only a very few and have no apparent practical consequences. We celebrate learning for learning's sake. The university teaches counterintuitive physics and mathematics that few will understand. It teaches classical languages that are the province of amateur and professional scholars. It maintains archives and libraries that only a small fraction of the population uses. The university protects and sustains the historic accomplishments of the human imagination from all cultures. However, the university has traditionally, particularly in Europe, kept a distance from the arts, except as an object of study. We at Bard College believe the time has come for the university to extend its protective and supportive character into the arts. The university can and should play a vital role in encouraging the making of new art and in preserving the practices and repertoire of the past for the sake of sustaining the memory of the human imagination for subsequent generations. The support of future generations of artists and performers should not be done without an integral connection to the central tasks of the university: teaching and scholarship. Although Bard has taken leadership in this relationship to the arts over many decades, it is ironically financially not in the strongest position to do so. We must urge the leadership of our richest private colleges and universities, those blessed with massive endowments, to invest their resources on behalf of the role of the arts in American culture in precisely the way Bard does, and will continue to do.

Tonight's version of Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet* is a perfect case in point. Nearly 20 years ago, Bard initiated the Bard Music Festival (BMF), a yearly program of collaboration between performers and scholars in the field of music. In conjunction with the BMF, Princeton University Press produces an annual volume in what has become the premier series of books, now numbering 19 volumes, of musical historical scholarship in the English language. Just as basic research in biology can lead to practical advances in medicine, so too can research and scholarship in the humanities have consequences beyond the noble goal of the pursuit of knowledge. When, several years ago, the College decided to appoint Professor Simon Morrison of Princeton to be the scholar in residence for the BMF and edit this year's volume, *Prokofiev and his World*, it did so in the full knowledge that he, the leading American scholar on Prokofiev, would have access to the newly opened archives in post-Soviet Russia. It was Professor Morrison who urged us to make Prokofiev the subject of the BMF precisely because research would reveal things heretofore unknown about the composer's life and work. Indeed, that did occur, and the most prominent revelation was the version of *Romeo & Juliet* you will hear tonight.

When Professor Morrison reported to us the existence of another version of *Romeo & Juliet*, Bard approached Mark Morris and initiated the process of making this production a reality. This would not have been possible had it not been for the collaboration of the two parties that have the most to celebrate tonight. That first party is the university, in this case Bard, with its habits of research, teaching, and scholarship. The second party consists of performing artists and organizations that put dance and music on the stage. Without the curiosity, discipline, and training of scholarship, this evening would not have happened. Without the genius and determination of Mark Morris, inspired by the discovery of this new version of Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet*, we would not have had his realization of this masterpiece. And without the American Symphony Orchestra, a New York City-based independent arts organization, we would not be enjoying the beauties of the orchestral score.

We welcome you to this and subsequent events in SummerScape 2008 and look forward to seeing you again this year and in future years.

Leon Botstein is the president of Bard College, music director of the American Symphony Orchestra, and coartistic director and founder of the Bard Music Festival.

Love Triumphs

By Deborah Jowitt

Sergey Prokofiev died in 1953, having never heard a performance of the score he composed in 1935 for a projected ballet based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. At least, not exactly as he wrote it. One can only imagine what might go through his head were he to be present at Bard's Fisher Center for the world premiere of that original music 73 years after he created it, with choreography by Mark Morris for Morris's own modern-dance group, rather than for a big ballet company. The performances would undoubtedly stir painful memories of the struggles and compromises that had occurred before the Kirov Ballet finally premiered its *Romeo and Juliet* in Leningrad in January 1940. Prokofiev had to insert new music to suit choreographer Leonid Lavrovsky's revised scenario. Musical selections deemed too difficult and discordant

were dropped, and repeats added to others. Conductor Yuriy Fayer's reorchestrations thickened the musical texture. Most troubling of all, perhaps, was the rejection of the composer's transcendent fourth act.

The ballet that Prokofiev conceived with innovative theater director Sergey Radlov and planned to title *Romeo and Juliet, on Motifs of Shakespeare* could be interpreted as presenting an idyllic view of communism. Romeo and Juliet's love defies the codes and rivalries of a decadent aristocracy and points the way toward a bright new world. And to triumph, they had to live. In the words of musicologist Simon Morrison, who rediscovered Prokofiev's score while doing research for his forthcoming book on the composer's Soviet years, "Juliet awakes in Romeo's arms and they do what I imagine would have been a sumptuous pas de deux, and right at the end they walk off into some third space where they've never been before; it's just labeled a grove, a sort of garden space of their own." Prokofiev, a devout Christian Scientist, must have believed with the religion's founder, Mary Baker Eddy, that "love enriches the nature, enlarging, purifying, and elevating it."

The composer's scenario was drafted before Stalin's regime began to crack down on the arts in 1936. Ironically, the Committee on Arts Affairs decided that the workers needed to be exposed to the classics long denied them. Therefore, tampering with Shakespeare's tragedy was not to be thought of. The score that shocked Prokofiev when he heard it in 1940 and the one that has since been set by numerous choreographers (including Frederic Ashton, Kenneth MacMillan, and Rudolf Nureyev) is the version with Joseph Stalin's personal imprimatur.

When Radlov wrote about the proposed ballet in 1935 for the newspaper *Sovetskoye iskusstvo*, he mentioned that he and Prokofiev weren't envisioning traditional feats like 32 *fouettés*. The composer, then, might have relished Mark Morris's approach to movement, and he surely would have admired the extraordinary musicality that Morris brings to every composition he tackles—from his early *Gloria* to his recent *Mozart Dances* and Purcell's *King Arthur*, which he choreographed and directed in 2006. Morris hears throughout Prokofiev's score the contrasts between hidebound traditions (such as arranged marriages) and love that rebels against them. He points out that "the music for the powers-that-be is very lockstep and strange and aggressive, and the lovers' music is quite . . . I hate to use the word 'impressionistic' for music, but there's more Debussy in it than . . . It's very tender and *new*. And that's what I'm trying to do with the dance."

One January afternoon, to a piano reduction of the score, the Mark Morris Dance Group stages a first run-through of two acts and part of a third of his *Romeo & Juliet, on Motifs of Shakespeare*, so that scenic designer Allen Moyer, costume designer Martin Pakledinaz, and lighting designer James F. Ingalls can form a clearer idea of the piece. A surprisingly different 15th-century Verona materializes. That it is less densely populated than big-ballet-company versions goes without saying, and although vendetta is a fact of life, the town isn't as blatantly split into two gangs. The dancing, with its allusions to Renaissance style, is also earthier; the bedroom duet sexier; and the behavior both more nuanced and lustier. The dancers have been encouraged to look at Giotto's art ("gorgeously theatrical, for one thing," says Morris, "and the storytelling in those paintings is astonishing"). Another source is Adam Kendon's translation of Andrea de Jorio's 1832 study of Neapolitan gesture. When Morris's Capulets move through intricate group patterns to the music that Prokofiev referred to as "a ponderous dance," they embel-

lish them with subtle indications of gossiping and spurning. In the public square, Montague and Capulet youths may flick their teeth or spit in an adversary's face. Roistering at the masked ball and urging Romeo not to be a wimp, Mercutio grabs his shy friend and gives him a hearty kiss on the lips, Mafia style. Morris, occasionally conducting or clapping with the pianist's rhythms, calls out things like, "Rough it up everybody! Energize it!" to the guests at the ball. Or, "Get some drinks!" (which they hasten to do from the tray being passed around). Against this seething social scene, Romeo and Juliet appear all the more innocent and idealistic.

Morris adores his company members ("Don't they dance unbelievably?" he demands). Six months before the premiere, they all have developed characters and are up for any challenge, including those subverting conventional gender roles. This production reverses the custom of Shakespeare's day whereby young boys played the female roles. Morris's Mercutio is Amber Darragh, his Tybalt Julie Worden. The reasons are both practical and artistic. Morris points out that "a lot of the plays have a superabundance of male characters . . . men ran everything, of course. So it's partly because I didn't have enough men." Somehow having these two rivalrous youths played with terrific conviction by two women makes the characters seem all the more tragically adolescent in their bravado and their pointless animosity. Given that, in the end, Juliet will awaken to find her lover alive, Morris makes you feel the senseless deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt as the tragic heart of the story.

And what would Prokofiev make of all this? To hear his music ordered and orchestrated according to his specifications and to see his thinking so honored? Would tears of joy be out of the question?

Deborah Jowitt writes about dance for the Village Voice and other publications and teaches at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Her most recent book is Jerome Robbins: His Life, His Theater, His Dance.

Chronology of Sergey Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*

By Simon Morrison

November 1934 Prokofiev travels to Leningrad to discuss prospective performances of his operas at the State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet. He and the dramatist Adrian Piotrovsky, a disciple of the theater director Sergey Radlov, discuss potential subjects for a new ballet. Prokofiev takes to the idea of setting Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to music.

January 1935 In Paris, Prokofiev drafts a five-act scenario for the ballet, which he submits to Piotrovsky and Radlov for revision. Radlov, a longtime friend of the composer, had staged a radical version of Shakespeare's drama at his Studio Theater in April 1934, and encouraged Prokofiev to incorporate its central themes into the ballet.

May 1935 Prokofiev, Piotrovsky, and Radlov settle on a four-act *Romeo and Juliet* with a happy ending. Vladimir Mutnykh, the new artistic director of the Bolshoy Theater in Moscow, commissions the ballet for production in the 1935–36 season. Radlov discusses the scenario with Sergey Dinamov, a Central Committee official on the board of the Bolshoy. Dinamov approves it, suggesting that, given the happy ending, the ballet be subtitled "on motives of Shakespeare."

June 1935 Radlov writes an article for the newspaper *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* (Soviet Art) in which he stresses the ballet's central themes: class struggle, radical conflict between comedy and tragedy,

the clash of youth and feudal society. In a related essay for *Teatr i dramaturgiya* (*Theater and Dramaturgy*), he declares *Romeo and Juliet* the most “Komsomol-like” of Shakespeare’s dramas.

September 1935 Prokofiev completes the piano score of the ballet in Polenovo and begins annotating it for orchestration.

October 1935 Prokofiev performs the piano score for adjudication at the Bolshoy Theater. He receives severe criticism from conductor Yuriy Fayer. A debate ensues about the complexity of the musical syntax and the unorthodox happy ending.

December 1935 From Casablanca, Prokofiev writes to Radlov asking whether he plans to “press on” with his conception of the ballet, and whether he has devised another ending.

January 1936 Prokofiev performs acts I–III of the piano score for adjudication at the offices of *Sovetskoye iskusstvo*. Mutnykh and Dinamov attend. Dinamov continues to advocate the happy ending, stressing that “in Prokofiev’s work, the two main characters of Shakespeare’s drama must not die.” His position is countered by the composer Aleksandr Ostretsov, who declares that “the life-enhancing tone of Prokofiev’s entire piece, clearly manifest in the culmination, will not be weakened if he follows in Shakespeare’s footsteps in the denouement.”

January–February 1936 *Pravda* denounces Dmitrii Shostakovich’s opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and his ballet *The Limpid Stream*. Platon Kerzhentsev, chairman of the All-Union Committee on Arts Affairs, begins to purge the Bolshoy Theater administration as part of an ideological campaign against antidemocratic, “formalist” experimentation in Soviet art.

June 1936 Kerzhentsev notifies Stalin and Molotov of his intention to dismiss the conductor Nikolay Golovanov from the Bolshoy Theater and to reevaluate the repertoire. The memorandum lists *Romeo and Juliet* as a prospective production for the 1936–37 season.

August 1936 Prokofiev begins composing the tragic ending of the ballet; it remains incomplete, however, until July 1938.

April 1937 Mutnykh is arrested; those works commissioned by him for the Bolshoy Theater, including *Romeo and Juliet*, are pulled from the repertoire.

June 1937 Kerzhentsev denounces Prokofiev’s *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of October* as “incomprehensible.” Mark Bicurin, director of the Regional Theater in Brno, Czechoslovakia, approaches Prokofiev about staging *Romeo and Juliet* there. The production, which opens for seven performances in December 1938, features the tragic ending. Prokofiev is unable to attend.

July 1937 Piotrovsky is arrested.

December 1937 Kerzhentsev submits a memorandum to Stalin and Molotov regarding Soviet musical affairs. He comments with reference to the *Romeo and Juliet* orchestral suites that Prokofiev is seeking “to overcome formalism and approach realism.”

August 1938 Prokofiev receives a telegram from the Kirov Theater in Leningrad expressing interest in staging *Romeo and Juliet* during the 1939–40 season. The invitation is initiated by choreographer Leonid Lavrovsky, who had earlier proposed staging the ballet with students from the Leningrad Choreographic Technical College.

September 1938 Dinamov is arrested.

February 1939 Prokofiev informs Radlov that Lavrovsky was seeking changes to the ballet, but that he “put a stop” to most of them.

August 1939 Finding the music of the ballet diffuse, Lavrovsky insists on the inclusion of bravura variations for *Romeo and Juliet* in act I (the balcony and bedroom scenes). Prokofiev rejects the requests, informing the conductor Isay Sherman that “I’m not going to change anything. Radlov and I checked the length of each scene to the precise second. The work was composed in 1934–36 and now that I have other projects I don’t intend on going back to it.”

October 1939 Lavrovsky sends telegrams to Prokofiev imploring him to compose the variations, claiming that work on the ballet has come to a halt. The composer reluctantly fashions the variations using music from the abandoned happy ending. Kirov Theater soloists Galina Ulanova and Konstantin Sergeyev express dissatisfaction with the music, after which it is revised.

November 1939 to January 1940 Lavrovsky enlists Sherman to negotiate a series of changes to the scenario and the music with Prokofiev. Beyond writing and revising the variations for *Romeo and Juliet*, the changes include the elimination of three exotic dances from act III, expanding the music for Paris, reducing the music for Mercutio, and adding a pensive scene to act III called “Romeo in Mantua.” Lavrovsky also insists on adding a large group dance at the beginning of act I. Prokofiev point-blank refuses this last request, at which point Lavrovsky threatens to insert music of his own choosing into the act. Following a tense confrontation, Prokofiev backs down.

January 1940 *Romeo and Juliet* receives its Russian premiere at the Kirov Theater. Prokofiev discovers that Lavrovsky had altered the orchestration without his approval, thickening the textures and amplifying the dynamics. Repeats had also been added without his knowledge.

March 1940 Prokofiev protests the unauthorized changes to his music in a letter to the Kirov Theater. He subsequently complains to Sherman: “For four months nothing has been done and I don’t know the state in which the ballet will reach Moscow.”

March 1940 Stalin approves a request from the Committee on Arts Affairs for a performance of the revised ballet at the Bolshoy Theater. *Romeo and Juliet* thereafter enters the world repertoire.

1941 Prokofiev writes an autobiographical sketch for publication in *Sovetskaya muzika* (*Soviet Music*): “There was quite a fuss at the time [1935–36] about our attempts to give *Romeo and Juliet* a happy ending in the last act. Romeo arrives a minute earlier, finds Juliet alive and everything ends well. The reasons for this bit of barbarism were purely choreographic: living people can dance, the dying cannot.”

Musicologist Simon Morrison is the scholar in residence for the 2008 Bard Music Festival. His work in unearthing Prokofiev’s original score for Romeo and Juliet is directly responsible for its presentation at SummerScape.

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York