**Week 16: The Chronicles of *Romeo and Juliet***

1. **Which *Romeo and Juliet* version came first?**
   
   *A: The movie*
   
   *B: The play*
   
   *C: The opera*
   
   *D: The ballet*

   The play by William Shakespeare was originally published in 1597, but it is unknown when the original performance took place. The opera composed by French composer, Charles Gounod, premiered in 1867 with libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carre. There are two other musical adaptations of the play. A symphonic work by Tchaikovsky that was composed in 1880, and the ballet which was composed by Sergei Prokofiev and premiered in 1938. The movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio was released in 1996.

   Act 5, Scene 3 of the play from The Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2018 production: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Q6tOsnbUjI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Q6tOsnbUjI)

   1996 Movie Trailer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VBsi0VxiLg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VBsi0VxiLg)

   *Romeo and Juliet* had its Cincinnati Opera debut in 1922 and was last seen in 2019.

2. **In what country did the opera version of *Romeo and Juliet* premiere?**

   *A: France*

   The opera version of Romeo and Juliet, or *Roméo et Juliette* as it is known in French, first premiered in Paris, France on April 27, 1867 at the Théâtre Lyrique. Composer Charles Gounod was commissioned to write another opera after the wildly successful reception of his other opera, *Faust*. This was also Gounod’s last opera composition, and its success is partly credited due to the Exposition Universelle taking place in Paris at the time which brought a large number of visitors to Paris and as such to the opera performances.

   While Gounod wrote more operas than *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*, these are the only two that have been adapted into the standard repertoire across opera houses in the world.

   Diana Damrau sings “Je veux vivre” from The Metropolitan Opera’s 2017 production: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEopBZgkSq8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEopBZgkSq8)
3. How many duets are in Gounod’s opera?
   \[A: 4\]

It is noted that much of the success of this opera is due to the opera’s four duets. The first one is the first encounter of our titular characters, the moment where pilgrim hands do meet. The following duet is the famous balcony scene. The next duet is the “lark and the nightingale” duet that opens up the fourth act into the bedroom of these two lovers. And to those who know this tragic story, the fourth duet is the one of death and goodbye as we part ways with our main characters.

The first duet “Ange adorable” from The Royal Opera House’s 1994 production: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a08paWkMf5I

The third duet “Nuit d’hyménéée” from the aforementioned production: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_X8LsHwJXfA

4. How many acts does the opera version of Romeo and Juliet have?
   \[A: 5\]

The opera as well as the original play versions have five acts! However, even though it has more acts that other common operas, it still hits around the usual 2 hour and some mark in terms of length. The ballet version only has four acts, and the shortest of all the versions is Tchaikovsky’s coming in around 20 minutes.

The iconic ballet number, the Bedroom Pas de deux, from The Royal Opera House’s 2019 production: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fdE4nYibJk

Stephen Costello sings Romeo’s aria “Ah, lève toi soleil”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r-h7-dBIUo

5. Who sang the roles of Romeo and Juliet in Cincinnati Opera’s 2019 production?
   \[
   \begin{align*}
   \text{Romeo: Matthew White} \\
   \text{Juliet: Nicole Cabell}
   \end{align*}
   \]

Cincinnati Opera’s Romeo and Juliet stars sing “Ô nuit divine”: https://youtu.be/lgukNuAQhgI

Other Stars in Cincinnati Opera’s 2019 production of Romeo and Juliet include Hadleigh Adams as Mercutio, Piotr Buszewski as Tybalt, and Darian Clonts as Benvolio.
6. What opera company did Cincinnati Opera co-produce the 2019 production of *Romeo and Juliet* with?
   
   A: Minnesota Opera

If you weren’t able to catch our Cincinnati Opera’s 2019 production, you can read more fun facts about at the link below and see a brief trailer of it, too!

Cincinnati Opera R&J 2019: [https://www.cincinnatiopera.org/romeo-and-juliet](https://www.cincinnatiopera.org/romeo-and-juliet)