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## ROZHDESTVENSKY

### Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet*

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These new discs by the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra give what none of the previous records of the suites can provide—the music as it is danced. Sometimes the tempi are quite different from those indicated in the complete piano score, and then we can assume that either choreographer or dancers have altered the music for their own purposes against the wish of the composer. This, of course, happens in all ballets to some extent. Thus the cool music with the viola glissandi in the middle of “The Young Juliet” seems rather fast and insensitive for the composer’s tranquillo marking, and “Masks” is surely too fast for the swaggering effrontery one expects of Romeo and Benvolio at the Capulets’ Ball; musically I prefer Munch here. But it may well be that I am being hidebound, liking what I am used to, and perhaps I shall get used to Rozhdestvensky’s tempi in time. He takes “The Maids with the Lilies” at little more than half the marked speed, but this I found very effective. The dance takes place outside Juliet’s bedroom on her wedding morning (and I am glad to find no mention on these discs of those West Indian islands, the Antilles, which keep creeping into the Suite title), and there is a sense of forboding about the slow tempo that I like ... You can get to know nearly all the tunes by listening to the suites, but in them you get very little idea what Prokofiev does with those tunes. The ballet has an elaborate leit-motiv organisation, and the same tunes are repeated and transformed and developed for dramatic reasons. The music that does not come in the suites, though not immediately so appealing, is often of the very greatest interest musically. Thus, if you like this ballet, and I do not see how you could fail to do so, there is everything to be said for having the whole of it.

R.F., The Gramophone, September 1961 - (*excerpt*)

#### Producer's Note

Rozhdestvensky's complete 6-LP-sided 1959 Moscow recording of the complete *Romeo and Juliet* ballet followed a number of outings of the work in its cut-down suites as it started to become more widely known. Reading through the various mentions it has received since then in reviews it seems to have retained a high musical reputation, despite some technical shortcomings. Certainly Melodiya pressings were never the best! But rather unusually for an orchestral recording this late in the 1950s it was made in mono, and had a rather restricted and harsh edge to the sound. This I've managed to tame considerably, alongside a more general opening out of the sonic palette, something that's particularly enjoyable with the extra space on the soundstage offered by the Ambient Stereo issue of this recording. I've also been able to add a sense of depth and fullness that was lacking in the Melodiya issues. Finally I've fixed a curious anomaly found at around the point where Mercutio dies - a short section of reversed music that appears on all Melodiya issues from the LPs onwards that I've managed to source. This is the second instance of this I've discovered in Melodiya recordings of the era, which seems more than coincidental - one can only guess as to the reasons for it. In this instance a short section of the music was actually missing once the reversed section had been corrected - a beat has had to be inserted from another recording to cover this gap, though it shouldn't be noticed by any but the most perceptive listeners. **Andrew Rose**

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)  
SARL Pristine Audio, 144 Rue de l'Eglise, 24610 St. Méard de Gurçon, France

# Rozhdestvensky

conducts Prokofiev's

## ROMEO AND JULIET

Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra

Pristine Soviet Series  
Melodiya studio recording, 1959



PROKOFIEV ROMEO AND JULIET  
ROZHDESTVENSKY, BOLSHOI THEATRE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PASC 424

PRISTINE AUDIO

PROKOFIEV Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64

COMPACT disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO  
PASC 424

XR remastering by  
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on  
photographs of Rozhdestvensky  
and the Casa di Giulietta, Verona

Recorded 1959, Moscow  
Issued as Melodiya  
3LP-set: D.05342-47

Total duration: 2hr 22:39

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PRISTINE AUDIO

1 Act 1 - Introduction (2:39)

2 Scene 1 - Romeo (1:36)

3 The Street Awakens (2:35)

4 The Morning Dance (1:53)

5 The Quarrel (1:51)

6 The Fight (3:20)

7 The Duke's Order (1:30)

8 Interlude (2:25)

9 Scene 2 - Preparations for the Feast (2:09)

10 Juliet the Young Girl (3:08)

11 The Arrival of the Guests (4:18)

12 Masques (2:32)

13 Dance of the Knights (5:11)

14 Juliet's Variation (2:11)

15 Mercutio (2:09)

16 Madrigal (3:56)

17 Tybalt Recognises Romeo (1:59)

18 Gavotte (3:35)

19 The Balcony Scene (3:54)

20 Romeo's Variation (0:55)

21 Love Dance (4:20)

22 Act 2 - Scene 1 - Dance of the People (3:22)

23 Romeo and Mercutio (2:01)

24 Dance of the Five Couples (3:49)

25 Dance with the Mandolins (1:52)

26 The Nurse (2:20)

27 The Nurse Delivers Juliet's Message to Romeo (0:54)

1 Act 2 - Scene 2 - Romeo at Friar Lawrence's (3:35)

2 Juliet at Friar Lawrence's (3:45)

3 Scene 3 - People's Merry-Making is Going On (3:17)

4 Dance of the People again (2:12)

5 Tybalt Encounters Mercutio (1:59)

6 Tybalt Fights Mercutio (1:24)

7 Mercutio Dies (3:08)

8 Romeo Resolves to Avenge the Death of Mercutio (4:38)

9 Act 3 - Scene 1 - Introduction (1:17)

10 Romeo and Juliet (1:27)

11 Leave-Taking Before Parting (5:02)

12 The Nurse (1:46)

13 Juliet Refuses to Marry Paris (2:35)

14 Juliet Alone (1:24)

15 Interlude (1:10)

16 Scene 2 - At Friar Lawrence's (4:56)

17 Interlude (1:41)

18 Scene 3 - At Juliet's Again (2:38)

19 Juliet Alone (4:05)

20 Morning Serenade (2:44)

21 Dance of the Maids with Lilies (2:09)

22 At Juliet's Bed (2:06)

23 Epilogue - Juliet's Funeral (7:20)

24 Juliet's Death (3:56)

Symphonic Orchestra of the State Academic Bolshoi Theater Gennadiy Rozhdestvensky

