

BALLET OF ROMEO AND JULIET, Russian, 1954. Directors, Lev Arnshtam and Leonid Lavrosky. Photography, A. Chelanko and Tchen You-lin. Choreography, Leonid Lavrosky. Music, Sergei Prokofiev. Galina Ulanova (Juliet), Prima ballerina. Y. Jdavov (Romeo). Ermolalov (Tibald), Koren (Mercutio), Lapouri (Paris), and the Corps de Ballet and Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theater, Moscow. (The next film will be: One Summer of Happiness)

Romeo and Juliet is the first feature length film of a ballet. Unlike The Tales of Hoffmann which was a filmed opera or The Red Shoes in which dance sequences were inserted in the dramatic action dealing with the dance ballet, this film is not a "film recording" of a ballet. Based on the ballet presented at the Leningrad opera in 1940, the cinematic adaptation was conceived as a spectacular display in the tradition of the Russian opera. Leaving the limited theater stage the action takes place in immense settings. (Half of the city of Verona was rebuilt near Yalta for that purpose.) This considerably frees the camera and makes possible shots in perspective, shots of palace façades, public squares or stairways in which evolve masses of characters, underlining the action of the main protagonists. (Notice the numerous incidents-- fights, chases, duels, processions--mingled in the motion of the crowds. "The camera separates plans, divides, isolates groups hangs high over the crowd; It insinuates itself among the groups, passing from one group to the other")

One of the great qualities of this film is that dance really narrates the action instead of being simply a diversion, and that this specificity of dance is stressed and heightened through cinematic means, that is, camera work and cutting. Another feature of this film is the almost faithful narration of Shakespeare's plot. Note also the fairy-like atmosphere due mainly to the art of Galina Ulanova, the lightness, swiftness of her dance.

The group will not meet after the showing, but I want you to write down your observations. Specifically pick out the different sequences of the film and analyse one in particular, that is, note the different shots, any motions of the camera and effects obtained by the means of montage. please hand them into the Honors office by Tuesday.