



## Reading 84

*You are going to read four reviews of a ballet. For questions 14–17 choose from reviews A–D.*

### **Four critics comment on the ballet production**

A

Returning to the stage, after a long injury, Natalya Osipova is back in peak condition. She takes real risks in the giddy, swooning steps, swooping right off balance, and trusting her Romeo, Carlos Acosta, to catch her. Yet this revival just falls short of passion. There's plenty of care in the storytelling, but the ballet's star-crossed lovers need headlong ardour and despair. It's been a long wait for Osipova to come back. She had surgery on her foot more than a year ago, with several return performances announced and cancelled. She's a sleek dancer, tall and dark, prompting extra attention. This performance shows new thought in her acting, Juliet is dancing with Paris, her approved fiancé, when she first sees Romeo. She can't take her eyes off him, even when she tries to remember Paris.

B

As one of the jewels in the Royal Ballet's crown, this rendition of Romeo and Juliet offers a rare opportunity for dancer and spectator to forge a close relationship. Familiar as the story is, we can focus our entire attention on the interpretation without having to wonder what's coming next. In spite of Nicholas Georgiadis' monumental sets, this latest production is characterised by its extraordinary intimacy, it takes a while to warm up as Carlos Acosta's Romeo doesn't appear to be unduly upset by his failed courtship of Rosaline and only really takes flight with the arrival of the three firecracker harlots (Laura Morera, Romany Pajdak and Laura McCulloch) who blast through the townspeople with exuberant naughtiness. As a prelude to the street fight between the Capulets and the Montagues, it is a terrific sequence, full of dazzle and spark. The key sequence that unlocks the production, is the grand ball with Prokofiev's magnificently doom-laden, Dance of the Knights, thundering out of the pit before the first encounter between the two lovers.

C

Not quite what one might have hoped, Natalya Osipova's debut as Juliet with the Royal Ballet was eagerly anticipated: here is an artist prodigious in technique, vivid in dramatic sensibilities, who has illuminated every role that I have seen her dance.

And yet on Thursday night, she seemed isolated at moments from the staging. This was, I sense, in part owed to an unlikely relationship with Carlos Acosta's Romeo. Osipova's pairing with Acosta brings her a secure partner, but also a dancer whose account of his role is now underpowered in both means and manner. I did not for a moment believe in him as a youth ardently in love. But what I once saw with Lynn Seymour, and saw with Natalya Makarova, and then ravishingly saw again last week with Yevgenia Obraztsova in the arms of Steven McRae was the traditional interpretation of the role. Unfortunately, Osipova, in trying to make the role her own, decides to show a knowing Juliet.

D

The slim shoulders of the Russian ballerina Natalia Osipova were carrying a twin weight as she made her debut with London's Royal Ballet. Would this international shooting star be able to add lustre to a company that is depleted of ballerinas of her class? The answers to those questions varied from moment to moment during the course of the evening. Rarely has a performance flickered so rapidly between the astonishing and the disappointing. Having said that, the overall impression was satisfying, as one would expect from a dance company that has such a high profile leading lady. It will be interesting to see how she continues to settle in with future productions with the Royal Ballet.

**Which reviewer**

14 like reviewer A, remains unconvinced of the dancer's portrayal of the passion between Romeo and Juliet?

15 like reviewer C, had eagerly anticipated Osipova's performance, only to be disappointed in some way?

16 disagrees with the other three reviewers, in finding Osipova's performance faultless?

17 compares and contrasts this rendering with past performances of Romeo and Juliet?

*Источник задания: Плехановская олимпиада школьников,  
финал 2017/18, 10–11 классы*

# Reading 84 — Keys

## KEY

14 C

15 D

16 B

17 C

## EXPLANATION

A

Returning to the stage, after a long injury, Natalya Osipova is back in peak condition. She takes real risks in the giddy, swooning steps, swooping right off balance, and trusting her Romeo, Carlos Acosta, to catch her. Yet this revival just falls short of passion. There's plenty of care in the storytelling, but the ballet's star-crossed lovers need headlong ardour and despair. It's been a long wait for Osipova to come back. She had surgery on her foot more than a year ago, with several return performances announced and cancelled. She's a sleek dancer, tall and dark, prompting extra attention. This performance shows new thought in her acting, Juliet is dancing with Paris, her approved fiance, when she first sees Romeo. She can't take her eyes off him, even when she tries to remember Paris.

B

As one of the jewels in the Royal Ballet's crown, this rendition of Romeo and Juliet offers a rare opportunity for dancer and spectator to forge a close relationship. Familiar as the story is, we can focus our entire attention on the interpretation without having to wonder what's coming next. In spite of Nicholas Georgiadis' monumental sets, this latest production is characterised by its extraordinary intimacy, it takes a while to warm up as Carlos Acosta's Romeo doesn't appear to be unduly upset by his failed courtship of Rosaline and only really takes flight with the arrival of the three firecracker harlots (Laura Morera, Romany Pajdak and Laura McCulloch) who blast through the townspeople with exuberant naughtiness. As a prelude to the street fight between the Capulets and the Montagues, it is a terrific sequence, full of dazzle and spark. The key sequence that unlocks the production, is the grand ball with Prokofiev's magnificently doom-laden, Dance of the Knights, thundering out of the pit before the first encounter between the two lovers.

C

Not quite what one might have hoped, Natalya Osipova's debut as Juliet with the Royal Ballet was eagerly anticipated: here is an artist prodigious in technique, vivid in dramatic sensibilities, who has illuminated every role that I have seen her dance.

And yet on Thursday night, she seemed isolated at moments from the staging. This was, I sense, in part owed to an unlikely relationship with Carlos Acosta's Romeo. Osipova's pairing with Acosta brings her a secure partner, but also a dancer whose account of his role is now underpowered in both means and manner. I did not for a moment believe in him as a youth ardently in love. But what I once saw with Lynn Seymour, and saw with Natalya Makarova, and then ravishingly saw again last week with Yevgenia Obraztsova in the arms of Steven McRae was the traditional interpretation of the role. Unfortunately, Osipova, in trying to make the role her own, decides to show a knowing Juliet.

14

16

D

The slim shoulders of the Russian ballerina Natalia Osipova were carrying a twin weight as she made her debut with London's Royal Ballet. Would this international shooting star be able to add lustre to a company that is depleted of ballerinas of her class? The answers to those questions varied from moment to moment during the course of the evening. Rarely has a performance flickered so rapidly between the astonishing and the disappointing. Having said that, the overall impression was satisfying, as one would expect from a dance company that has such a high profile leading lady. It will be interesting to see how she continues to settle in with future productions with the Royal Ballet.

anticipation

15