

A TIMELESS STORY OF LOVE, YEARNING, AND THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES of youthful pride, *Eugene Oegin* holds the dual honor of being one of the most beloved works of both Russian opera and Russian literature. Tchaikovsky's expressive lyricism gives a fitting voice to the emotional turmoil at the heart of Alexander Pushkin's famous verse novel. Pushkin's stature in Russian literature can only be compared to Shakespeare's in the English canon, and the opera represents a fortuitous meeting of two of Russia's great creative minds. With roughly half a century separating them, Tchaikovsky stands as the tortured creator of highly personal, semi-autobiographical works of art while Pushkin is the sly and subversive social critic. But it is these differences that make the operatic version of *Eugene Oegin* so thrilling: it's both a kaleidoscopic portrait of Russian society and a philosophical reflection on the human condition.

Deborah Warner's Met production places the action in the late 19th century, around the time of the opera's premiere and several decades after Pushkin's own setting in the 1820s. This shift emphasizes the autumnal quality of aristocratic life at the end of Russia's imperial age, highlighting the sharp divisions between country life, rural gentry, and aristocratic St. Petersburg, and the bleak and constrained futures of its characters.

This guide will introduce students to the Golden Age of Russian literature and Tchaikovsky's achievement in adapting one of its most beloved works into an opera of Romantic melancholy and melodic sweep. By comparing Tchaikovsky's libretto to Pushkin's verse novel and considering the different approaches of composer, poet, and translator, students will gain an understanding of what makes *Eugene Oegin* a remarkable and moving opera. They will also explore the challenges of cross-form adaptation and the innovations in both Tchaikovsky's and Pushkin's work. The activities on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this *Live in HD* transmission. This guide will also align with key strands of the Common Core Standards.

### THE WORK:

#### ***EUGENE ONEGIN***

An opera in three acts, sung in Russian

Music by Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Libretto by the composer and Konstantin Shilovsky

Based on the verse novel *Eugene Oegin* by Alexander Pushkin

First performed March 19, 1879 at the Maly Theater, Moscow, Russia (with students from the Moscow Conservatory); professional premiere on January 29, 1881 at the Bolshoi Theater, Moscow, Russia

### PRODUCTION

Robin Ticciati, Conductor

Deborah Warner, Production

Tom Pye, Set Designer

Chloe Obolensky, Costume Designer

Jean Kalman, Lighting Designer

Ian William Galloway and Finn Ross, Video Designers

Kim Brandstrup, Choreography

### STARRING

(In order of vocal appearance):

**Anna Netrebko**

TATIANA (soprano)

**Elena Maximova**

OLGA (contralto)

**Alexey Dolgov**

LENSKI (tenor)

**Dmitri Hvorostovsky**

ONEGIN (baritone)

**Štefan Kocán**

GREMIN (bass)



NETREBKO



MAXIMOVA



DOLGOV



HVOROSTOVSKY



KOCÁN

Production a gift of Ambassador and Mrs. Nicholas F. Taubman

Revival a gift of Rolex

Co-production of the Metropolitan Opera and English National Opera

This guide includes five sections with two types of classroom activities.

•THE SOURCE, THE STORY, WHO'S WHO IN *EUGENE ONEGIN*, AND A TIMELINE

• CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

Two activities designed to align with and support various Common Core Standard strands used in ELA, History/Social Studies, and Music curricula

• PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:

Two activities to be used during *The Met: Live in HD* transmission, highlighting specific aspects of this production

• POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:

A wrap-up activity, integrating the *Live in HD* experience into the students' understanding of the performing arts and the humanities

• STUDENT RESOURCE PAGES:

Classroom-ready worksheets supporting the activities in the guide

The activities in this guide will focus on several aspects of *Eugene Onegin*:

- The relationship between Tchaikovsky's libretto and Pushkin's verse novel
- Tchaikovsky's musical style and his representation of Pushkin's poetry
- The psychological evolution of the opera's characters
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *Eugene Onegin*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes activities for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.

**SUMMARY** Eugene Onegin, a worldly but arrogant young man, visits the home of two young sisters in the Russian countryside. The older sister, Tatiana, immediately falls in love with him and, in a fit of passion, writes him a letter confessing her feelings. Onegin humiliates Tatiana by refusing her and suggesting that she learn to control her emotions. A few months later, Onegin angers his best friend, the poet Lenski, by idly flirting with Olga, Tatiana's sister and the object of Lenski's affection. Onegin and Lenski fight a duel and Lenski is killed.

Several years later, Onegin returns to St. Petersburg after traveling abroad. While at a party, he is introduced to the young wife of Prince Gremin and is shocked to realize that the stylish, beautiful woman is the same Tatiana whose love he once refused. Onegin suddenly realizes that he is indeed in love with Tatiana and later, at the Prince's palace, asks her to run away with him. Tatiana tells Onegin that while she still loves him, she has made her choice and will not abandon her husband. Onegin is left alone and devastated.

**THE SOURCE: *EUGENE ONEGIN* BY ALEXANDER PUSHKIN** Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, a novel in verse, is one of the most celebrated works in all of Russian literature. It is a wonder of formal innovation as well as a work of stunning social and psychological insight. The witticism of the verse and complicated structure of its rhyme scheme belie the seriousness of the novel's investigation into the nature of young love and unfulfilled longing.

Tchaikovsky—who was profoundly sensitive to poetry—adapted the novel into an operatic libretto himself, with help from a friend, the amateur poet Konstantin Shilovsky. Some portions of the opera, most notably the famous letter scene, preserve Pushkin's text in an almost unaltered state. Although the libretto omits large sections of the novel, it remains true to the episodic nature of Pushkin's narrative: Tchaikovsky called his opera "lyric scenes."

## SYNOPSIS

**ACT I: *The Larin estate in rural Russia*** Madame Larina listens as her daughters, Tatiana and Olga, sing a song about young lovers meeting in the woods. She reminisces with the girls' aging nurse, Filippievna, about bygone years and the romantic ideals of her youth.



## VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

### SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian “mezzo” = middle, medium)

### CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

### COUNTERTENOR

a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano, or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through use of falsetto

### TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

### BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

### BASS

the lowest male voice

Their conversation is interrupted by a group of peasants who have finished their daily work and sing for the Larin family. Olga, who has a spirited and flirtatious nature, teases Tatiana, who is quiet and romantic, for living in a dreamland, and prepares excitedly for a visit from her fiancé, the poet Lenski. When Lenski arrives with a friend, Eugene Onegin, Tatiana is immediately taken with the visitor.

Later that night, Tatiana worries Filippievna with her restlessness. Tatiana assures the nurse she is fine, but stays awake thinking about Onegin. Acting on an impulse, she writes him a letter confessing the true nature of her feelings and enlists Filippievna's help to deliver it.

When Onegin and Tatiana meet again, he tells her that he was touched by her letter but can only offer her friendship. He warns her to guard her emotions more carefully. Tatiana is humiliated.

**ACT II: *The Larin estate*** A few months later, Lenski and Onegin return to the Larin estate to celebrate Tatiana's name day. Annoyed that Lenski has dragged him to a large party he would rather have avoided, Onegin takes his revenge by flirting brazenly with Olga. Lenski is enraged and challenges Onegin to a duel, ending the party.

While waiting for Onegin to arrive for their duel, Lenski thinks about his poetry, death, and his love for Olga. Onegin arrives late, and although both men would rather avoid violence, their honor compels them to fight. Lenski is shot and killed.

**ACT III: *St. Petersburg*** Several years have passed, and Onegin has returned from traveling abroad. He is bored by his surroundings, lonely, and still consumed with guilt over Lenski's death. At a ball at Prince Gremin's palace, the prince tells his friend Onegin how much joy his young wife has brought into his life. Onegin is stunned to recognize the elegant, confident woman as Tatiana. She is taken aback by Onegin's presence, but greets him politely before quickly leaving the party. Onegin suddenly realizes he is in love with Tatiana.

Onegin writes to Tatiana. When they meet, he asks her to run away with him. Tatiana admits that she still loves Onegin, but tells him that she cannot abandon her husband. She leaves Onegin alone and devastated.

## WHO'S WHO IN *EUGENE ONEGIN*

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Tatiana Larina	A young woman from a country estate	ta-TYAH-na	soprano	Tatiana's life has been secluded, and although she is shy and bookish, she is capable of passionate expression and deep attachment.
Eugene Onegin	A young aristocrat	yoo-JEEN oh-NYEH-gin	baritone	Disillusioned and aloof, Onegin is dismissive of the world and people around him. His careless attitude will lead him to tragedy and loss.
Lenski	A young poet and neighbor of the Larin family	LEN-skee	tenor	Lenski is earnest, idealistic, and deeply in love with Olga, Tatiana's sister.
Olga Larina	Tatiana's younger sister	AWL-guh	contralto	More extroverted than her sister, Olga's innocent flirtation with Onegin ultimately leads to tragedy.
Prince Gremin	A wealthy aristocrat	GREH-min	bass	Gremin is surprised to find love late in life, following a career in the army. He is decent and honorable.
Madame Larina	The mother of Tatiana and Olga	LAH-ree-na	mezzo-soprano	Madame Larina wants her daughters to marry well but reminisces about the man she loved before her own arranged marriage.
Filippievna	The sisters' aging nanny	fil-leep-YEV-nah	mezzo-soprano	Tatiana enlists the loyal Filippievna's help to deliver her letter to Onegin.

**1731** With a performance on December 11 of *Calandro* by Giovanni Ristori, Russian audiences are first exposed to Italian opera. Before this time, there had been no Russian tradition of opera, and instrumental music was still in an early stage of development in comparison to that of Western Europe.

**1799** Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin is born in Moscow, Russia, to an old, aristocratic family. On his mother's side, he was a descendant of Abram Hannibal, who was abducted from his African family, eventually adopted by Peter the Great, and elevated as a member of the imperial court. Many scholars consider Pushkin to be Russia's greatest poet and the founder of modern Russian literature.

**1823** Pushkin begins work on the verse novel *Eugene Onegin*, which he writes and publishes serially through 1832. A detailed and accurate portrait of aristocratic life in tsarist Russia, it becomes one of the most beloved Russian novels of any age.

**1836** Mikhail Glinka's opera *A Life for the Tsar* premieres at the Bolshoi Theater in St. Petersburg. The work is hailed as the first truly Russian opera, featuring not only a libretto in the Russian language and a story based on the folk hero Ivan Susanin, but the incorporation of folk melodies and other distinctively Russian musical elements.

**1837** After witnessing his wife accept the flirtatious behavior of their acquaintance George d'Anthès, Pushkin receives a letter informing him that he has been elected to "The Most Serene Order of Cuckolds." Pushkin challenges d'Anthès to a duel and is mortally wounded. He dies two days later.

**1840** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is born on May 7 near Votkinsk, in rural north-eastern Russia, to a large middle-class family. Tchaikovsky's parents encourage his early musical talent by hiring a tutor and purchasing an orchestrion, a type of organ, for their family home. He is also a precocious student of poetry and writes a number of literary works at a young age.







**1852** Tchaikovsky is sent to St. Petersburg to attend the School of Jurisprudence with the aim of later pursuing a career in law. While there, he continues his musical education privately, attending concerts, performing in choirs, and writing his first musical compositions.

**1859** Upon his graduation from the School of Jurisprudence, Tchaikovsky begins working as a clerk at the Ministry of Justice. He is an avid participant in St. Petersburg's rich cultural life, attending performances of theater, ballet, opera, and amateur theatrical organizations.

**1862** Tchaikovsky matriculates at the newly established St. Petersburg Conservatory, the first academic musical institution in Russia, studying composition, piano, flute, organ, and music theory. As Herman Laroche, one of his classmates at the Conservatory and one of his earliest biographers later claims he told Tchaikovsky, "You are the greatest musical talent in present-day Russia... I see in you the greatest, or, better said, the sole hope of our musical future."

**1866** Tchaikovsky accepts a post to teach music theory at the new Moscow Conservatory. In his personal life, he develops friendships with the homosexuals in his social circle and romantic relationships with a few. Tchaikovsky's homosexuality is known to his family and close friends, and is a frequent topic of discussion in his correspondence. At the time, he believes that he will eventually be able to have a traditional marriage and looks forward to the comfort of family life and children.  
*(continued on next page)*

*Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky*

*1877* During a discussion with Tchaikovsky about potential opera libretti, the singer Yelizaveta Lavrovskaya—a fellow professor at the Conservatory—proposes Pushkin’s verse novel *Eugene Onegin* as a possible source.

While composing at an intense pace, Tchaikovsky is contacted by Antonina Milyukova, a former pupil, who sends him an ardent letter in which she confesses her love for him. Tchaikovsky understands his situation as uniquely similar to that of the characters of *Eugene Onegin*. He and Antonia marry in July; within two weeks, Tchaikovsky leaves her and they separate permanently two months later. His marriage and the resulting psychological turmoil launch the composer into a period of medical crises, restlessness, and writer’s block.

Tchaikovsky continues work on *Eugene Onegin* while convalescing in Switzerland and Italy. He completes the opera in January, despite the difficulties of the past months, within only eight months.

*1879* The opera premieres in March in a production by students from the Moscow Conservatory at the Maly Theater in Moscow.

*1881* *Eugene Onegin* has its first professional production at Moscow’s Bolshoi Theater in January.





Anna and Elena Balbusso's illustration for the cover of a recent edition of *Eugene Onegin* casts the protagonist as an "empty suit."

## THE SUPERFLUOUS MAN

The character of Eugene Onegin served as a model for later generations of writers who created anti-heroes with similar attributes. Like Onegin, these men tend to be aristocratic and intelligent, but bored, disengaged with the world around them, careless and cynical, and inclined to idle activities such as drinking and gambling. Over the course of the 19th century, this kind of character became an archetype particular to Russian literature, commonly referred to as the "superfluous man," after Ivan Turgenev's *The Diary of a Superfluous Man* (1850). Other writers who explored the concept include Mikhail Lermontov (*A Hero of Our Time*, 1840), Ivan Goncharov (*Oblomov*, 1859), Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov.

## English Language Arts

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *Poetic License*, as well as the audio selections from *Eugene Onegin* available online or on the accompanying CD.

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

English/Language Arts, Poetry, Creative Writing, World Literature

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To consider the creative component of translating poetry
- To analyze how different artistic genres convey meaning
- To explore how live performance shapes the impact of operatic storytelling
- To become familiar with Pushkin's literary style and Tchaikovsky's interpretation of the story of *Eugene Onegin*

## Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music

Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* is a renowned and beloved work of Russian literature with an intricate poetic structure. Tchaikovsky's task in adapting it was a daunting one, and just as he and his librettist faced difficult interpretive choices in creating their opera, so have an impressive number of translators who have attempted to render Pushkin's highly idiosyncratic poetry into English.

This activity will introduce students to the creative work of the poetic translator. Students will also consider the relationship between artistic genres and their particular styles of storytelling. What does adapting a story into another format require? What changes must be made? What can be altered without sacrificing the essence of the original work? To explore these questions and more, students will:

- examine the literary attributes of Pushkin's verse
- compare various translations of the same excerpts from both Pushkin's novel and Tchaikovsky's libretto
- listen to and analyze musical excerpts from *Eugene Onegin* in advance of the Met's HD transmission
- apply their knowledge by creating a new translation of a stanza of Pushkin's verse

### STEPS

In this activity, students will engage in close reading, analyzing an unfamiliar poem before turning to different translations of passages from Pushkin's verse novel *Eugene Onegin*. Students will also examine Tchaikovsky's expansion and adaptation of the same passages in his opera. Through class performance, group work, listening, and creative response, students will gain an understanding of the nuances of poetic translation and the myriad creative choices available to poet, librettist, and composer.

**STEP 1:** Students will likely be unfamiliar with Alexander Pushkin and his contributions to literary history. You may like to summarize the information found in the biographical sidebar *Alexander Pushkin* on his life, some of the fun facts, and/or selections from the timeline in this guide to give students a brief overview of his work and his stature in Russian literature.

Explain to students that Tchaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin* is a setting of one of Pushkin's works—a novel in verse (i.e. rhymed, metrical poetry), and it thus unites two of Russia's great creative minds. By the time Tchaikovsky was working on his composition, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* was a pillar of the Russian literary canon, and the novel's leading female character, Tatiana, was universally beloved. But despite this status, the work also presented unique challenges to adaptation into other artistic genres, given Pushkin's highly individual style and strict poetic structure.

**STEP 2:** To demonstrate this last point, distribute the first page of the reproducible handouts entitled *Poetic License* found at the back of this guide. Turn students' attention to the text, a poem by Vladimir Nabokov entitled "On Translating *Eugene Onegin*," also reprinted below. Invite a student or two to read the poem aloud.

What is translation? On a platter  
A poet's pale and glaring head,  
A parrot's screech, a monkey's chatter,  
And profanation of the dead.  
The parasites you were so hard on  
Are pardoned if I have your pardon,  
O, Pushkin, for my stratagem:  
I traveled down your secret stem,  
And reached the root, and fed upon it;  
Then, in a language newly learned,  
I grew another stalk and turned  
Your stanza patterned on a sonnet,  
Into my honest roadside prose—  
All thorn, but cousin to your rose.

Reflected words can only shiver  
Like elongated lights that twist  
In the black mirror of a river  
Between the city and the mist.  
Elusive Pushkin! Persevering,  
I still pick up Tatiana's earring,  
Still travel with your sullen rake.  
I find another man's mistake,  
I analyze alliterations  
That grace your feasts and haunt the great  
Fourth stanza of your Canto Eight.  
This is my task—a poet's patience  
And scholastic passion blent:  
Dove-droppings on your monument.

First, allow students some time to reflect on the poem and discern its meaning. They may record their thoughts on the space provided on the handout. Next, initiate a discussion on the meaning of this dense text. What is Nabokov talking about? (As indicated by the poem's title, he is reflecting on the difficulties of translating *Eugene Onegin* from Russian into English.) What does the narrator claim about the merits of translation versus the original poetry? (Translations are a "monkey's screech" and a "profanation," etc.) What is the style of the narrator's translation? (It is "honest, roadside prose"—i.e. it is not a poetic translation.) What is the effect of Nabokov's neologisms in the penultimate line? What are the poetic rules he is upholding? (rhyme and meter).

Next, delve into the precise poetic structure of the two 14-line stanzas. On a smart board, on the handout, or on the blackboard, map out the rhyme structure, line by line, together as a class. The result should be:

ABAB CCDD EFFE GG

If students have studied Shakespeare's sonnets, they may be aware that Shakespeare used the similar rhyme structure of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG for his sonnets; and they may be interested to know that Petrarch used another structure—ABBA ABBA CDECDE—for his own. The precise scheme that Nabokov employs in the poem above is identical

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *EUGENE ONEGIN*

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4

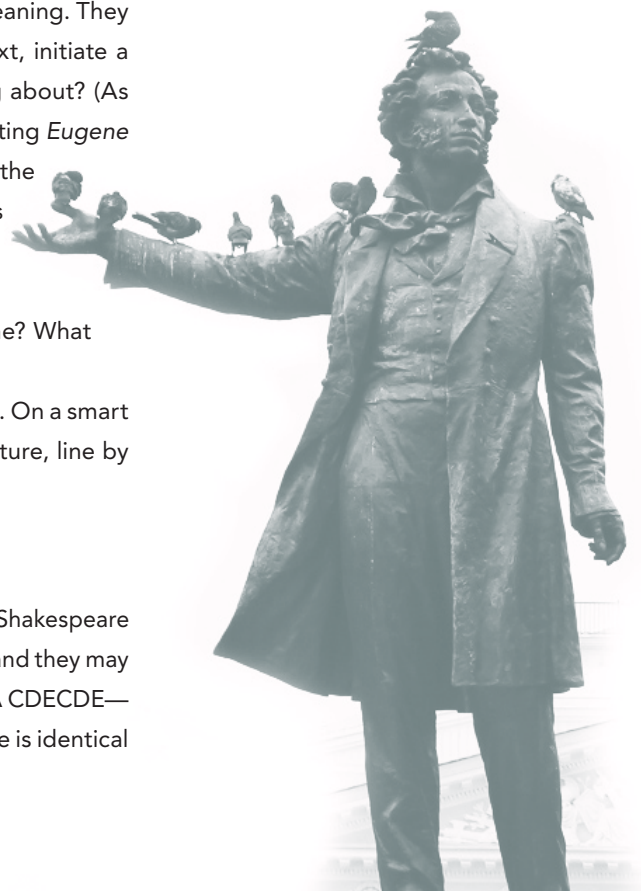
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.



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**Alexander Pushkin** Although his writing is among the best known in Russian literature, Alexander Pushkin remains a somewhat enigmatic historical figure. Born in 1799, he prided himself on his family's noble and supposedly exotic lineage. His father's family could be traced back to 12th-century aristocracy, while his mother was a descendant of Abram Hannibal, who had been an African slave brought back to Russia by Peter the Great. Pushkin relished his unique ancestry and sometimes used it to excuse his erratic behavior, which included a dissipated lifestyle long after it was a socially excusable aspect of youth; protracted literary feuds; and his impolitic antagonism to the Russian court.



After graduating from the prestigious Imperial Lyceum at 16, Pushkin was given a post in the foreign office in St. Petersburg. His narrative poem *Ruslan and Ludmila*, which he completed in 1820, was attacked by critics for flouting literary convention but made him well known in cultural circles. Shortly afterwards, Pushkin's involvement in political movements that took aim at the tsarist regime and the publication of similarly political poetry earned him a transfer to a remote southern province. There, he began writing a collection of romantic poetry that would become known as his "southern cycle." During this time, he also began work on *Eugene Onegin*, which would be published in installments between 1825 and 1832.

In 1826, Pushkin was pardoned by the new Tsar Nicholas I and allowed to return to Moscow. After several years of writing and leading a frenzied social life, he married Natalya Goncharova, a famous Moscow beauty. They settled in St. Petersburg, but neither was happy in the marriage. Pushkin continued to antagonize and provoke those within his social set, culminating in 1837 when he was shot and killed in a duel defending his wife's honor.

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to the one Pushkin used in *Eugene Onegin*. It is so distinctive that it has been termed the "Onegin stanza" or the "Pushkin sonnet."

Taking the literary analysis to another level, you may have students analyze which rhymes are masculine (i.e. only a single syllable is rhymed, as in "learned" and "turned") and feminine (i.e. two or more syllables are rhymed, as in "upon it" and "sonnet"). Students will find that the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes precisely matches the overall rhyme scheme. You may also have students analyze the poetic meter; here, the structure is equally rigid. The Onegin stanza is composed in strict tetrameter (four stressed syllables per line). In sum, Pushkin's verse structure is highly controlled, a virtuosic display of poetic invention.

At the close of your brief examination of the structure of Nabokov's poem, point out to the class that Nabokov's eventual translation of *Eugene Onegin* was neither rhymed nor in verse; he considered it impossible to do justice to Pushkin's poetry in this way, and instead aimed to capture as much of his meaning and contextual nuance as he could in a prose translation.

**STEP 3:** Now it is time to turn Pushkin's text. Distribute the next portion of the reproducible handouts and divide students into groups of 5 to 6 students each. In their groups, students should read each of the translated versions of "Onegin's Sermon,"

reproduced as Excerpt #1 in the handouts, making notes on the differences between them. How does the imagery vary? Is the tone consistent between translations? Does one version seem more earnest than another? More ironic? Students can make notes on the handouts.

After allowing sufficient time for groups to complete their reading and group review, open a discussion with the entire class on their discoveries. What are their impressions of each translation? Do they find one translation to be more compelling than the others? What makes it so? What do the translator's choices in imagery and style say about his interpretation of the scene in question?

**STEP 4:** Now have students turn to the next page of the reproducible handout, which gives Tchaikovsky and his librettist's version of the same scene. Have students read it to themselves or have a volunteer read it aloud. Then, with students following along to the text, play Tchaikovsky's musical setting of Onegin's Sermon, found on **Track 1**. Lead students in a discussion about the passage. Guiding questions may include:

- How does the length of Tchaikovsky's passage compare to Pushkin's?
- What is new in Tchaikovsky's version? Are there differences in style? Students may think back to the shifts between the versions of the different translators.

# DUELS

A practice dating back to at least the early Middle Ages and the stylized code of chivalry, dueling was long the preferred method, and considered the honorable way by some, to settle disagreements and satisfy affronts between two men, who were both typically members of the aristocracy. Duels might be fought for a range of reasons, from a perceived verbal insult to competition over a woman. Highly formalized and requiring a series of actions in preparation and execution, the duel would begin with the men meeting at a prearranged location. If they were unable to resolve their differences, they would count off a set number of paces, aim their pistols, and fire at each other.

Given Pushkin's sensitive treatment of the duel in *Eugene Onegin*—its avoidability, meaninglessness, and the personal disaster it brings about for the title character, it is tragically ironic that the author himself would eventually die in the same way. Only a few years after completing the novel, Pushkin fought a duel in defense of his wife's honor. He was mortally wounded and died two days later.



**FUN FACT:** The tale of *Eugene Onegin* has been adapted many times since its publication, in films, ballets, plays, and more. These works include a 1911 silent film directed by Vasili Goncharov, a German film (also from the silent era) directed by Alfred Halm, and much more recently, a 1999 film starring Ralph Fiennes as Onegin and Liv Tyler as Tatiana.

- How does Tchaikovsky's musical setting give us more information than the text alone?
- You may like to bring up the notion of "tone," or the overall character, atmosphere, or attitude of an artistic work. The tone of the two versions is very different. The style of Pushkin's novel is witty and humorous, while Tchaikovsky's opera is more earnest. What do the differing tones say about each creator's attitude towards the characters? Do your students prefer one version to the other? Why or why not?
- How does the music make you feel? What does it do to our understanding of the characters?
- How would you describe the singers' voices? High? Low? Tender? Melancholy? Pompous?
- What does this convey about the characters and their personalities?
- Is there anything that you think the poetry captured that is missing from the music?
- Introduce the idea of an unreliable narrator. In Pushkin's text, there is a narrator who has thoughts and opinions, and who often speaks directly to the reader. Tchaikovsky's opera has no narrator. How does this affect the way the audience or reader perceives the story? How might the music itself fulfill the role of a narrator or commentator?

**STEP 5:** If time permits, repeat this process with the second set of translations and the corresponding scene from the opera. The musical excerpt can be found on **Track 2**.

**FOLLOW-UP:** As a take-home activity, students can choose one of the three supplemental stanzas of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and "translate" it line by line into their own style of poetry or prose. Students may find it helpful to review the synopsis of the opera as a whole for further details on the characters and situations of the story; feel free to distribute the synopsis or summary found in this guide for them to take home. After completing their translations, students should jot down some thoughts on how they think their passages might be augmented by music. What will the music tell the listener that the words do not? What instruments or voice types should the composer use to set their passages? Will their translation be set as an aria, a duet, or an ensemble? What should the tone of their passage be? Encourage students to be creative as they develop a plan for their musical settings.



## Tatiana's Musical Confession

By far the best known and most widely quoted portion of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* is Tatiana's letter to Onegin. In it, she lays her emotions bare to the reader as she works through the turbulence of her feelings for Onegin, her hesitation in how to respond, and her attempts to confess her love in a letter for him. Tchaikovsky's musical setting takes Pushkin's remarkably brief text and expands it not only with added lines, but with lush, sweeping melodies that transport the listener along with Tatiana's roiling emotions.

This activity is designed to help students explore the musical, emotional, and theatrical elements of the Letter Scene. They will:

- study some of the musical motifs from *Eugene Onegin*
- listen to and analyze a selection of musical excerpts
- imagine how the scene might be staged, based on Tchaikovsky's musical choices

### STEPS

Students will first review musical vocabulary and concepts before studying a number of important musical motifs from *Eugene Onegin*. After this preparatory work, they will engage in a close study of Tatiana's Letter Scene from the opera, remarking on the musical attributes of each section—including not only their basic musical characteristics, but also identifying motifs that are present in each section and drawing conclusions on the overall emotional meaning of the music. The lesson concludes with students formulating plans on how each section might be staged, based on their understanding of the text and music.

**STEP 1:** As preliminary work at the start of class, make sure that students are comfortable with the *Ten Essential Musical Terms*. You may want to photocopy the page and

## Music

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *Tatiana's Musical Confession* as well as the audio selections from *Eugene Onegin* available online or on the accompanying CD. You may also want to share the plot summary and *Ten Essential Musical Terms* found in this guide.

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

General Music, Band, Orchestra, Chorus, Humanities, Arts

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To introduce and/or reinforce knowledge of musical terminology
- To hone aural skills by listening to and analyzing musical excerpts
- To draw conclusions about the meaning of a scene based on its musical characteristics



Anna Netrebko, front, as Tatiana.  
KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA



**COMMON CORE STANDARDS  
AND EUGENE ONEGIN**

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2**  
Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5**  
Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

distribute it as a handout, or alternatively write the terms on your blackboard so that students can easily call them to mind later in the lesson. As applicable, you may want to demonstrate the terms on the piano or with your instrument, and play the musical examples found in the audio tracks to aid students in their understanding. A guide to these tracks is below.

TRACK	MUSICAL TERM
3	Accelerando
4	Rallentando
5	Crescendo
6	Diminuendo
7	Lyricism
8	Modulation
9	Rubato
10	Syncopation
11	Tremolo

**STEP 2:** Students will also need to have a basic understanding of the plot of *Eugene Onegin*. You may like to use the summary included in this guide (rather than the full synopsis, which includes more detail than students will need for the purposes of this lesson), or instead briefly talk over the story of *Eugene Onegin*. Namely, it follows Tatiana, a shy but romantic girl from a country estate, who falls in love with a worldly and bored gentleman, Eugene Onegin. She pours her heart out to him in a letter, but he rejects and humiliates her for her youthful idealism. He then flirts idly with her sister Olga, and when his friend Lenski (who loves Olga) takes offence, matters between them deteriorate until Lenski challenges Onegin to a duel. The two friends meet at the appointed time, and to his horror, Onegin kills Lenski with his first shot. Some time goes by, and Onegin returns to St. Petersburg, attending a ball at the noble Princess Gremina’s house. Onegin is shocked to recognize Tatiana, who is now married and widely admired for her elegant, composed grace. He realizes that he is in love with Tatiana, but when he confesses all to her, she is unwilling to leave her husband, and Onegin is left alone.

**STEP 3:** Now distribute the *Tatiana’s Musical Confession* reproducible handout found at the back of this guide, which presents the four major musical motifs of the opera. These motifs help create musical meaning, providing the audience with clues as to what the characters are thinking and feeling. They also help provide musical coherence, acting as recurring musical material that is easily recognizable.

Work through the motifs with your students, having them follow along to the printed music on the handout as you play **Tracks 12 through 15**. Encourage students to describe each motif, commenting on their melodic shape, harmony, and overall dramatic effect. Space is provided on the handout for students to make notes. You will likely need to play each example several times. Each of the motifs is summarized below for your convenience.

#### Track 12: Tatiana's Motif



A minor-mode, evocatively chromatic falling line against a legato chordal accompaniment. The feeling is yearning and rather melancholy.

#### Track 13: Solitude Motif



Begins with an expressive appoggiatura; after a brief rest, a rising chromatic line introduces another expressive appoggiatura.

#### Track 14: Confession of Love Motif



A major-mode descending scale with chromatic alterations merges into a cantabile gesture in the French horns. The effect is one of innocence and earnestness.

#### Track 15: Onegin's Motif



A minor-mode scale rises against a syncopated accompaniment, creating an effect of restlessness and tension.

**FUN FACT:** Shortly before Tchaikovsky embarked on *Eugene Onegin*, his work was introduced to Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy widow, avid supporter of Russian music, and patron of the Moscow Conservatory. Wishing to support his talent, she established a stipend for Tchaikovsky that allowed him to depart his post at the Conservatory and focus solely on his composition. Their ensuing correspondence demonstrates their high mutual regard; Tchaikovsky dedicated a number of his compositions to von Meck and frequently called her his “best friend.”



**STEP 4:** It is now time to turn to Tatiana's Letter Scene. Explain to students that this is an extended section in which Tatiana is alone on stage, struggling with her feelings for Onegin and her resolve to confess her love in a letter to him. First, play the entire scene on **Track 16** while students follow along to the text and translation provided in the reproducible handouts.

Next, have students turn to the chart in the handouts and begin working through the scene one section at a time, as it is broken down in the audio examples in **Tracks 17** through **29**. A translation of the text is provided in the first column. In the section on the right, students should list the musical elements they hear, drawing on their knowledge of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* and their musical backgrounds. There students should indicate which (if any) musical motifs they hear. (There may be more than one motif per example.) Students should feel free to refer back to the list of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* as well as their handouts on the musical motifs as necessary. Finally, students should fill in the next section of the chart with their conclusions on the emotional or dramatic meaning of the passage, based on their understanding of both the text and the music. They may find it helpful to imagine what Tatiana is feeling at that particular moment. It will be necessary to play each excerpt several times.

A completed chart is provided on the following pages for your reference.

**STEP 5:** As a final activity or as a homework assignment, you may encourage students to extend their opinions of each section's emotional and dramatic meaning by imagining how each excerpt should be staged. Opera directors and singers work together in rehearsal to map out where a character moves on stage and how a text should be brought to life through body language. This process is called "blocking."

This portion of the activity is designed to encourage students to think from the point of view of a director. How would they describe or plan out Tatiana's physical movement and blocking in each section? When does she sit at the table to write? When she does stand up? Does she pace back and forth? Does she fall to her knees? Using evidence from the text and musical shape of each portion of the scene, students can record their plans on their charts in the provided spaces.

**FOLLOW UP:** As a follow-up activity, you might have groups of students mime their blocking for portions of the excerpt while playing the corresponding music as found on the tracks above. After several groups perform their scenes, conclude the lesson with a group discussion of which stagings made for the most effective and dramatically convincing scenes.

# Ten Essential Musical Terms

**Accelerando/Rallentando** Two terms that depict changes in tempo. An *accelerando* (Italian for “quickening”) marking indicates that the performer should gradually increase the speed of the music. *Rallentando* (“slowing down”) indicates the opposite.

**Dynamics** The relative intensity in the volume of musical sound. When indicated in a score, dynamics are communicated by a set of standard Italian terms and symbols (such as *f* for forte, *p* for piano, *mf* for mezzo-forte, and so on). The concept of dynamics comprises not only the degree of loudness, but also the movement between different volume levels (as in *crescendo*, “growing louder,” and *diminuendo*, “growing softer”).

**Lyricism** A term borrowed from poetry meaning “songfulness.” In music, it is used to refer to a style that depicts an outpouring of emotion and expression in melody and long, legato phrases. Lyrical musical settings often emphasize a character’s feelings of love, longing, romance, heartbreak, sorrow, or desire.

**Modulation** A shift to a new key within a musical composition. Tonal music—most music written between the early 17th and early 20th centuries—usually begins and ends in the same key, with modulating material in the middle. Modulations can be close or distant, depending on how drastically the key signature must change. Distant modulations can sound surprising or jarring to the listener.

**Motif** A musical motif (or motive) is a brief musical idea that recurs throughout a musical work. Motives can be based on a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic component, and their repetition makes them recognizable to the listener. In opera, musical motives are often symbolically associated with specific characters or dramatic ideas.

**Recitative** A term with far-reaching significance across the history of opera, recitative refers to a type of vocal utterance that can be characterized as song-speech. It is derived from the Italian verb that translates as “to recite” and is meant to capture the gestures of the spoken word. Recitative is understood in contrast to the more tuneful and reflective mode of arias and ensemble pieces, in which texts are often repeated.

**Rubato** Described as the “push and pull” in musical tempo, the term *rubato* refers to a type of rhythmic freedom taken by a performer. *Rubato* is created by speeding up and slowing down the tempo of a musical moment for expressive effect. The use of *rubato* may create the feeling of a singer indulging in a note for a moment or suspending time briefly before moving on. While it can be expressively beautiful, it can make it difficult to keep a steady conducting pattern, as the general flow of the beat is temporarily suspended.

**Scale** A sequence of notes proceeding up or down, spanning an entire octave or a portion of an octave. The pitches of any composition can be distilled into a scale, and there are many different types of scales. Western tonal music employs both the major scale and the minor scale; the minor scale possesses variations in how the 6th and 7th scale degrees are treated, resulting in the natural minor, melodic, and harmonic minor scales.

**Syncopation** Syncopation describes the technique and effect of connecting an unstressed note or beat to a following, stressed one, resulting in an unexpected shift in the pulse of a composition, while the overall meter remains regular and discernible in other parts of the musical texture.

**Tremolo** A musical term indicating the rapid repetition of a single note, from the Italian for “trembling” or “quivering.” In string instruments, it requires that players move their bows back and forth across the string as fast as possible. A solo string player playing a tremolo may not sound very powerful, but when all the string instruments in the orchestra play a tremolo together, it creates an impressive effect.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# Tatiana's Musical Confession ANSWER KEY

TRACK	TEXT
17	Let me perish, but first let me, with dazzling hope, summon bliss as yet unknown. I'm getting to understand life's sweetness! I drink the magic potion of desire! I am beset by visions! Everywhere, everywhere I look, I see my fatal tempter! Wherever I look, I see him!
18	No, that's all wrong! I'll try again! Ah, what's wrong with me! I'm burning up! I don't know how to begin!
19	"I'm writing to you, ...and then what? What else can I say? I know that it's in your power to punish me with your contempt! But if you have at least one grain of pity for my unhappy lot, you will not abandon me. At first I wished to remain silent; then, believe me, you would never have known my shame, never!"

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *String tremolos*

*Major mode*

*Accelerando*

*Crescendo*

*Lyrical melody in strings*

*Ascending musical gestures*

**MOTIF:** *none*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Excitement*

*Overcome by the intensity of her emotions*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Fluttering musical gestures*

*Rallentando*

*Recitative-like declamation*

**MOTIF:** *Tatiana*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Unsure, she*

*starts to doubt herself*

*Frustration*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Minor mode rising scales*

*Modulation*

*Pulsing syncopation*

*Piano dynamics*

*Rallentando at the end*

**MOTIF:** *Onegin*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Earnest, as her*

*mind is swirling and she is intently trying to communicate*

*how she feels*

*Vulnerable*

*Shame, uncertainty*

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# Tatiana's Musical Confession ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
20	<p>O yes, I swore to lock within my breast this declaration of a crazed and ardent passion! Alas, I don't have the strength to control my heart! Come what may, whatever happens, I will confess to him! Courage! He will know all!</p>
21	<p>"Why, oh why did you come to us? I would never have met you in this remote countryside, nor known this bitter torment. The excitement of a youthful heart would have calmed with time, who knows? Most likely I would have found another, and been a faithful wife and virtuous mother..."</p>
22	<p>Another! No, not to any other in the world would I have given my heart! It is decreed on high, it is the will of heaven: I am yours! My whole life has been a pledge of this inevitable encounter; I know this: God sent you to me, you are my keeper till the grave!</p>

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Lyrical melodies*

*Yearning musical gestures*

*Rubato*

*Recitative-like style*

**MOTIF:** *Tatiana, Solitude*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Overwhelmed by the  
intensity of her emotions*

*Reflection*

*Determination*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Minor mode*

*Rising and falling/swirling musical gestures*

*Modulation*

*Rubato*

*Syncopation*

*Piano dynamics*

*Rallentando at the end*

**MOTIF:** *Onegin*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Confusion*

*Doubt and distress*

*Struggling to express herself*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Major mode,*

*Più mosso (i.e. with faster motion)*

*Crescendo*

*Pulsing musical gestures, rallentando at the end*

**MOTIF:** *none*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Regaining confidence*

*Hopeful, optimistic*

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# Tatiana's Musical Confession ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
23	You appeared before me in my dreams; as yet unseen, you were already dear, your wondrous gaze filled me with longing, your voice resounded in my heart.
24	Long ago... no, it was no dream! As soon as you arrived, I recognized you, I almost swooned, began to burn up, and said to myself: It's him!
25	I know it! I have heard you ... Did you not speak to me in the silence, when I visited the poor, or sought to calm my anguished soul in prayer? And just this very moment, was it not you, dear vision, that flashed in the transparent darkness quietly standing at my bedside? Wasn't it you, who joyfully and lovingly whispered words of hope to me?

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Rallentando*

*Ascending musical gestures in the woodwinds*

*Piano dynamics*

**MOTIF:** *none*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Suddenly reflective*

*Longing*

*Desire*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Tremolos*

*Rising, forte musical gestures/scales*

*Rubato, accelerando, and rallentando*

*Modulation*

**MOTIF:** *none*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Passionate intensity*

*Longing*

*Desire*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Più mosso as Tatiana*

*becomes more excited*

*Major mode*

*Modulation*

*Crescendo*

*Triplet accompaniment*

*Rallentando at the end*

**MOTIF:** *none*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Hopeful and*

*optimistic*

*Anguish and desire all mixed together*



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

# Tatiana's Musical Confession ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
26	<p>"Who are you? My guardian angel or a cruel tempter? Put my doubts at rest. Maybe this is all an empty dream, the delusion of an innocent soul, and something else is meant for me?..."</p>
27	<p>But so be it! From here on I entrust my fate to you; in tears before you, I beg for your protection, I beg you!</p>
28	<p>Imagine: I am all alone here! No one understands me! My mind is restless, and I must suffer in silence! I wait for you, I wait for you! Say the word to revive my heart's fondest hopes or wake me from this oppressive dream with, alas, the scorn I have deserved!</p>

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Modulation to new key*  
*Major mode*  
*Lyrical melodies*  
*Rubato*  
*Rallentando*  
*Descending/falling musical gestures in the vocal line*  
*Piano dynamics*

**MOTIF:** *Confession of Love*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Reflective*  
*Vulnerable, exposed*  
*Unsure of herself, with a desire for answers*  
*Afraid of being hurt*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Minor mode*  
*Pulsing/driving musical gestures*  
*Syncopation*  
*Più mosso*  
*Rubato*

**MOTIF:** *none*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:** *Deciding to*  
*let go of her inhibitions*

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Grand, lyrical melody*  
*Accelerando/più mosso in the middle, then*  
*rallentando at the end*  
*Crescendo*  
*Forte dynamics*

**MOTIF:** *Confession of Love*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:**  
*overwhelmed by the intensity of her feelings*  
*Alone, as if no one understands her*  
*Hopeful*

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana’s Musical Confession **ANSWER KEY** (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
29	It’s done! I can’t read it over, I’m overcome by shame and fright, but I trust your honor and put my fate in your hands!

**MUSICAL ELEMENTS:** *Fast, ascending scales at the beginning*  
*Fortissimo dynamics*  
*Accelerando*  
*Modulation*  
*Accents*  
*Tremolos in the high strings, ending with a dramatic musical flourish*

**MOTIF:** *Confession of Love*

**EMOTIONAL OR DRAMATIC MEANING:**  
*Excited and terrified all at the same time*

### Supporting the Student Experience during *The Met: Live in HD* Transmission

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

Each Performance Activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the *Live in HD* transmission and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activities direct attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

For *Eugene Onegin*, the first activity sheet, *Decisions, Decisions*, asks students to consider the consequences of the various choices made by the characters throughout the opera. Students will construct a decision tree based on characters' actions and think about whether the opera's tragic conclusion was inevitable or avoidable.

The second, basic activity sheet is called *My Highs & Lows*. It is meant to be collected, opera by opera, over the course of the season. This sheet serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The Performance Activity reproducible handouts can be found in the back of this guide. On the next page, you'll find an activity created specifically for follow-up after the *Live in HD* transmission.

#### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the Performance Activity reproducible handouts found in the back of this guide.

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *EUGENE ONEGIN*

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

##### CSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

## Growing Pains

### IN PREPARATION

This activity requires no preparation other than attendance at the *Live in HD* transmission of *Eugene Onegin*.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Think critically about the psychological realism of Tchaikovsky's characters
- Consider the ways in which a character, or person, can evolve
- Think about effective ways to demonstrate these changes to a reader/audience
- Write creatively about their own experience of personal evolution

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs & Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *Eugene Onegin* experts.

Apart from its many insightful observations on human nature, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is also a story about evolution and transformation. A shy, naïve girl from the country grows into a beautiful woman of great poise and self-control. A man bored by everything he encounters is consumed by passion and changed into an individual capable of breaking all social mores. Tatiana's transition occurs in between the episodes portrayed in the opera. Onegin's transformation from aloof aristocrat to ardent lover, on the other hand, happens in an instant, entirely within view of the audience.

Ask your students to consider the nature of these changes in Tatiana's and Onegin's characters. Specifically:

- Are they believable? Did you “buy” Tatiana's transformation? What about Onegin's?
- Do you think Onegin loved Tatiana all along? Why or why not? If not, what might have inspired his sudden feelings?



Anna Netrebko as Tatiana  
KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

- Do you think Onegin's rejection of Tatiana played a role in her evolution? Would Tatiana have become the graceful and elegant aristocrat of the last act without Onegin's earlier refusal?
- Do you think Tatiana made the right choice? Do you think she and Onegin might have been happy together? Why or why not?
- What do you imagine for the two characters after the final scene of the opera? What will become of Onegin and Tatiana? How will they change or evolve from this point on?
- What makes a person change? Does someone's character really ever change, or is the seed of that change contained inside a person all along?
- Can students discern how Tchaikovsky's music expresses and matches the changes within Onegin and Tatiana?

Ask students to consider an evolution they recognize within themselves. Prompt them to think about the timeline of that change. Did it occur suddenly or over the course of months, maybe even years? Did something in their past slowly build and develop within them, or was their evolution triggered suddenly by a specific situation?

If students are comfortable sharing their personal histories, invite them to participate in a conversation about how their stories demonstrate the many different ways a person, or character, can change. For homework, ask them to write about a personal anecdote in the third person, as if described by someone else. Ask them to consider how they might show, rather than tell, their reader about the evolution or change they are describing. Students may compose their anecdote in any format they wish: as a short essay or reflection, dramatic scene, work of poetry, or in any other artistic format.

**Excerpts taken from the  
Metropolitan Opera broadcast of  
February 14, 2009**

**EUGENE ONEGIN**

Thomas Hampson

**TATIANA**

Karita Mattila

**LENSKI**

Piotr Beczala

**OLGA**

Ekaterina Semenchuk

**PRINCE GREMIN**

James Morris

Conducted by  
Jirí Belohlávek

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
and Chorus

- 1 Onegin's Sermon
- 2 Lenski's Aria
- 3 Accelerando
- 4 Rallentando
- 5 Crescendo
- 6 Diminuendo
- 7 Lyricism
- 8 Modulation
- 9 Rubato
- 10 Syncopation
- 11 Tremolo
- 12 Tatiana's Motif
- 13 Solitude Motif
- 14 Confession of Love Motif
- 15 Onegin's Motif
- 16 Tatiana's Letter Scene in full
- 17 "Let me perish"
- 18 "No, that's all wrong!"
- 19 "I'm writing to you"
- 20 "Oh yes, I swore"
- 21 "Why, oh why did you come to us?"
- 22 "Another!"
- 23 "You came to me in my dreams"
- 24 "As soon as you arrived"
- 25 "I know it!"
- 26 "Who are you?"
- 27 "But so be it!"
- 28 "Imagine: I am all alone here!"
- 29 "It's done!"

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music

“On Translating *Eugene Onegin*” by Vladimir Nabokov

What is translation? On a platter  
A poet's pale and glaring head,  
A parrot's screech, a monkey's chatter,  
And profanation of the dead.  
The parasites you were so hard on  
Are pardoned if I have your pardon,  
O, Pushkin, for my stratagem:  
I traveled down your secret stem,  
And reached the root, and fed upon it;  
Then, in a language newly learned,  
I grew another stalk and turned  
Your stanza patterned on a sonnet,  
Into my honest roadside prose—  
All thorn, but cousin to your rose.

Reflected words can only shiver  
Like elongated lights that twist  
In the black mirror of a river  
Between the city and the mist.  
Elusive Pushkin! Persevering,  
I still pick up Tatiana's earring,  
Still travel with your sullen rake.  
I find another man's mistake,  
I analyze alliterations  
That grace your feasts and haunt the great  
Fourth stanza of your Canto Eight.  
This is my task—a poet's patience  
And scholastic passion blent:  
Dove-droppings on your monument.

Notes on the poem's meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rhyme scheme: \_\_\_\_\_

Meter: \_\_\_\_\_



THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

.....

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

Read the translations below and then answer the following questions.

Excerpt #1, Chapter IV, stanzas 12–16 from *Eugene Onegin* by Alexander Pushkin

TRANSLATION BY A. S. KLINE (2009)

For two long minutes neither spoke,  
And then Onegin approached her,  
Saying: "You wrote to me, I broke  
The seal, I have read your letter.  
Don't disavow it, I find here,  
A love that's innocent, sincere.  
Your candour: that is dear to me,  
It brought to life, instantly,  
Those feelings, so long quiescent;  
That's no ready compliment,  
All that you sincerely meant  
I'll requite, with your assent:  
But hear my confession through,  
I'll leave the verdict up to you."

"Could I happily circumscribe  
My life with the domestic round;  
Could kindly fate for me prescribe  
A role as husband, father; found  
My being in family existence  
For but a moment, mind and sense—  
Then truly, in this life,  
You alone would be my wife.  
No rhetoric, no flattery,  
I'd find in you my heart's ideal,  
Find that youthful folly real,  
A cure for my sad history,  
Token of every beauty, good,  
And be as happy...as I could!

"I was not born for happiness,  
All such is alien to my mind;  
Of your perfection too, no less  
Am I unworthy, you would find.  
Believe me (conscience is my guide)  
Wed, the fire would soon have died;  
However I wished to prove true,  
Habit would cool my love for you.  
Then you would weep, yet your tears,  
Your grief, would never move my heart,  
But madden me, spur me to depart.  
What thorns, not roses, through the years  
Would Hymen strew along our way,  
Many a night, and many a day?

"What in the world is worse than this,  
A household, a neglected wife,  
Mourning her husband's absent kiss,  
Her days and nights alone, through life,  
While the spouse, knowing her worth,  
(Cursing the hour of his birth),  
Is ever-jealous, sullen, sour,  
Cold, darkly threatening, and dour!  
Such am I. Was it this you sought,  
With your pure and ardent mind;  
Was this what you hoped to find;  
This the message your note brought?  
Is this the destiny that waits,  
Dealt you by the cruel Fates?

"His days and dreams, what man recovers?  
My soul, nothing can renew...  
My love for you is as a brother's,  
More tender even, but as true:  
So hear me without tears or anger,  
A girl will often change her lover,  
Fresh dreams will replace the last,  
As, after winter's icy blast,  
Spring clothes the branches with new  
leaves,  
As heaven dictates. You'll love again.  
And then...our hearts we must restrain,  
Not all will see what your soul weaves,  
Know you as I, share your belief:  
The inexperienced come to grief."

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

TRANSLATION BY CHARLES JOHNSTON (1977)

Moments of silence, quite unbroken;  
then, stepping nearer, Eugene said:  
"You wrote to me, and nothing spoken  
can disavow that. I have read  
those words where love, without condition,  
pours out its guiltless frank admission,  
and your sincerity of thought  
is dear to me, for it has brought  
feeling to what had long been heartless:  
but I won't praise you—let me join  
and pay my debt in the same coin  
with an avowal just as artless;  
hear my confession as I stand  
I leave the verdict in your hand.

"Could I be happy circumscribing  
my life in a domestic plot;  
had fortune blest me by prescribing  
husband and father as my lot;  
could I accept for just a minute  
the homely scene, take pleasure in it,  
then I'd have looked for you alone  
to be the bride I'd call my own.  
Without romance, or false insistence,  
I'll say: with past ideals in view  
I would have chosen none but you  
as helpmeet in my sad existence,  
as gauge of all things that were good,  
and been as happy...as I could!

"But I was simply not intended  
for happiness—that alien role.  
Should your perfections be expended  
in vain on my unworthy soul?  
Believe (as conscience is my warrant),  
wedlock for us would be abhorrent.  
I'd love you, but inside a day,  
with custom, love would fade away;  
your tears would flow—but your emotion,  
your grief would fail to touch my heart,  
they'd just enrage it with their dart.  
What sort of roses, in your notion,  
would Hymen bring us—blooms that might  
last many a day, and many a night!

"What in the world is more distressing  
than households where the wife must moan  
the unworthy husband through depressing  
daytimes and evenings passed alone?  
and where the husband, recognizing  
her worth (but anathematising  
his destiny) without a smile  
bursts with cold envy and with bile?  
For such am I. When you were speaking  
to me so simply, with the fires  
and force that purity inspires,  
is this the man that you were seeking?  
can it be true you must await  
from cruel fortune such a fate?

"I've dreams and years past resurrection;  
a soul that nothing can renew...  
I feel a brotherly affection,  
or something tenderer still, for you.  
Listen to me without resentment:  
girls often change to their contentment  
light dreams for new ones...so we see  
each springtime, on the growing tree,  
fresh leaves...for such is heaven's mandate.  
You'll love again, but you must teach  
your heart some self-restraint; for each  
and every man won't understand it  
as I have...learn from my belief  
that inexperience leads to grief."

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

TRANSLATION BY HENRY SPALDING (1881)

Two minutes they in silence spent,  
Onegin then approached and said:  
"You have a letter to me sent.  
Do not excuse yourself. I read  
Confessions which a trusting heart  
May well in innocence impart.  
Charming is your sincerity,  
Feelings which long had ceased to be  
It wakens in my breast again.  
But I came not to adulate:  
Your frankness I shall compensate  
By an avowal just as plain.  
An ear to my confession lend;  
To thy decree my will I bend.

"If the domestic hearth could bless—  
My sum of happiness contained;  
If wife and children to possess  
A happy destiny ordained:  
If in the scenes of home I might  
E'en for an instant find delight,  
Then, I say truly, none but thee  
I would desire my bride to be—  
I say without poetic phrase,  
Found the ideal of my youth,  
Thee only would I choose, in truth,  
As partner of my mournful days,  
Thee only, pledge of all things bright,  
And be as happy—as I might.

"But strange am I to happiness;  
'Tis foreign to my cast of thought;  
Me your perfections would not bless;  
I am not worthy them in aught;  
And honestly 'tis my belief  
Our union would produce but grief.  
Though now my love might be intense,  
Habit would bring indifference.  
I see you weep. Those tears of yours  
Tend not my heart to mitigate,  
But merely to exasperate;  
Judge then what roses would be ours,  
What pleasures Hymen would prepare  
For us, may be for many a year.

"What can be drearier than the house,  
Wherein the miserable wife  
Deplores a most unworthy spouse  
And leads a solitary life?  
The tiresome man, her value knowing,  
Yet curses on his fate bestowing,  
Is full of frigid jealousy,  
Mute, solemn, frowning gloomily.  
Such am I. This did ye expect,  
When in simplicity ye wrote  
Your innocent and charming note  
With so much warmth and intellect?  
Hath fate apportioned unto thee  
This lot in life with stern decree?

"Ideas and time ne'er backward move;  
My soul I cannot renovate –  
I love you with a brother's love,  
Perchance one more affectionate.  
Listen to me without disdain.  
A maid hath oft, may yet again  
Replace the visions fancy drew;  
Thus trees in spring their leaves renew  
As in their turn the seasons roll.  
'Tis evidently Heaven's will  
You fall in love again. But still—  
Learn to possess more self-control.  
Not all will like myself proceed—  
And thoughtlessness to woe might lead."

A.S. Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*, (tr. Henry Spalding).  
Macmillan, 1881.

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

TRANSLATION BY VLADIMIR NABOKOV (1964)

For a few seconds they were silent;  
Onegin then went up to her  
and quoth: "You wrote to me.  
Do not deny it. I have read  
a trustful soul's avowals,  
an innocent love's outpourings;  
your candidness appeals to me,  
in me it has excited  
emotions long grown silent.  
But I don't want to praise you—  
I will repay you for it  
with an avowal likewise void of art;  
hear my confession;  
unto your judgment I submit.

"If I by the domestic circle  
had wanted to bound life;  
if to be father, husband,  
a pleasant lot had ordered me;  
if with the familistic picture  
I were but for one moment captivated;  
then, doubtlessly, save you alone  
no other bride I'd seek.  
I'll say without madrigal spangles:  
my past ideal having found,  
I'd doubtlessly have chosen you alone  
for mate of my sad days, in gage  
of all that's beautiful, and would have been  
happy—insofar as I could!

"But I'm not made for bliss;  
my soul is strange to it;  
in vain are your perfections:  
I'm not at all worthy of them.  
Believe me (conscience is thereof the  
pledge),  
wedlock to us would be a torment.  
However much I loved you,  
having grown used, I'd cease to love at  
once;  
you would begin to weep; your tears  
would fail to touch my heart—  
they merely would exasperate it.  
Judge, then, what roses  
Hymen would lay in store for us—  
and, possibly, for many days!

"What in the world can be  
worse than a family where the poor wife  
frets  
over an undeserving husband  
and day and evening is alone;  
where the dull husband,  
knowing her worth (yet cursing fate),  
is always sullen, silent, cross,  
and coldly jealous?  
Thus I. And it is this you sought  
with pure flaming soul when  
with such simplicity,  
with such intelligence, to me you wrote?  
Can it be true that such a portion  
is by stern fate assigned to you?

"For dreams and years there's no return;  
I shall not renovate my soul.  
I love you with a brother's love  
and maybe still more tenderly.  
So listen to me without wrath:  
a youthful maid will more than once  
for dreams exchange light dreams;  
a sapling thus its leaves  
changes with every spring.  
By heaven thus 'tis evidently destined.  
Again you will love; but...  
learn to control yourself;  
not everyone as I will understand you;  
to trouble inexperience leads."

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

Now take a few minutes to answer the questions below.  
What are your initial reactions to this excerpt?

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What does it tell you about the character of Onegin? Do you feel like you have a good sense of who he is?

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How do the rhyme schemes of the translations affect the tone of the scene? Do they make it funny? Serious? There are no wrong answers.

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What do you think Onegin’s attitude is as he delivers this “sermon”?

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Other notes:

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

Onegin's Sermon

TRACK 1

ONEGIN: Когда бы жизнь домашним кругом  
Я ограничить захотел,  
Когда б мне быть отцом, супругом  
Приятный жребий повелел,  
То верно б, кроме вас одной,  
Невесты не искал иной.  
Но я не создан для блаженства,  
Ему чужда душа моя.  
Напрасны ваши совершенства,  
Их не достоин вовсе я.  
Поверьте, (совесть в том порукой),  
Супружество нам будет мукой.  
Я сколько ни любил бы вас,  
Привыкнув, разлюблю тотчас.  
Судите ж вы, какие розы  
Нам заготовил Гименей,  
И, может быть, на много дней!  
Мечтам и годам нет возврата!  
Ах, нет возврата;  
Не обновлю души моей!  
Я вас люблю любовью брата,  
Любовью брата,  
Иль, может быть, еще нежней!  
Иль, может быть еще,  
Еще нежней!  
Послушайте ж меня без гнева,  
Сменит не раз младая дева  
Мечтами легкие мечты.  
Учитесь властвовать собой; ...  
Не всякий вас, как я, поймет.  
К беде неопытность ведет!

Kogda bi zhizn domashnim krugom  
ya ogranichit zakhotyel,  
kogda b mnye bit otsom, suprugom  
priyatni zhrebi povelyel,  
to, vyerno b, krome vas odnoi,  
nevesti ne iskal inoi.  
No ya ne sozdan dlya blazhenstva,  
yemu chuzhda dusha moyaya.  
Naprasni vashi sovershenstva,  
ikh ne dostoyin vovse ya.  
Povyerte, sovest v tom porukoi,  
supruzhestvo nam budet mukoi.  
Ya skolko ni lyubil bi vas,  
privyknuv, razlyublyu totchas.  
Sudite zh vi, kakiye rozi  
nam zagotovil Gimenyei,  
i, mozhet bit, na mnogo dneye!  
Mechtam i godam nyet vozvrata!  
Ah, nyet vozvrata:  
ne obnovlyu dushi moyei!  
Ya vas lyublyu lyubovyu brata,  
lyobovyu brata,  
il, mozhet bit, yeshcho nezhnyei!  
il, mozhet bit yeshcho,  
yeshcho nezhnyei!  
Poslushaite zh menya bez gnyeva,  
smenit ne raz mladaya dyeva  
mechtami lyogkiye mehti.  
Uchites vlastvovat soboi; ...  
Ne vsyaki vas, kak ya, poimyot.  
K bedye neopitnost vedyot!

If I wished to spend my life  
in a close-knit family,  
and if it were my fate  
to be a husband and a father,  
then, probably, you would be the  
bride that I would choose.  
But I wasn't made for married bliss,  
it is a foreign concept to my soul,  
your perfections are not for me;  
I am quite unworthy of them.  
Believe me, I swear to you,  
marriage would be torturous for us.  
No matter how much I loved you,  
routine would kill that love.  
Think, then, what a thorny bed of roses  
Hymen would prepare for us,  
to, perhaps, be endured for a lifetime!  
One cannot return to dreams and youth,  
No, return is impossible:  
I cannot change my soul!  
I love you with a brother's love,  
a brother's love  
or, perhaps, more than that!  
Perhaps, perhaps more than that!  
Listen to me without getting upset,  
often a young girl will exchange one  
dream for another.  
Learn to control your feelings;  
Not everyone will be as  
understanding as I am.  
Inexperience leads to disaster!

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

Read the translations below and then answer the following questions.

Excerpt #2, Chapter VI, stanzas 20–22

TRANSLATION BY A. S. KLINE (2009)

At home, his pistols are inspected  
Then replaced, their case shut tight;  
He undresses; a book's selected,  
Schiller,\* to scan by candlelight.  
His sad heart prevents all rest,  
By a single thought oppressed:  
He seems to see his Olga, bright  
In all her beauty, in the night.  
Vladimir shuts the book once more,  
Then poetry flows from his pen,  
Full of love's foolishness, again  
Verse sounds, as he strides the floor,  
Like that by Delvig's\*\* muse created,  
At dinner, when intoxicated.

By chance, I have the lines, unfinished,  
They're here before me, his in truth:  
'Where, oh where have you vanished,  
Golden springtime of my youth?  
This day to come, what will it bring?  
My eyes in vain seek out the thing  
That's veiled in deepest mystery.  
No matter: a just fate awaits me.  
Whether I fall struck by the power  
Of its arrow, or death wings by,  
All is well: our moments fly,  
Sleep and waking have their hour,  
Blessed the day of toil and care,  
Blessed the tomb's darkness there.'

'The morning star will tremble bright,  
Then the shining day will dawn,  
And I—perhaps, far from the light,  
Will know the secrets of death's bourn;  
Lethe\*\*\* will drown all memory  
Of the poet, this world forget me,  
But you, the beautiful, and dear,  
Will you not stop to shed a tear  
Over my urn, and think: "He loved,  
And in the fierce storm and strife,  
All the sad morning of his life,  
By me alone his soul was moved!...?  
Friend of my heart, eternal friend,  
Come to me, come: yours, to the end!...'

\* a German poet and philosopher

\*\* Anton Delvig, a poet and close friend of Pushkin

\*\*\* in Greek mythology, one of the rivers of the Underworld; drinking from its waters caused forgetfulness and the erasure of earthly memory



THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

TRANSLATION BY CHARLES JOHNSTON (1977)

Once home, he brought out and inspected  
his pistols, laid them in their case,  
undressed, by candlelight selected  
and opened Schiller... but the embrace  
of one sole thought holds him in keeping  
and stops his doleful heart from sleeping:  
Olga is there, he sees her stand  
in untold beauty close at hand.  
Vladimir shuts the book, for writing  
prepares himself; and then his verse,  
compact of amorous trash, and worse,  
flows and reverberates. Reciting,  
he sounds, in lyric frenzy sunk,  
like Delvig when he's dining drunk.

By chance those verses haven't vanished;  
I keep them, and will quote them here:  
'Whither, oh whither are ye banished,  
my golden days when spring was dear?  
What fate is my tomorrow brewing?  
the answer's past all human viewing,  
it's hidden deep in gloom and dust.  
No matter; fate's decree is just.  
Whether the arrow has my number,  
whether it goes careering past,  
all's well; the destined hour at last  
comes for awakening, comes for slumber;  
blessed are daytime's care and cark,\*  
blest is the advent of the dark!

'The morning star will soon be shining,  
and soon will day's bright tune be played;  
but I perhaps will be declining  
into the tomb's mysterious shade;  
the trail the youthful poet followed  
by sluggish Lethe may be swallowed,  
and I be by the world forgot;  
but, lovely maiden, wilt thou not  
on my untimely urn be weeping,  
thinking: he loved me, and in strife  
the sad beginnings of his life  
he consecrated to my keeping?...  
Friend of my heart, be at my side,  
beloved friend, thou art my bride!'

\* an archaic noun meaning worry or trouble

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

TRANSLATION BY HENRY SPALDING (1881)

At home arriving he addressed  
His care unto his pistols' plight,  
Replaced them in their box, undressed  
And Schiller read by candlelight.  
But one thought only filled his mind,  
His mournful heart no peace could find,  
Olga he sees before his eyes  
Miraculously fair arise,  
Vladimir closes up his book,  
And grasps a pen: his verse, albeit  
With lovers' rubbish filled, was neat  
And flowed harmoniously. He took  
And spouted it with lyric fire—  
Like Delvig when dinner doth inspire.

Destiny hath preserved his lay.  
I have it. Lo! the very thing!  
'Oh! whither have ye winged your way,  
Ye golden days of my young spring?  
What will the coming dawn reveal?  
In vain my anxious eyes appeal;  
In mist profound all yet is hid.  
So be it! Just the laws which bid  
The fatal bullet penetrate,  
Or innocently past me fly.  
Good governs all! The hour draws nigh  
Of life or death predestinate.  
Blest be the labours of the light,  
And blest the shadows of the night.

'To-morrow's dawn will glimmer gray,  
Bright day will then begin to burn,  
But the dark sepulchre I may  
Have entered never to return.  
The memory of the bard, a dream,  
Will be absorbed by Lethe's stream;  
Men will forget me, but my urn  
To visit, lovely maid, return,  
O'er my remains to drop a tear,  
And think: here lies who loved me well,  
For consecrate to me he fell  
In the dawn of existence drear.  
Maid whom my heart desires alone,  
Approach, approach; I am thine own.'

A.S. Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*, (tr. Henry Spalding).  
Macmillan, 1881.

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

TRANSLATION BY VLADIMIR NABOKOV (1964)

On coming home his pistols he inspected,  
then back into their case  
he put them, and, undressed,  
by candle opened Schiller;  
but there's one thought infolding him;  
the sad heart in him does not slumber:  
Olga, in beauty  
ineffable, he sees before him.  
Vladimir shuts the book,  
takes up his pen; his verses—  
full of love's nonsense—sound  
and flow. Aloud  
he reads them in a lyric fever,  
like drunken Delvig at a feast.

The verses chanced to be preserved;  
I have them; here they are:  
'Whither, ah! whither are ye fled,  
my springtime's golden days?  
What has the coming day in store for me?  
In vain my gaze attempts to grasp it;  
It matters not; fate's law is just.  
Whether I fall, pierced by the dart, or  
whether  
it flies by—all is right:  
of waking and of sleep  
comes the determined hour;  
blest is the day of cares,  
blest, too, is the advent of darkness!

'The ray of dawn will gleam tomorrow,  
and brilliant day will scintillate;  
whilst I, perhaps—I shall descend  
into the tomb's mysterious shelter,  
and the young poet's memory  
slow Lethe will engulf;  
the world will forget me; but thou,  
wilt thou come, maid of beauty,  
to shed a tear over the early urn  
and think: he loved me,  
to me alone he consecrated  
the doleful daybreak of a stormy life!...  
Friend of my heart, desired friend, come,  
come: I'm thy spouse!'



A.S. Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*, (tr. Vladimir Nabokov).  
Bollingen Foundation, 1964.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

Lensky's Aria

TRACK 2

LENSKY: Куда, куда, куда вы удалились,  
Весны моей златые дни?  
Что день грядущий мне готовит?  
Его мой взор напрасно ловит:  
В глубокой мгле таится он!  
Нет нужды; прав судьбы закон!  
Паду ли я, стрелой пронзенный,  
Иль мимо пролетит она,  
Все благо; бдения и сна  
Приходит час определенный!  
Благословен и день забот,  
Благословен и тьмы приход!  
Блеснет завтра луч денницы  
И заиграет яркий день,  
А я, быть может, я гробницы  
Сойду в таинственную сень!  
И память юного поэта  
Поглотит медленная Лета.  
Забудет мир меня; но ты, ты, Ольга...  
Скажи, придешь ли, дева красоты,  
Слезу пролить над ранней урной  
И думать: он меня любил!  
Он мне единой посвятил  
Рассвет печальный жизни бурной!  
Ах, Ольга, я тебя любил!  
Тебе единой посвятил  
Рассвет печальный жизни бурной!  
Ах, Ольга, я тебя любил!  
Сердечный друг, желанный друг.  
Приди, приди!  
Желанный друг, приди, я твой супруг!  
Приди, приди!  
Я жду тебя, желанный друг.  
Приди, приди; я твой супруг!  
Куда, куда, куда вы удалились,  
Златые дни, златые дни моей весны?

Kuda, kuda, kuda vi udalilis,  
vesni moyei zlatiye dni?  
Shto dyen gryadushchi mnye gotovit?  
Yevo moi vzor naprasno lovit:  
V glubokoi mglye tayitsa on!  
Nyet nuzhdi; prav sudbi zakon!  
Padu li ya, streloi pronzyonni,  
il mimo proletit ona,  
Vsyo blago; bdyeniya i sna  
prikhodit chas opredelyonni!  
Blagoslovyen i dyen zabot,  
blagoslovyen i tmi prikhod!  
Blesnyot zautra luch dennitsi  
i zayigrayet yarki dyen,  
a ya, bit mozhet, ya grobnitsi  
soidu v tayinstvennyuyu syen!  
I pamyat yunovo poeta  
poglotit myedlennaya Lyeta.  
Zabudet mir menya; no ti! Ti!... Olga...  
Skazhi, pridtyosh li, dyeva krasoti,  
slezu prolit nad rannei urnoi  
i dumat: on menya lyubil!  
On mnye yedinoi posvyatil  
rassvyet pechalni zhizni burnoi!  
Akh, Olga, ya tebya lyubil!  
Tebye yedinoi posvyatil  
rassvyet pechalni zhizni burnoi!  
Akh, Olga, ya tebya lyubil!  
Serdyechni drug, zhelanni drug.  
Pridi, pridit!  
Zhelanni drug. Pridi, ya tvoi suprug,  
Pridi, pridit!  
Ya zhdu tebya, zhelanni drug.  
Pridi, pridit; ya tvoi suprug!  
Kuda, kuda, kuda vi udalilis,  
zlatiye dni, zlatiye dni moyei vesni?

Where, oh where have you gone,  
the golden days of my youth?  
What lays in store for me today?  
My gaze searches in vain;  
all is dark!  
It doesn't matter: Fate is fair.  
Should I fall, pierced by the arrow,  
or should it fly past me,  
'tis all the same; there is a time for  
dreaming and a time for waking.  
Blessed is the day of care,  
blessed, too, the coming of darkness!  
The early morning sunrise gleams,  
and the day begins to brighten,  
but I, perhaps, will enter  
the mysterious darkness of the grave!  
And the memory of a young poet will be  
swallowed by Lethe's sluggish stream.  
The world will forget me; but you, Olga...  
Say, beautiful girl, will you come  
to shed a tear at my untimely death  
and think: he loved me!  
To me alone he devoted  
the sad dawn of his stormy life!  
Oh, Olga, I loved you,  
to you alone I devoted  
the sad dawn of my stormy life!  
Oh, Olga, I loved you!  
My heart's beloved, my desired one,  
come, oh come!  
My desired one, come,  
I am your betrothed, come, come!  
I wait for you, my desired one,  
come, come; I am your betrothed!  
Where, oh where have you gone,  
the golden days of my youth?

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

.....

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

How does the length of this libretto excerpt compare to Pushkin's poetry? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does it do to our understanding of Lenski? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can the music do that the original poetry cannot? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did the poetry capture that the music misses? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a version that you prefer? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a specific character or emotional element that the creator of your preferred version (Tchaikovsky or Pushkin) focuses on?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this allow you to engage with it more than the other version? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What about the artistic form (poetry or opera) allows this element to be in focus? Is it possible for that same element be as central in the other version? \_\_\_\_\_

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THE MET: LIVE IN HD

EUGENE ONEGIN

.....

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Poetic License: On Translating Pushkin in Words and Music (CONTINUED)

Take-Home Activity

OPTION #1

"Can it be she?" Eugene in wonder demanded. "Yes, she looks... And yet... from deepest backwood, furthest under..." And every minute his lorgnette stays fixed and focused on a vision which has recalled, without precision, forgotten features. "Can you say, prince, who in that dark-red béret, just there, is talking to the Spanish ambassador?" In some surprise the prince looks at him, and replies: "Wait, I'll present you—but you banish yourself too long from social life." "But tell me who she is." "My wife."

OPTION #2

From hour to hour a surer capture for Olga's beauty, Lenski gives his soul to a delicious rapture that fills him and in which he lives. He's always with her: either seated in darkness in her room, or treated to garden walks, as arm in arm they while away the morning's calm. What else? Quite drunk with love's illusion, he even dares, once in a while, emboldened by his Olga's smile, and plunged in tender shame's confusion, to play with a dishevelled tress, or kiss the border of her dress.

OPTION #3

We all meandered through our schooling haphazard; so, to God be thanks, it's easy, without too much fooling, to pass for cultured in our ranks. Onegin was assessed by many (critical judges, strict as any) as well-read, though of pedant cast. Unforced, as conversation passed, he had the talent of saluting felicitously every theme, of listening like a judge-supreme while serious topics were disputing, or, with an epigram-surprise, of kindling smiles in ladies' eyes.

Translation:

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Musical Settings:  
What will the music tell the listener that the words do not?

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What instruments or voice types should the composer use to set your passages?

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Will your translation be set as an aria, a duet, or an ensemble?

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What should the overall tone of your passage be?

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Other notes on your musical setting:

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THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Tatiana's Musical Confession

### Track 12: Tatiana's Motif



### Track 13: Solitude Motif



### Track 14: Confession of Love Motif



### Track 15: Onegin's Motif





THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana's Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

The Letter Scene

TRACK 16

ТАТИАНА: Пускай погибну я, но прежде  
я в ослепительной надежде  
блаженство темное зову,  
я негу жизни узнаю!

Я пью волшебный яд желаний!  
меня преследуют мечты!  
Везде, везде передо мной  
Мой искушитель роковой!  
Везде, везде, он предо мною!

Нет, все не то! Начну сначала!  
Ах, что со мной! я вся горю!  
Не знаю, как начать...

Я к вам пишу, - чего же боле?  
Что я могу еще сказать?  
Теперь я знаю, в вашей воле  
Меня презреньем наказать!  
Но вы, к моей несчастной доле  
Хоть каплю жалости храня,  
Вы не оставите меня.  
Сначала я молчать хотела;  
Поверьте, моего стыда  
Вы не узнали б никогда,  
Никогда!..

О да, клялась я сохранить в душе  
Признание в страсти пылкой и безумной!  
Увы! не в силах я владеть своей  
душой!  
Пусть будет то, что быть должно со мной!  
Ему признаюсь я! Смелей!  
Он все узнает!

Puskai pogibnu ya, no pryvezhde  
ya v oslepitelnoi nadyezhde  
blazhenstvo tyomnoye zovu,  
ya nyegu zhizni uznayu!

Ya pyu volshebni yad zhelani!  
menya preslyedyuyut mechti!  
Vezdye, vezdye peredo mnoi  
moi iskusitel rokovoi!  
Vezdye, vezdye, on predno mnoyu!  
*(She writes frantically, but immediately tears  
up what she has written.)*

Nyet, vsyo ne to! Nachnu snachala!  
Akh, shto so mnoi, ya vsya goryu ...  
Ne znayu, kak nachat!  
*(She pauses, thinks, then begins to write  
again.)*

„Ya k vam pishu, ...chevo zhe bole?  
Shto ya mogu yeshcho skazat?  
Tepyer ya znayu, v vashei vole  
menya prezryenyem nakazat!  
No vi, k moyei neschastnoi dole  
khot kaplyu zhalosti khranya,  
vi ne ostavite menya.  
Snachala ya molchat khotyela;  
povyerte, moyevo stida  
vi ne uznali b nikogda,  
nikogda!“

*(She puts the letter aside.)*  
O da, klyalas ya sokhranit v dushe  
priznanye v strasti pilkoi i bezumnoi!  
Uvi! ne v silakh ya vldyet svoiei  
dushoi!  
Pust budet to, shto bit dolzhno so mnoi!  
Yemu priznayus ya! Smelyei!  
On vsyo uznayet!

Let me perish, but first  
let me, with dazzling hope, summon  
bliss as yet unknown. I'm getting to  
understand life's sweetness!

I drink the magic potion of desire!  
I am beset by visions!  
Everywhere, everywhere I look,  
I see my fatal tempter!  
Wherever I look, I see him!

No, that's all wrong! I'll try again!  
Ah, what's wrong with me! I'm burning up!  
I don't know how to begin!

“I'm writing to you, ...and then what?  
What else can I say?  
I know that it's in your power  
to punish me with your contempt!  
But if you have at least one grain of pity  
for my unhappy lot,  
you will not abandon me.  
At first I wished to remain silent;  
then, believe me, you would never  
have known my shame,  
never!”

O yes, I swore to lock within my breast  
this declaration of a crazed and ardent passion!  
Alas, I don't have the strength to control my  
heart!  
Come what may, whatever happens,  
I will confess to him! Courage!  
He will know all!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana's Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

Зачем, зачем вы посетили нас?  
В глуши забытого селенья  
Я б никогда не знала вас,  
Не знала б горького мученья.  
Души неопытной волненья  
Смирив, со временем, (как знать?)  
По сердцу я нашла бы друга,  
Была бы верная супруга  
И добродетельная мать...

Другой!  
Нет, никому на свете  
Не отдала бы сердца я!  
То в вышнем суждено совете,  
То воля неба: я твоя!  
Вся жизнь моя была залогом  
Свиданья верного с тобой;  
Я знаю: ты мне послан Богом  
До гроба ты хранитель мой.  
Ты в сновиденьях мне являлся,  
Незримый, ты уж был мне мил,  
Твой чудный взгляд меня томил,  
В душе твой голос раздавался.

Давно... нет, это был не сон!  
Ты чуть вошел, я vmig узнала...  
Вся обомлела, запылала,  
И в мыслях молвила: вот он!  
Вот он!

Не правда ль! Я тебя слыхала...  
Ты говорил со мной в тиши,  
Когда я бедным помогала,  
Или молитвой улаждала  
Тоску души?  
И в это самое мгновенье  
Не ты ли, милое виденье,  
В прозрачной темноте мелькнул,  
Приникнув тихо к изголовью?  
Не ты ль с отрадой и любовью  
Слова надежды мне шепнул?

*(She writes.)*

„Zachem, zachem vi posetili nas?  
V glushi zabitovo selyenya  
ya b nikogda ne znala vas,  
ne znala b gorkovo muchenya.  
Dushi neopitnoi volnyenya  
smiriv, so vryemenem, kak znat?  
Po syerdtzu ya nashla bi druga,  
bila bi vyernaya supruga  
i dobrodyetelnaya mat...”

Drugoi!  
Nyet, nikomu na svyete  
ne otdola bi syerdtsa ya!  
To v vishnem suzhdeno sovyete,  
to volya nyeba: ya tvoya!  
Vsya zhizn moya bila zalogom  
svidanya vyernovo s toboid;  
ya znayu: ti mnye poslan Bogom  
do groba ti khranitel moi  
Ti v snovidenyakh mnye yavlyalsa,  
nezrimiy, ti uzh bil mnye mil,  
tvoi chudniy vzglyad menya tomil,  
dushe tvoi golos razdavalsa.

Davno... nyet eto bil ne son!  
Ti chut voshol, ya vmig uznala  
Vsya obomlyela, zapilala,  
i v mislyakh molvila:  
vot on!

Ne pravda !! Ya tebya slikhala ...  
Ti govoril so mnoi v tishi,  
kogda ya byednim pomogala,  
ili molitvoi uslazhdala  
tosku dushi?  
I v eto samoye mgnovyenye  
ne ti li, miloye vidyenye,  
v prozrachnoi temnotye melknul,  
Priniknuv tikho k izgolovyu?  
Ne ti l s otradoi l lyubovyu  
slova nadyezhdi mnye shepnul?

“Why, oh why did you come to us?  
I would never have met you  
in this remote countryside,  
nor known this bitter torment.  
The excitement of a youthful heart  
would have calmed with time, who knows?  
Most likely I would have found another,  
and been a faithful wife  
and virtuous mother...”

Another!  
No, not to any other in the world  
would I have given my heart!  
It is decreed on high,  
it is the will of heaven: I am yours!  
My whole life has been a pledge  
of this inevitable encounter;  
I know this: God sent you to me,  
you are my keeper till the grave!  
You came to me in my dreams;  
as yet unseen, you were already dear,  
your wondrous look filled me with longing,  
your voice resounded in my heart.

Long ago... no, it was not a dream!  
As soon as you arrived, I recognized you,  
I almost swooned, began to burn up,  
and said to myself:  
It's him!

I know it! I have heard you ...  
Did you not speak to me in the silence,  
when I visited the poor,  
or sought to calm my anguished soul  
in prayer?  
And just this very moment,  
was it not you, dear vision,  
that flashed in the transparent darkness  
quietly standing at my bedside?  
Wasn't it you, who joyfully and lovingly  
whispered words of hope to me?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana's Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

Кто ты, мой ангел ли хранитель  
Или коварный искушитель?  
Мои сомненья разреши.  
Быть может, это все пустое,  
Обман неопытной души,  
И суждено совсем иное?..

Но так и быть! Судьбу мою  
Отныне я тебе вручаю,  
Перед тобою слезы лью,  
Твоей защиты умоляю,  
Умоляю!

Вообрази: я здесь одна!  
Никто меня не понимает!  
Рассудок мой изнемогает,  
И молча гибнуть я должна!  
Я жду тебя,  
Я жду тебя! Единим словом  
Надежды сердца оживи,  
Иль сон тяжелый перерви.  
Увы, заслуженным укором!

Кончаю, страшно перечестъ  
Стыдом и страхом замираю,  
Но мне порукой ваша честь.  
И смело ей себя вверяю!

„Kto ti: moi angel li khranitel  
Ili kovarniy iskusitel?  
Moyi somnyenya razreshi.  
Bit mozhet, eto vsyo pustoye,  
obman neopitnoi dushi,  
i suzhdeno sovsyem inoye?...”

No tak i bit! Sudbu moyu  
otnine ya tebye vruchayu,  
pered toboyu slyozhi lyu,  
tvoyei zashchiti umolyayu,  
umolyayu!

Voobrazi: ya zdyes odna!  
Nikto menya ne ponimayet!  
Rassudok moi iznemogayet,  
i molcha gibnut ya dolzhna!  
Ya zhdu tebya,  
ya zhdu tebya! Yedinim slovom  
nadyezhdi syerdtsa ozhivi,  
il son tizholy pyeryervy.  
Uvi, zasluzhennim ukorom!

Konchayu! strashno perechest  
stidom i strakhom zamirayu,  
no mnye porukoi vasha chest.  
I smyelo yei sebya vveriyayu!

“Who are you? My guardian angel  
or a cruel tempter?  
Put my doubts at rest.  
Maybe this is all an empty dream,  
the delusion of an innocent soul,  
and something else is meant for me?...”

But so be it! From here on  
I entrust my fate to you;  
in tears before you,  
I beg for your protection,  
I beg you!

Imagine: I am all alone here!  
No one understands me!  
My mind is restless,  
and I must suffer in silence!  
I wait for you, I wait for you!  
Say the word  
to revive my heart's fondest hopes  
or wake me from this oppressive dream  
with, alas, the scorn I have deserved!

It's done! I can't read it over,  
I'm overcome by shame and fright,  
but I trust your honor and put  
my fate in your hands!

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana's Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
17	<p>Let me perish, but first let me, with dazzling hope, summon bliss as yet unknown. I'm getting to understand life's sweetness! I drink the magic potion of desire! I am beset by visions! Everywhere, everywhere I look, I see my fatal tempter! Wherever I look, I see him!</p>
18	<p>No, that's all wrong! I'll try again! Ah, what's wrong with me! I'm burning up! I don't know how to begin!</p>
19	<p>"I'm writing to you, ...and then what? What else can I say? I know that it's in your power to punish me with your contempt! But if you have at least one grain of pity for my unhappy lot, you will not abandon me. At first I wished to remain silent; then, believe me, you would never have known my shame, never!"</p>

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

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Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love

☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

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Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

---

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

---

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love

☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

---

Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

---

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

---

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love

☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

---

Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

---

.....

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana's Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
20	O yes, I swore to lock within my breast this declaration of a crazed and ardent passion! Alas, I don't have the strength to control my heart! Come what may, whatever happens, I will confess to him! Courage! He will know all!
21	"Why, oh why did you come to us? I would never have met you in this remote countryside, nor known this bitter torment. The excitement of a youthful heart would have calmed with time, who knows? Most likely I would have found another, and been a faithful wife and virtuous mother..."
22	Another! No, not to any other in the world would I have given my heart! It is decreed on high, it is the will of heaven: I am yours! My whole life has been a pledge of this inevitable encounter; I know this: God sent you to me, you are my keeper till the grave!

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love  
☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love  
☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love  
☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

.....

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana's Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
23	You appeared before me in my dreams; as yet unseen, you were already dear, your wondrous gaze filled me with longing, your voice resounded in my heart.
<p>.....</p> <p>Musical Elements _____</p> <hr/> <p>Motif: <input type="checkbox"/> Solitude <input type="checkbox"/> Confession of Love</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tatiana <input type="checkbox"/> Onegin <input type="checkbox"/> No motif</p> <p>Emotional or Dramatic Meaning _____</p> <hr/> <p>Movement and Blocking _____</p> <hr/> <p>.....</p>	
24	Long ago... no, it was no dream! As soon as you arrived, I recognized you, I almost swooned, began to burn up, and said to myself: It's him!
<p>.....</p> <p>Musical Elements _____</p> <hr/> <p>Motif: <input type="checkbox"/> Solitude <input type="checkbox"/> Confession of Love</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tatiana <input type="checkbox"/> Onegin <input type="checkbox"/> No motif</p> <p>Emotional or Dramatic Meaning _____</p> <hr/> <p>Movement and Blocking _____</p> <hr/> <p>.....</p>	
25	I know it! I have heard you ... Did you not speak to me in the silence, when I visited the poor, or sought to calm my anguished soul in prayer? And just this very moment, was it not you, dear vision, that flashed in the transparent darkness quietly standing at my bedside? Wasn't it you, who joyfully and lovingly whispered words of hope to me?
<p>.....</p> <p>Musical Elements _____</p> <hr/> <p>Motif: <input type="checkbox"/> Solitude <input type="checkbox"/> Confession of Love</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tatiana <input type="checkbox"/> Onegin <input type="checkbox"/> No motif</p> <p>Emotional or Dramatic Meaning _____</p> <hr/> <p>Movement and Blocking _____</p> <hr/> <p>.....</p>	

THE MET: LIVE IN HD  
EUGENE ONEGIN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana's Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
26	<p>"Who are you? My guardian angel or a cruel tempter? Put my doubts at rest. Maybe this is all an empty dream, the delusion of an innocent soul, and something else is meant for me?..."</p>
27	<p>But so be it! From here on I entrust my fate to you; in tears before you, I beg for your protection, I beg you!</p>
28	<p>Imagine: I am all alone here! No one understands me! My mind is restless, and I must suffer in silence! I wait for you, I wait for you! Say the word to revive my heart's fondest hopes or wake me from this oppressive dream with, alas, the scorn I have deserved!</p>

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love  
☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love  
☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love  
☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

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Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

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THE MET: LIVE IN HD

EUGENE ONEGIN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Tatiana’s Musical Confession (CONTINUED)

TRACK	TEXT
29	It’s done! I can’t read it over, I’m overcome by shame and fright, but I trust your honor and put my fate in your hands!

.....

Musical Elements \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Motif: ☐ Solitude ☐ Confession of Love

☐ Tatiana ☐ Onegin ☐ No motif

Emotional or Dramatic Meaning \_\_\_\_\_

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Movement and Blocking \_\_\_\_\_

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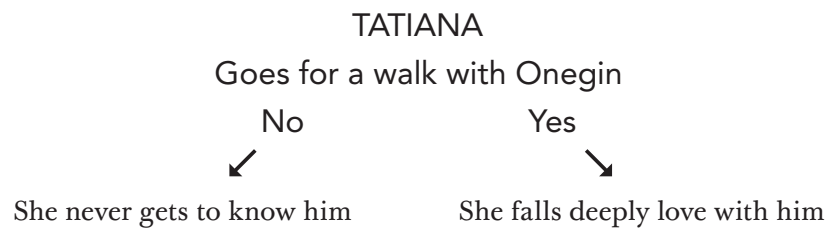
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## At the Met: *Decisions, Decisions*

Every decision has consequences. Just as in real life, the characters of *Eugene Onegin* are faced with situations that compel them to choose one path over another. In combination, these choices lead to the opera’s tragic end. One can imagine that if they had made different choices, the story would have ended very differently.

Pick one of these characters to follow throughout the opera: TATIANA   OLGA   ONEGIN   LENSKY.

As you watch the opera, write down the moments in which your character makes a decision. Later, during intermission, begin drafting your “decision tree” to explore what might have happened if your character had done something different. For example:



You can continue to record important moments of decision during the second and third acts, and keep building your tree throughout the broadcast. Use your decision tree not only to explore how successive decisions lead to later situations, choices, and outcomes, but also what might have happened if the characters had made different choices.

ACT I	ACT II	ACT III
Decision 1:	Decision 1:	Decision 1:
_____	_____	_____
Decision 2:	Decision 2:	Decision 2:
_____	_____	_____
Decision 3:	Decision 3:	Decision 3:
_____	_____	_____

MY DECISION TREE

# *Eugene Onegin*: My Highs & Lows

APRIL 22, 2017

CONDUCTED BY ROBIN TICCIATI

REVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_

THE STARS	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
ANNA NETREBKO AS TATIANA	*****	
DMITRI HVOROSTOVSKY AS ONEGIN	*****	
ELENA MAXIMOVA AS OLGA	*****	
ALEXEY DOLGOV AS LENSKI	*****	
ŠTEFAN KOČÁN AS GREMIN	*****	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
MADAME LARINA REFLECTS ON DAYS GONE BY MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE FAMILY'S PEASANTS SING AND DANCE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
A VISIT BY LENSKI AND ONEGIN MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
TATIANA POURS OUT HER FEELINGS IN A LETTER MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ONEGIN REJECTS TATIANA MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
A CELEBRATION GOES AWRY MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE DUEL MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ONEGIN RETURNS TO ST. PETERSBURG AND ATTENDS A BALL MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
PRINCE GREMIN CONFIDES HIS HAPPINESS IN MARRIAGE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ONEGIN RECOGNIZES TATIANA MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ONEGIN AND TATIANA MEET ONE LAST TIME MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5