Young People’s Concerts for Schools 2024: *Fantasy and Imagination*

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EDUCATION AT THE NY PHIL

For generations, the New York Philharmonic has been engaging listeners through unforgettable concerts, workshops, and enriching opportunities for young composers and performers that deepen the understanding of music for all kinds of audiences. Schools from across New York City and beyond can experience the full orchestra at our Young People’s Concerts™ for Schools and also bring Philharmonic programming into your community, led by our Teaching Artist faculty, through our Philharmonic Schools and Very Young Composers Programs. These initiatives have engaged school communities in all five boroughs, both during the school day and after school, for more than 25 years. Family programming has been a hallmark at the Philharmonic for a century. Our Young People’s Concerts™ engage children ages six to twelve around symphonic music from all eras — including the present day. Very Young People’s Concerts™, designed for pre-schoolers, combine great music with storytelling and games to unlock children’s imagination and talent. Digital Resources — including concerts, interactive lessons, and other topics — are specially designed with students, teachers, and families in mind. To learn more about the Philharmonic’s many other education and community engagement programs, visit nyphil.org.

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WELCOME TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE’S CONCERTS FOR SCHOOLS!
The lessons in this guide complement New York Philharmonic Young People’s Concerts to enhance your students’ experience in the concert hall and make meaningful connections between the modality of music and a range of core subjects. In keeping with The Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts and the Common Core, students will listen closely to distinguish different musical characteristics, just as they read texts closely for detail and evidence in class. They will compose music, develop musical literacy, and understand music as one strand of a rich web of cultural expression. They will build skills that open up all kinds of music in new ways. And they will hear the thrilling sound of the full New York Philharmonic.

Enjoy the lessons, indulge in listening, and have fun at your Young People’s Concert for Schools. See you there!

Gary Padmore
Vice President, Education & Community Engagement
The Sue B. Mercy Chair

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FANTASY AND IMAGINATION

We live in a post-pandemic age of ceaseless digital stimulation, information, and interruption. Students are increasingly devoted — through want, and also necessity — to screens that connect them to information, stories, the world, and one another. There are some undeniable benefits. These connections can foster understanding and empathy, encouraging our students to build agency around current, real-world issues that are close to them.

Considering this, over the past few years the NY Phil’s Young People’s Concerts for Schools have taken a topical approach, exploring the intersection between music and present-day issues (such as immigration, social justice, and climate change). But what can students gain when fantasy and imagination are prioritized, and the very goal is to disconnect from the real-world and real-time and get lost in one’s own thoughts?

This year, our aim is to provide the scaffolding for a variety of fantastical, personal, and collaborative explorations using composer Modest Musorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition as our foundation. Our hope is that your classrooms and our concert hall become a sanctuary for creativity that supports independent thinking, alleviates the stresses of everyday life, and provides time for daydreaming and self-reflection.

The extramusical associations embedded in Musorgsky’s work lend themselves to a variety of learning modalities that have been incorporated in the units and lessons that follow. And Ravel’s orchestration is the perfect host from which we can extract and distill musical concepts for learning and, in the concert, enrich our engagement with the imaginative offerings that your classrooms share with us. Together, we’ll create a boundless new world inspired by the kaleidoscopic sounds of the orchestra!

Wed, January 17, 2024 | 10:30am and 12:00pm
Thu, January 18, 2024 | 10:30am and 12:00pm
Fri, January 19, 2024 | 10:30am and 12:00pm

Jerry Hou conductor
Justin Jay Hines host
Materials for the Arts creative partner
Doug Fitch director / designer

MUSORGSKY / Orch. Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition (World Premieres)
NY PHIL VERY YOUNG COMPOSERS New works
David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center, New York City
PATHS THROUGH THIS CURRICULUM GUIDE

The following curriculum aspires to be both broad and deep to accommodate a range of learning levels and modalities. You know your students best and are free to utilize these activities as you see fit. Considering that you may have limited time to distill the content provided and prepare your students for their concert experience, here are a few suggested “short-cuts” that you could implement, based on the number of class periods you can allocate.

**One class period:** Unit 1, Activities 3 and 5

**Two class periods:** Above, plus Unit 2, Activities 1 and 2, or 1 and 4.
They allow for listening, movement, and group work that involve patterns, form, and imagination.

**Six class periods** (approximately one class per week, November–January): Above, plus two–three activities in Units 3 and 4

SHARE WITH US!

Throughout this guide you’ll find a number of Special Projects that extend concepts introduced in the lessons and culminate in sharable work. We have created Padlet pages for any submissions you and your learners would like to share. Check out what other classes are posting and continue the inspiration!

- **Playlist for a National Sound**
- **Make a Memory Jug**
- **Share an Art Walk Route of Your Own**
- **Putting Words to a Promenade**
- **Create a Digital Cover or Remix**
- **Architecture Using Everyday Materials**
- **Costume Design**
UNIT 1: A Friendship Built on Imagination

This unit guides learners through the story of artistic friendship and shared inspiration at the heart of Modest Musorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*. In this piece, the composer musically brought to life sketches and paintings by his dear friend Victor Hartmann, an artist whose sudden death left Musorgsky and his creative circle reeling. Musorgsky’s tender remembrance of his friend is certainly part of the piece, but even more so is his musical commitment to the imaginative ideals he and Hartmann shared. In the following activities learners will discover more about how *Pictures at an Exhibition* is connected to Musorgsky’s creative aim: a new style of music, inspired by the Russian people and their traditions, and sparked by stories from both real life and worlds of vivid fantasy.

Note: Activities 3 and 5 of this unit include references to death and loss. Please read through the activities carefully and consider any necessary adjustments to address this topic with your particular learners. The suggested reflection moments can incorporate students’ broader experiences with separation and expand this frame of loss to include time spent away from people and places dear to them.
WHO WAS MODEST MUSORGSKY?

Note: This bio is meant for adult readers. At your discretion, summarize and share key facts with younger learners.

“Life, wherever it reveals itself; truth, no matter how bitter; bold, sincere speech with people ... these are what I want, this is where I am afraid of missing the mark.” — Modest Musorgsky

Russian composer Modest Musorgsky (1839–81) experienced daunting external and internal struggles during his brief life. The quote above touches on both the artistic and personal idealism that fueled him, as well the self-doubt and despondency that often drove him low.

His most musically productive and positive seasons were buoyed by the artistic circle of friends he surrounded himself with as an adult. Though he is often grouped into the Russian musical collective called “The Five” or “The Mighty Handful,” his community was broader than that, and included sculptors, painters, writers, and poets. These artists came of age in an era when the search for national identities gained pace across Europe and Russia was looking to reestablish its own strength and pride after suffering some key military losses. That search for fresh identity trickled into many areas of cultural life, including the arts where creative-minded folks like Musorgsky began pushing aside Western artistic practice in favor of embracing everything “Russian:” folk traditions, stories, music, language, and more.

Musorgsky’s populist views and their impact on his creative life began forming during his childhood. Though he was born into a historically noble Russian family, he also had a grandmother who was a serf. Serfs were forced laborers for the owners of the land on which they lived. Of his interactions with the peasant classes growing up on his family’s estate, as well as the Russian folk tales told to him by his nanny, Musorgsky said: “This early familiarity with the spirit of the people, with the way they lived, lent the first and greatest impetus to my musical improvisations.” He vocally opposed the mistreatment of serfs and other peasant classes; in fact, he supported the abolition of serfdom even though it threatened the loss of his family income that subsequently caused his swift descent into poverty.

While Musorgsky’s unique musical style earned him some acclaim (especially with his popular opera, Boris Godunov, about the life of a Tsar), his unorthodox harmonies and bold contrasts just as often left his close musical friends shaking their heads in confusion. Many of his pieces weren’t performed publicly or published during his lifetime, including the highly individualistic Pictures at an Exhibition. He died at age 41 from complications related to his decades-long battle with alcohol abuse. Ever supported by his friends, fellow composer Nikolai Rimsky–Korsakov “cleaned up” Musorgsky’s manuscripts after his death, ultimately paving the way for Musorgsky’s music to be shared with the world.
ACTIVITY 1 FINDING CREATIVE SUPPORT

Goal: Introduce the importance of close relationships in Musorgsky’s creative life. *(10 minutes)*

Lead a conversation that begins to explore potential connections between learners’ close relationships and their own personal motivation toward creativity and action.

Share:
When thinking about the most important things in life, many folks put their friends, family, and the people they’re close with at the top of the list.

Reflect through writing, drawing, or discussion:
What are ways your friends and people you’re close with have had a positive impact on your life? How do they inspire you?

Introduce composer Modest Musorgsky to your learners:
One of the most important things in young composer Modest Musorgsky’s life was his close circle of friends. They were a creative group of musicians, writers, and visual artists, and the time they spent together was inspiring. They talked through their goals, developed projects together, offered feedback on each other’s work, and sometimes even completed the creative projects their friends left unfinished!

Invite students to imagine their own collaborative creations:
If you were to collaborate with a friend on a creative project, what might it be about?
What might you do, or make?
What are some shared ideas, causes, or activities that motivate both you and the people with whom you’re closest?

Clockwise from top: Modest Musorgsky, Mily Balakirev, Alexander Borodin, Cesar Cui, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
ACTIVITY 2 SHARING A COMMON VISION

Goal: Examine Musorgsky’s inspiration for a Russian “national sound” and imagine elements of a contemporary national sound for the United States. (10 minutes)

Continue to reveal the story of Musorgsky’s friendships:

Musorgsky’s circle of friends came together around a shared goal. They were determined to create a new style of art that focused on the things they believed were authentic, important, and unique about their homeland and culture. For Musorgsky and his musician friends (who were sometimes called “The Mighty Five”), that meant composing music built on the sounds, stories, and folk traditions of their country. They were trying to create a “national sound:” a style of music that could represent all Russian people, inspired by the people themselves.
Engage learners in musical brainstorming:

*Imagine a “national sound” for the United States of America. What do you think music representing our nation and our people would be like?*

*What kinds of sounds, styles, or musical ideas would be important to include if you were creating a “national sound”??*

Share the infographic to the right with students and invite learners to compare their ideas for a “national sound” with Musorgsky’s sources of inspiration.
SPECIAL PROJECT: 
PLAYLIST FOR A NATIONAL SOUND

As a class or individually, have learners choose pieces or songs that support their own ideas for a “national sound” for the USA. Add their lists to our Playlist Hosting Site on padlet and check out playlists created by other classes, too.

What do you notice about the different playlists?

Do they share songs in common?

HISTORY EXTENSION: 
THE COMPLEX NATURE OF NATIONALISM

Read a young-learner-friendly overview of nationalism’s origins and pitfalls.

Read an article or watch a video on nationalism from Khan Academy.

Explore a writer’s perspective on evolving nationalism in the face of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022.
ACTIVITY 3 FINDING INSPIRATION IN THE REALISTIC AND THE FANTASTICAL

Goal: Introduce the movements of Pictures at an Exhibition and link their subject matter to familiar literary genres. (20 minutes)

Have learners quickly and collaboratively create a class list of literary genres they have encountered in their reading and writing work. Be sure to include, through review or introduction, the two genres key to this activity: Realistic Fiction and Fantasy.

Looking for reading suggestions? Check out this list from the New York Public Library that includes historical fiction and fantasy categories for kids and teens.

Reflect on the class list:

Which of these genres do you enjoy most? Why?

Which genres spark your imagination most when you want to create or tell stories of your own?
Share the origin story of *Pictures at an Exhibition* that highlights how two of these genres played important roles:

Musorgsky loved two types of storytelling: realistic stories about everyday people and stories filled with fantasy and magic, especially ones inspired by Russian folktales. Musorgsky’s artist and architect friend Victor Hartmann shared these same storytelling loves. Hartmann filled up pages and pages with sketches and drawings inspired by them. Sometimes Hartmann carefully sketched city scenes, people, and animals that had made an impression on him during his many travels. Other times he let his imagination run wild and designed costumes, buildings, and toys with features based on magical characters from fairytales.

When Hartmann died, very suddenly and unexpectedly, his circle of friends thought it was important to celebrate and remember him and his creativity. They set up a gallery show of Hartmann’s art for anyone to view — an exhibition! It displayed more than 400 pieces of art, all created by Hartmann.

Musorgsky was deeply saddened by the loss of Hartmann, and at the exhibition he found himself especially drawn to a handful of pictures. Each seemed to have stories to tell, some realistic and some fantastical. With his musical imagination full of ideas, Musorgsky went to work creating a musical gallery inspired by the stories he saw in his friend’s art. After working for just a few weeks, his piece for solo piano, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, was finished.
As a class, read through the following list of ten musical pictures the New York Philharmonic will perform. Using information from the titles and summaries as their guide, have learners work together to imagine which genre — Realistic Fiction or Fantasy — applies to each musical picture. Learners can organize their ideas on the Venn Diagram Worksheet provided.

### Movement Titles / Summaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gnome</th>
<th>Tuileries</th>
<th>Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks</th>
<th>The Hut on Chicken Feet: Baba-Yaga</th>
<th>The Marketplace at Limoges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A gnome — meaning earth-dweller and often portrayed as a small, wrinkled figure — living underground and protecting some type of treasure</td>
<td>Children playing and teasing one another in a beautiful city park</td>
<td>Little canary chicks dancing around, still covered by their shells</td>
<td>The Russian witch Baba Yaga flying through the air near her house, which can move through the forest on giant chicken legs</td>
<td>A crowd of people having an excited conversation in a busy outdoor marketplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Old Castle</td>
<td>The Great Gate of Kiev</td>
<td>Catacombs: Roman Burial Place</td>
<td>With the Dead in a Dead Language</td>
<td>Polish Ox-Cart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone singing an old song near an ancient castle</td>
<td>A grand monumental entrance to a city, with shapes and decorations inspired by epic heroes from Russian myths</td>
<td>An exploration of an underground burial site</td>
<td>A mysterious glow coming from part of the underground burial place</td>
<td>Workers and oxen struggling with a difficult physical task</td>
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Use a reflection modality of your choice to explore questions like these:

*How did you decide which genre to place each picture in? Which ones were challenging to place?*

*Based on the titles, which of these artworks would you be most curious to see in a gallery? Which are you most curious to hear as a musical picture?*

*If you were going to invent your own story inspired by one of these titles, which would you choose?*

*Putting on your composer hat, which of the titles starts to spark your musical imagination the most? What kind of music are you already imagining?*
A Controversial Picture

For this Young People’s Concerts for Schools performance, the movement *Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle* has been removed. Lacking decisive programmatic descriptions from Musorgsky himself, music scholars still debate his intentions in this musical picture.

For many years, the title was listed as *Two Jews, Rich and Poor*. The inference was that Musorgsky created a musical parable about the lack of mercy shown by the upper classes toward the poor (a social issue close to Musorgsky’s heart).

However, more accurate translations of the original title from Musorgsky’s manuscript, as well as the strong antisemitic views found in his letters and writing, have led some contemporary music historians to a less generous interpretation. According to scholar Richard Taruskin, “the contrast embedded in title and music alike is thus a brazen insult” and this musical picture may instead portray an offensive caricature or parody of a 19th-century Jewish man.

As is appropriate for your learners, you may wish to further explore this important aspect of musical interpretation and programming.

*How should we handle a musician’s outdated, incorrect, or hurtful perspectives when learning about their music?*  
*Should musical pieces that portray potentially harmful perspectives be performed?*  
*Why or why not?*

*How do you make choices about inclusion of problematic music when evidence doesn’t support a single clear interpretation?*

Taruskin’s article, from which this quote was extracted, can be found [here](#).  
A recording of *Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle* can be found [here](#).
ACTIVITY 4 IMAGINING A RUSSIAN FAIRYTALE

Goal: Explore one of Musorgsky’s musical pictures rooted in fantasy; reflect on ways to create feelings of closeness during times of separation. (15 minutes)

Have learners recall fairytales they’ve read or heard. Initiate a brief turn-and-talk for pairs to share one hero that was a favorite character or especially sticks in their minds. Switch partners for a second turn-and-talk, this time sharing a favorite (or most feared) fairytale villain.

Consider:

- Why do you think these characters have stuck in your imagination?
- What character traits do they have, or actions did they take, that make them memorable?

Share:

Musorgsky and Hartmann grew up listening to Russian fairytales. One famous fairytale character that stuck with both of them — all the way into adulthood! — was the mysterious and terrifying witch named Baba Yaga. She was famous for flying through the forest in a giant mortar with pestle in hand, her fondness for bargaining and tricks, and her threats to feast on children she found in her forest. Not only that, she had an incredible house: a hut that stalked through the forest on giant chicken legs.
Gather a few initial reactions to this character from learners (including any prior encounters with Baba Yaga or her hut); then listen to an excerpt from *Hut on Chicken Feet: Baba Yaga*.

Excerpt from *Hut on Chicken Feet: Baba Yaga*

**Share impressions of this fantasy scene by considering questions like the following:**

- *How would you feel if you were inside this musical picture and came upon the hut on chicken feet and Baba Yaga in the forest?*
- *Which traits of Baba Yaga might Musorgsky have been imagining when he wrote this?*
- *What else do you picture in this fairytale fantasy moment?*

**Share:**

Musorgsky’s friend Hartmann once made a very memorable impression by dressing up as Baba Yaga for a fancy costume party. Some music historians think Musorgsky may have decided to give this musical picture extra time and emphasis in his musical gallery because it especially reminded him of his friend’s creative spirit.

Use these questions to reinforce possible links between Musorgsky’s desire to remember his friend, and students’ own ways of feeling connected to a person or place from which they are, or have been, separated:

*What’s a story, song, movie, or game that has special significance for you because of a connection to a friend, loved one, or special place?*

*What are other items or activities that help you remember or feel close to friends, loved ones, or meaningful places, even when you’re separated from them?*
SPECIAL PROJECT: CREATE A MEMORY JUG

The tradition of embellishing jugs, dishes, and other everyday items with small mementos and trinkets of sentimental value has roots in the funeral traditions of Africans and African-Americans in the Southern United States. The practice became more widespread during the Victorian era and has been adopted and continued by contemporary artists. Try a modern version of this remembrance-related practice.

Watch a how-to video.

Find inspiration in modern variations of the art form in this video with artist Jan Wade.

Learn about the story behind, and installation of, an exhibition by artist Mike Kelley called Memory Ware.

Share pictures of your final Memory Jugs or collages with us, here.

SOCIAL STUDIES EXTENSION: RITUALS OF REMEMBRANCE

Invite learners to share traditions or practices of remembrance they’ve learned about or have experienced in their own lives. Some potential ideas are included below; while many are focused on death-related remembrance, learner-added ideas need not be. Expand to include ways of acknowledging separations of all kinds, in informal or formal ways, as best supports your group.

- Dia de los Muertos
- Festival of the Hungry Ghost
- Obon
- Chuseok
- Jazz Funerals and the New Orleans Second Line
- Cooking a loved one’s favorite meal in their absence
- Visiting a meaningful place or site of a shared experience
- Lighting a candle at a specific time
- Creating an altar
ACTIVITY 5 STEPPING INTO THE CATACOMBS WITH HARTMANN

Goal: Explore a picture with a dual focus on realistic and fantasy storytelling, and gain facility with a thinking routine for listening and observing. (20 minutes)

Display Hartmann’s watercolor *The Paris Catacombs.*

Let learners know many of Hartmann’s sketches portrayed people and places that caught his attention as he traveled across Europe. This painting of a realistic scene from one of his journeys especially sparked Musorgsky’s imagination when he saw it at the exhibition of Hartmann’s work. It is a self-portrait of Hartmann touring the remarkable Catacombs of Paris, a series of underground tunnels where the remains of over six million people have been placed. As needed, use the resources in the sidebar on the next page to explain and explore the catacombs further.
As a class, gather impressions of this artwork using **See–Feel–Think–Wonder**, a thinking routine from Project Zero, part of Harvard’s Graduate School of Education. Make a four-square grid and document the class’s thoughts using one square for each of the following four prompts:

- **SEE**
  What do you **see**?

- **FEEL**
  What **feelings** emerge for you as you look at this picture?

- **THINK**
  What does this picture make you **think** about?

- **WONDER**
  What do you **wonder** about this picture?

Listen to Musorgsky’s musical reimagining of this realistic scene from his friend’s life.

♫ Excerpt from *Catacombs: Roman Burial Place*

Reflect:

- What ideas or impressions from our chart did you hear in the music Musorgsky created?  
- Based on what you heard, what else do you think Musorgsky wanted to share about the catacombs?

**Catacombs**
Underground cemeteries where human remains are displayed or stored, often consisting of multiple rooms connected by passageways.

The Paris Catacombs have become a museum visited by thousands of people each year. Learn more at the website for [Les Catacombs de Paris](https://www.catacombs.paris).
Explain:

After this musical portrait of Hartmann visiting the catacombs, Musorgsky’s journey through the exhibition takes a turn away from realistic scenes and goes into a much more magical and mysterious storyline. Musorgsky describes the music that comes next with these words: “The creative spirit of the dead Hartmann leads me towards the skulls ... the skulls begin to glow softly.”

Invite learners to imagine you’ve all stepped through the painting and into the catacombs. However, instead of being part of a realistic exploration of this mysterious place, you have all entered into a strange fantasy world. Anything could happen! With that in mind, display Musorgsky’s text from the score and give learners time to imagine multiple possibilities for what happens next in this suddenly magical scene.

“The creative spirit of the dead Hartmann leads me towards the skulls ... the skulls begin to glow softly ... and then ______________________________.”

After learners consider the possibilities that come to mind, share the title for Musorgsky’s music for this moment: *With the Dead in a Dead Language*. Have learners prepare to use a listening-focused version of the thinking routine from earlier to document their observations while listening (learners can use a printout of the following pdf link or set up a similar table in a notebook or on looseleaf paper).

Reflect together:

What feelings or mood did the music have at the beginning? Was it the same or different by the end?

What do you think Musorgsky wanted this music to show?

What did you imagine happening in this magical, fantastical moment?

Listen:

*With the Dead in a Dead Language*
LISTENING EXTENSION:
JUMPING INTO MORE PICTURES

Dive into excerpts from additional musical pictures that pique your learners’ curiosity. Encourage inquisitive and observant listening by having the class continue to practice the thinking routine *Hear–Feel–Think–Wonder* for each listening session.

♪ Pictures at an Exhibition Playlist

Note: Additional pictures are also explored in greater detail throughout the various activities in Units 2–4.
UNIT 2: An Exhibition of Imaginative Contrasts

As an adult, Modest Musorgsky worked hard to let go of Western Classical traditions and follow his own musical instincts. *Pictures at an Exhibition* showcases many aspects of the unique musical approach he developed. In Unit 2, learners will spend time exploring a particularly powerful tool in Musorgsky’s creative toolbox: *musical contrast*. Musorgsky organizes his *Pictures at an Exhibition* by juxtaposing contrasting musical material. The following activities explore how Musorgsky used contrast to **support musical storytelling**, to **create form** within the musical pictures, and to **design an engaging listening journey** from picture to picture through the complete musical exhibition.
ACTIVITY 1 GOING ON A CONTRAST LISTENING HUNT

Goal: Define musical contrasts and identify them in a musical picture. (10 minutes)

Create a class definition of the concept of contrast, or use the definition provided.

Quickly generate some familiar examples of contrasts by naming a variety of categories from everyday life (e.g. flavors, colors, temperatures, character traits, etc.) and by inviting students to name examples of contrasting pairs from each.

Remind learners that contrasts exist in music. Give a speed challenge and ask learners to work with a partner or small group to see how many kinds of musical contrasts they can imagine in two minutes.

Invite groups to share their answers and compile them to create a class Musical Contrast List.

Let learners know Musorgsky was a fan of composing with big contrasts. Throughout Pictures at an Exhibition Musorgsky played around with moving back and forth between sounds and ideas that were very different from one another.

As a class, go on a listening hunt for these musical contrasts in an excerpt from Gnome.

As learners share observations after listening, highlight ideas already on your class Musical Contrast List and add newly discovered examples.

Respond to questions, like those below, with a reflection modality that suits your group (i.e. writing, movement, drawing, discussion, etc.):

Which kinds of musical contrasts did Musorgsky play around with the most in Gnome?

Based on what you heard, what do you think this Gnome might be like? What else does the music make you imagine?
ACTIVITY 2 LISTENING TO NEIGHBORS WITH MUSICAL DIFFERENCES

Goal: Identify contrasting qualities of musical pictures Musorgsky placed side-by-side. (25 minutes)

Part 1 Comparing Secret Pictures

Explain:
Musorgsky had many imaginative strategies for using musical contrasts to organize his musical ideas and create form in his pieces. In music, form is the overall shape, or structure, of a piece. When Musorgsky was deciding on an order for the pictures in Pictures at an Exhibition, he let musical contrasts help guide him by often putting musical pictures that were very different next to one another. The piece is full of contrasting neighbors!

Let learners know that in this variation on the Contrast Listening Hunt from Activity 1 they will again be on the hunt for musical contrasts. However, instead of examining one picture, this time they’ll be listening out for contrasts between two neighboring pictures.

As a group or individually, use the following version of Hear–Feel–Think–Wonder to organize learners’ listening observations and support their comparison work.

- **HEAR**
  What musical qualities do you hear in this picture?

- **FEEL**
  What feelings come up for you as you listen?

- **THINK**
  What does this piece make you think about or imagine?

- **WONDER**
  What do you wonder about this piece?
Print out and distribute the Sample Listening Charts for the next listening exercise.

Keep the titles of the two example pictures secret until after learners have listened and shared observations.

Listen:
- Secret Picture 1
- Secret Picture 2

Reflect together on observations and thoughts from the group’s Hear–Feel–Think–Wonder prompts.

Reveal the secret pictures’ “identities” and Musorgsky’s likely programmatic inspiration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secret Picture 1: Tuileries</th>
<th>Secret Picture 2: Polish Ox–Cart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children playing and teasing one another in a beautiful city park</td>
<td>Workers and- oxen struggling with a difficult physical task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the reveal, explore these questions together:

What are some ways the subjects of these pictures are contrasting?

How do the musical contrasts you noticed earlier connect with these two very different sources of inspiration?
### Part 2 Imagining Musical Differences:

#### The Marketplace at Limoges vs. Catacombs: Roman Burial Place

Prepare students to listen to another set of contrasting neighbors. This time, share the titles and inspirations first. As a group, name some pairs of contrasts that exist between these two musical pictures’ settings and scenes. You can use examples from the list of possible ideas to the right to help prompt learners or share the list as a premade bank of ideas for learners to discuss and add to.

*Note: Additional info about Catacombs can also be found in [Unit 1, Activity 5]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Marketplace at Limoges</strong></th>
<th><strong>Catacombs: Roman Burial Place</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A crowd of people having an excited conversation in a busy outdoor marketplace</td>
<td>An exploration of an underground burial site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Marketplace / Catacombs Contrast Ideas

- Above-ground / Underground
- Living People / Dead People
- Light / Dark
- Bustling / Still
- Cheerful / Creepy
- Chatty / Quiet
Share the following thinking prompt.

Give learners a few minutes to discuss in pairs, write about, draw, sing, or play through their imagined responses.

*If you were the composer, what musical choices would you make to create contrast in the music for these two pictures?*

Invite learners to share some of their musical choices.

**Listen together to the two pictures.**

Let learners know *The Marketplace at Limoges* leads directly into *Catacombs*. Encourage them to hold up a “C”-shape with their hand (for “contrast” or “Catacombs”) when they think they hear the dramatic change to the contrasting neighbor picture.

♫ Excerpt from *The Marketplace at Limoges* connecting to the opening of *Catacombs: Roman Burial Place*

Use questions like these to prompt reflection on learners’ listening observations:

*What musical changes let you know we moved from *The Marketplace at Limoges* to the *Catacombs*?*

*How were Musorgsky’s musical contrasts similar to or different from the musical ideas you imagined before we listened?*

*If you were creating a pair of contrasting neighbor pictures of your own, what are two sources of inspiration you could use that would be very contrasting?*
ACTIVITY 3 CREATE YOUR OWN EXHIBITION ROUTE

**Goal:** Use musical contrasts as a focal point for creating an original order for Musorgsky’s musical pictures.

(15 minutes)

Organize learners into pairs or small groups and distribute a set of Picture Cards to each.

**Picture Cards** (print out and cut along the dotted lines)

Note: If learners have not yet heard all the musical pictures, they can still create a route based on any musical examples they have encountered and musical predictions using titles as clues. Consider playing excerpts on request if learners are unsure how a picture might fit into their route. When sharing journey choices, be sure to have learners give the reasons behind their choice-making, particularly if musical predictions were part of their process.

Let learners know they get to imagine their own path through Musorgsky’s musical exhibition and will be collaborating to create an order for moving from picture to picture. Share the following prompts to help jumpstart their choice-making:

- *If it were up to you, which musical picture would you visit first? Which would be at the end?*
- *How would you organize the rest of your journey through the exhibit?*

**After a few minutes, add an ordering challenge:**

Revise your route through the pictures so that it maximizes experiencing contrasts.

To support working through this challenge, it may help to brainstorm some of the areas where contrasts could turn up. For example, learners can think about the inspiration behind the musical pictures (e.g., realism / fantasy, busy scene / calm scene, cheerful / spooky, etc.) or consider contrasts in the musical ideas themselves (e.g., loud and slow / quiet and quick; bright high instruments / deep heavy instruments, etc.).

Give learners five minutes to work together to design a journey full of contrasts.

View some of the unique paths through the exhibition and describe the contrasts learners’ emphasized.
CAREER EXTENSION: THINK LIKE A CURATOR

Explain to learners that curators are employed by museums or galleries to take care of the artwork in their collections. They make decisions about which artworks should be displayed and how they should be seen.

Challenge learners to be like musical curators and stretch their thinking about the exhibition paths they designed:

- What are some other ideas you have for interesting ways to organize the different parts of your exhibition, besides just creating contrast?
- Can you create a route that helps tell a story?
- Which musical picture would make a strong opening statement?
- What impressions do you want to make on an audience who follows your path?

SPECIAL PROJECT: SHARE AN ART WALK ROUTE OF YOUR OWN

While Musorgsky’s musical exhibition was inspired by walking through an indoor art gallery, that’s just one way to take an art walk. Consider places where you can view art in the city or neighborhood you live in, indoors and outdoors, formally and informally. In addition to museums and galleries, art can be found in your school, on the sides of buildings, in the subways, in the parks, and in your home! Make note of the art in your world and imagine a route someone could walk to experience the local art you most enjoy.

Share your route! Visit the map on this Artwalk Route Padlet page. Zoom in and click on the site or location of your art. Add a description or upload a photo to share.

(Top): Eastern Kingbird by Andre Trenier (409 W. 145th Street, Manhattan); Symphonic Convergence by George Bates (Beach 36 St. Station, A line, Queens); (Bottom): La Guacamaya by Los Muralistas de El Puente (Domino Park, Brooklyn)
**ACTIVITY 4 ABA FORM: CREATING WITH CONTRASTS**

**Goal:** Examine ABA (ternary) form through the lens of contrast and make a small ABA creation. *(30 minutes)*

Introduce or review **ABA form** with your learners.

Let learners know that artists across the world and throughout history have made ABA creations, and the form also often pops up in day-to-day life. As a class, brainstorm an array of examples of ABA form. Some starter ideas are provided.

**Examples of ABA Form**

**Architecture**

(A) Window – (B) Door – (A) Window

**Stripes or patterns on clothing**

(A) Blue – (B) White – (A) Blue

**Soccer match**

(A) Play – (B) Halftime – (A) Play

**Sandwich**

(A) Bread – (B) Filling – (A) Bread

**A journey or trip**

(A) Home – (B) New place – (A) Home

**Plot of a story**

(A) Hero’s life is great – (B) Hero has a problem to overcome – (A) Hero’s life is great

ABA Form

(Ternary form)

A symmetrical three-part way of creating form — most often used when referring to a piece of music — in which the beginning and ending sections are the same. Idea or event (A) starts, a new event (B) occurs, and finally the initial idea (A) returns.
Introduce the creative task:

In a moment, we’ll start combining two ideas we’ve been thinking about as we’ve been getting to know *Pictures at an Exhibition*. We’ll be making our own ABA form creations and we’re going to use one of Musorgsky’s favorite creative tools: contrast. What happens when we put those two things together? We get Contrast Sandwiches, creative projects in which the A and B sections are very different from one another. The outside layers and the filling of these sandwiches contrast.

A variety of arts mediums can work for creating Contrast Sandwiches. Select one that’s a good fit for your group, or let learners choose a medium that interests them most. Learners can tackle this challenge independently or in collaboration with others.

Some possibilities for Contrast Sandwich creations:

- Choreographing a 30-second ABA dance
- Composing a 30-second ABA piece for voice, body percussion, or available instruments
- Writing a 3-line ABA form poem
- Creating a 3-part drawing, sculpture, or tableau vivant

Print out the PDF of the Emotion Inspiration Cards linked below and cut along the dotted lines. Give each group or individual one of the cards to spark their A section.

[Contrast Sandwich “A Section” Emotion Inspiration Cards](#)
Display the instructions below:

**Making a Contrast Sandwich (ABA)**

1. Imagine how you will show the A-Section Emotion listed on your card.
2. Choose a **contrasting emotion** to inspire your B-section filling.
3. Imagine a way to show this contrasting filling. It must be **very different** from your A section.
4. Put the A and B parts together to create your full Contrast Sandwich.
5. Practice or revise, if needed, to make the filling and the outside layers of your sandwich **even more contrasting**.

Have learners work for 5-10 minutes on their Contrast Sandwich. Take time to share or view different creations and reflect together:

- **What are some ways individuals and groups created contrast between their Contrast Sandwiches’ A and B sections?**
- **What would it have been like to make “Similar Sandwiches” instead, where the B section was a lot like the A sections?**
- **What do you think makes Contrast Sandwiches work well as a way of organizing a creative project?**
Explain:
Musorgsky used Contrast Sandwich form to organize the music for many of the musical pictures in *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Some of his pictures have extremely contrasting A and B sections, and sometimes the differences are not so extreme. Let’s listen together to one Contrast Sandwich, *Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks*, and see what we notice about the contrasts between his musical filling and the outer layers of this picture’s ABA form.

▶ *Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks*

Pause at 0’16” (before the initial A section repeats) to gather a few class thoughts on the key musical and emotional qualities of this A section.

Continue listening straight through, but give signals at 0’32” and 0’55” to support learners catching the arrival of the B section and the return of the A section.

Reflect:
*Do you think this Contrast Sandwich had high, medium, or low levels of contrast between the A and B sections?*

Gather learners’ assessments of contrast levels by having all learners physically show their personal responses with hands at high, medium, or low levels in front of their body. Follow up by asking volunteers to share some of the musical observations that inspired their reactions.

Dig a bit deeper by having learners discuss, write, draw, or use movement embodiment to reflect on questions like the ones below:

- *What did you imagine happening in the different sections?*
- *What are ways ABA form and Contrast Sandwiches help make a good story, or musical journey?*
- *Why might Musorgsky have liked creating Contrast Sandwiches so much?*
VIEWING EXTENSION: KANDINSKY’S CHICKS

Enjoy this animation of visual artist Wassily Kandinsky’s art for Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks and the Promenade that precedes it. (The accompanying music is Musorgsky’s original composition for solo piano.)

LISTENING EXTENSION: MORE CONTRAST SANDWICHES

Half of the musical pictures in Pictures at an Exhibition are examples of ABA form. Choose one, or a few, to build on the musical Contrast Sandwich listening (the egg sandwich!).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music Piece</th>
<th>A 0’0”</th>
<th>B 0’50”</th>
<th>A 1’31”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polish Ox-Cart</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Marketplace at Limoges</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hut on Chicken Feet: Baba Yaga</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNIT 3: Following the Storyteller: Musorgsky’s Promenades

Though the pictures may get top billing, Musorgsky’s recurring Promenade theme is the musical bridge connecting them during the listening journey through Pictures at an Exhibition. From the opening phrase to the final Promenade occurrence in the last picture, The Great Gate of Kiev, Promenade variations support the formal structure of this massive work while also serving a larger narrative purpose. Part strolling music, part reflective reverie, the Promenades are not only inspired by the pictures they connect, but also Musorgsky’s own thoughts and emotions while wandering through them. In Unit 3 activities, learners will listen for clues to Musorgsky’s inner world and grow deeply familiar with the Promenade melody through additional performance, composition, and listening challenges centered on this essential musical theme.
ACTIVITY 1 LEARNING THE PROMENADE

Goal: Gain familiarity with Musorgsky’s Promenade melody through singing, moving, and listening. (15 minutes)

Share with learners:

To help connect the musical pictures and guide listeners on their journey through his musical exhibition, Musorgsky created a musical idea he called the Promenade. To promenade means to walk or stroll for pleasure and in public — in part, to be seen. This melody is like the theme song for strolling from painting to painting. Whenever you hear it, you know we’re on the move to a new part of the musical exhibit. And Musorgsky is there with us, telling us a little more about what he’s seeing, feeling, and thinking, and giving us a preview of the next musical picture.

Use the resources on the next page to help students internalize the Promenade theme. Listen a few times, then practice singing the Promenade melody together. When ready, try incorporating the movement suggestions provided. Consider learning to play the theme on available instruments. Alternate key options are provided.

Walking in Mixed Meter

Musorgsky’s Promenade is a famous example of mixed meter: the opening phrase contains two different time signatures that together create an uneven number of beats (5+6 beats). While some music historians think the Promenade’s unique mixed meter is inspired by traditional rhythmic patterns of Russian folk music, others believe it was a musical nod to Musorgsky’s own slightly off-kilter gait.
Promenade theme notation

Reflect:
What did you notice about how this Promenade sounds?
What mood or emotion do you think Musorgsky wanted to show at the beginning of the journey through the exhibition?

Promenade Movement Demo

Alternate notation
When learners are comfortable, play the following excerpt of the Promenade theme for orchestra. Perform along with the first 15 seconds, then continue listening to the rest. Let learners know this Promenade is how the entire visit to the musical exhibition begins!

Excerpt from Promenade I
ACTIVITY 2 EXPLORING PROMENADE VARIATIONS

Goal: Create a musical variation on the Promenade theme and use mood vocabulary and varied movements as responses to Musorgsky’s Promenade variations. (30 minutes)

Share:
Musorgsky used the Promenade theme as a musical signal to show he was moving from one picture in the exhibition to another. There are ten pictures to see, so expect to hear this walking theme many times during the listening journey! Each new version of the Promenade is a little different from the ones before it — they’re variations inspired by the different emotions Musorgsky felt while walking through the exhibition, thinking about the pictures, and remembering his friend Hartmann. To make the feeling of each Promenade variation unique, Musorgsky changed the melody using different musical elements, like dynamics (how loud or soft), register (how high or low), and tempo (how fast or slow).

Note: for some classes it may be appropriate to also discuss changes in modality, instrumentation or timbre, articulation, and accompanimental texture.

Building on their work in Activity I, invite learners to experiment with changing one or more musical elements as they sing or play the Promenade theme. Individuals may also coach you or another confident performer to try out their ideas rather than performing themselves.

Reflect on the expressive impact of your newly created variations:
How did our experiments changing musical elements affect the mood or feeling of our Promenade? What are other musical changes we could make that might give the Promenade a very different feeling?
The *Promenade* theme appears in six forms at different points during *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Choose two to three of the six to focus on for the rest of this activity. Listen to each of your selections two times while following the listening and reflection prompts below.

1. Promenade I
2. Promenade II
3. Promenade III
4. Promenade IV
5. Promenade from *With the Dead in a Dead Language*
6. Promenade from *The Great Gate of Kiev*

**For the first listening through a Promenade variation** have learners consider these questions:

Think about musical elements we changed in our own Promenade variation(s) (i.e. dynamics, register, tempo, etc.) What did Musorgsky do with those same musical elements in this Promenade?

How do Musorgsky’s musical choices affect the feeling of this Promenade? Where on the mood meter do you think this Promenade falls?

As needed, display a Mood Meter or use another mood vocabulary resource of your own.

**For the second listening**, make sure learners are in spaces or positions where they have room to move.

As you play the Promenade recording, invite them to show their own movement phrase or physical shape that reflects the musical qualities or mood of this particular Promenade.

**Reflect:**

What kinds of movements or physical shapes felt like good fits for this version of the Promenade?

What were you hearing that inspired you to make those movements?

Repeat with additional Promenades, as time permits.
ACTIVITY 3 STROLLING ACROSS A MUSICAL BRIDGE

Goal: Use graphic organizers to examine ways Musorgsky’s *Promenades* function as musical and programmatic bridges between individual pictures. *(35 minutes)*

Introduce the idea of traveling across a bridge connecting one place to another. Display the image to the right or draw a similar one for learners to view.

Explore the narrative possibilities of a bridge connecting two worlds by imagining a short story as a class in which the learners leave one place, walk across a bridge, and arrive at a whole new destination. Choose what the worlds on either side of the bridge will be (i.e. a busy city and a relaxing beach; home and the circus; the world of the humans and the world of the dragons; etc.) Then use questions, like those below, to help learners begin to focus on what might be going on in their minds while strolling across the bridge. If possible, add the class’s ideas to the image. An example is provided here.

As you step onto the bridge, are you still thinking about where you’ve just been or are you thinking about something else?

What kinds of things might you wonder about while on the bridge?

How do your feelings change as you get farther from one world and closer to another?

When do you start to notice what’s up ahead on the other side? Did you know it was there all along, or is it a surprise?
Explain:
The Promenade themes often happen between musical pictures. Musorgsky placed them like musical bridges connecting the world of one picture to the next. Each time we hear a Promenade, it’s like we are shadowing Musorgsky across the bridge, following his footsteps and listening in on the thoughts and feelings he had while he strolled.

Print out and give each learner a copy of this Bridge Graphic Organizer worksheet.

Learners can use it to document their observations about the worlds of the pictures and the Promenade “bridge” in a variety of ways. You can encourage them to:

- Sketch or draw
- Note standout musical elements
- Document mood or feelings
- Write down imagined thoughts or inner monologues for Musorgsky at different points in his journey

See an example of a completed Model of a Bridge Graphic Organizer worksheet.

Let learners know you’ll all be listening to part of one world, The Old Castle, followed by the Promenade bridge that connects to the next picture. Have learners write and draw along with the music. Pause between The Old Castle and Promenade III to address questions and clarify the journey, as needed.

Excerpt from The Old Castle
Promenade III
As learners continue to draw and write, use questions like those below to help them go farther with their reflection and predictions:

Do you think Musorgsky brought any sounds or feelings from the world of The Old Castle with him as he went across the musical bridge? Or did he shake off the old world and start with a fresh new feeling and sound?

What did you hear that makes you think that?

What changes in sound or mood did you notice during this Promenade as we moved farther from the world of The Old Castle?

What do you think the next world will be like? How do you think Musorgsky might be feeling about what’s up ahead?

Have learners label the new world with the musical picture’s title: Tuileries.

Listen together to an excerpt from the opening of Tuileries:

Excerpt from Tuileries

Invite learners to share what they added to their graphic organizers, and how their predictions compared to the reality of the world Musorgsky led them to on the other side of the bridge.
Now, go on to another journey in a different way.

First, make observations about the worlds on either side of the *Promenade*, then listen to the musical bridge that connects them:

- 🎧 *Excerpt from Polish Ox-Cart*
- 🎧 *Excerpt from Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks*

Before hearing Musorgsky’s musical bridge, have learners put on their composer hats and offer up ideas for the sounds or feelings they think should be part of the *Promenade* variation bridging these two worlds. Encourage them to imagine an inner monologue for the journey across this bridge.

**Listen together to Promenade IV:**

- 🎧 *Promenade IV*

Share observations and compare this musical bridge to *Promenade* III from earlier in this activity.

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**Conclude with a final reflection:**

*Why do you think Musorgsky included these musical bridges instead of just jumping directly from one picture to the next?*

*What do the musical bridges add to the journey through the exhibition?*
MUSICAL EXTENSION:
CREATE A NEW PROMENADE BRIDGE

Invite learners to choose any two musical pictures from the exhibition and imagine a new Promenade that would make an effective bridge connecting them.

Which moods or musical qualities from these pictures will appear in this new Promenade bridge?

What, do you imagine, is going on in the mind of someone moving across this bridge, from one world to the next?

What musical elements and emotions will you use to compose your new Promenade?
ACTIVITY 4 PUTTING WORDS TO A PROMENADE

Goal: Craft original lyrics to the Promenade melody. (25 minutes)

Help learners synthesize their acquired knowledge of the story behind Pictures at an Exhibition, their understanding of the Promenades’ role as musical bridges in the piece’s larger form, and their own musical facility with the Promenade theme by challenging them to compose their own lyrics for the Promenade.

Remind learners that to promenade means to walk or stroll. The melody of the Promenade is like the theme song for strolling.

Have your learners close their eyes and imagine themselves walking down the street. Have students focus on one specific street: it could be a street that they are familiar with (like where they live or in their neighborhood) or one that’s completely imaginary.

Share:
What do you see when you walk down the street? What do you hear, feel, taste, and smell?

Have learners open their eyes and journal their ideas. Encourage them to think about each of their senses and what is special about their street.

Your class is ready to begin a Promenade Mad Lib: a short story based on words chosen by your learners. If necessary, review what a syllable is (you can clap along with each syllable or point out that your chin moves down with each syllable as you speak).

Share the following phrase and have learners fill in the blank line with a one-syllable verb.

*I’m _____-ing down the street.
(verb)
Now, have students look at their written ideas. Have them complete the Promenade Mad Lib Worksheet.

Promenade Mad Lib Worksheet

A final stanza might look like:

I’m walk-ing down the street, go-ing to buy cold ice-cream.
I’m skip-ping down the street, pass-ing peo-ple, dogs, and cars.
I’m skat-ing down the street, smell-ing rain, cut grass, and flow-ers.
I’m danc-ing down the street, to go hear a live orch-es-tra.

As a class, listen to the first part of the Promenade theme. Your lyrics will fit with each note of the melody, heard in the bassoon. Practice saying, and then singing, your words with the recording.

Take it a step further! Consider any of these possible inspiration sparks for lyrical content:

- Connect to the musical expression (i.e. mood) of an existing Promenade
- Imagine Musorgsky narrating his emotions for a certain moment during his tour of the exhibition
- Think about your Promenade as a bridge connecting two different musical pictures
- Lyrically describe what’s happening with the contour, rhythm, or other musical qualities of the melody itself

Composer and Teaching Artist Dr. Shelley Monroe shares some of her own tips for creating lyrics in this video.

Share your final stanzas and performances of your lyrics, here.
LISTENING EXTENSION: LYRICS FOR A PROG ROCK PROMENADE

Listen to the lyrics for a version of Musorgsky’s Promenade created by 1970s prog rock band Emerson, Lake & Palmer.

WRITING EXTENSION: UPDATE A SCENE

Musorgsky was deeply inspired by words and language. He often imagined little scenes and dialogue to help jumpstart his musical compositions, including some of the pictures in Pictures at an Exhibition.

Try creating an original scene or dialogue for one of the musical pictures most connected to words and conversation.

The Marketplace at Limoges
Create contemporary dialogue for the people speaking animatedly in a market, or other modern gathering place.

Tuileries
Imagine the kind of arguments children today might be having with their friends or siblings, and who or what would help them resolve their disagreements.
UNIT 4: Chain Reactions of Inspiration

When Victor Hartmann was first making his sketches and watercolors, he likely did not imagine the chain reaction of creativity he would spark. In this final unit learners follow the trail of inspiration from Hartmann to Musorgsky to composer Maurice Ravel, who picked up the creative spark and imagined his own orchestration of *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Further activities set up opportunities for learners to become part of the chain reaction themselves. From remaking Ravel’s orchestration, to creating choreography, to building with everyday materials, learners can use multiple artistic modalities and mediums as launching points for imagining their own inspired additions to, and reflections on, Musorgsky’s first musical exhibition. Keep that 150-year-old creative spark going!
ACTIVITY 1 REVEALING NEW COLORS WITH ORCHESTRAL INSTRUMENTS

Goal: Use individual sketching to reflect on Ravel’s orchestration choices and their effect on musical color (timbre). (30 minutes)

Up to this point, learners using this guide will have explored *Pictures at an Exhibition* for orchestra. However, Musorgsky originally created the entire piece for *solo piano*. The version the New York Philharmonic will play is an arrangement for orchestra — an orchestration — created by French composer Maurice Ravel about 50 years after Musorgsky wrote this music.

Orchestration

A version of a piece of music where the instruments have been changed or reassigned so that the piece can be performed by an orchestra.
Display the simple flow chart to the right to help illustrate the different sparking points along the way to Ravel’s reimagining of Pictures at an Exhibition for orchestra.

To help learners think about orchestration from a rich descriptive perspective, introduce a “color” metaphor.

**Share:**

Every instrument has its own unique sound. Musicians call this the instrument’s special musical color.

*Note: scientifically, musical color, or tone color, (often called timbre) is related to the acoustical profile of the overtones of the sound produced by an instrument. This is affected by a variety of variables including the instrument’s shape, materials, and means of sound production. Conversations about musical “colors” tend to be abstract, even when professionals have them. In practice musicians use an array of vocabulary — not just visual color names — to try to discuss musical color, and you should encourage learners to do the same. Try out words like bright, dark, harsh, light, mellow, full, open, smooth, breathy, clear, cool, earthy, etc. Here are some more.*

Pause, briefly, to let learners share words describing the special sound, or musical color, of some familiar instruments (i.e. guitar is bright, plinky, and metallic; clarinet is mellow, swooshy, and dark).
Explain:

Combinations of instruments make special colors, too. Composers carefully consider which instruments will blend to create just the right musical color for the ideas they’re imagining. Composer Maurice Ravel was especially well known for creating vivid musical colors with imaginative combinations of instruments. Let’s do some side-by-side listening — and then some sketching of our own — to discover more about how Ravel repainted Musorgsky’s pictures with new, imaginative musical colors from the orchestra.

Listen to at least 15 seconds of each version of The Great Gate of Kiev to warm up learners’ ears to color changes between solo piano and Ravel’s orchestration. Remind learners that both versions will use the same pitches and rhythms composed by Musorgsky, but the instruments playing these pitches and rhythms will change — that’s where the different musical colors will come from.

Reflect:

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very similar and 5 being extremely different, in your opinion how different from one another are the musical colors (the special sound qualities) of the solo piano version and Ravel’s orchestration?

Have learners respond by showing their number choice with their fingers. Unpack their reactions with questions like:

What changes did you notice?

Which moments in the music stood out the most?

If you were going to sketch something to show a little bit about this music, what would it look like? What shapes, lines, colors, etc. would you use? How might the orchestra sketch look different from the piano one?
Let the class know you’ll all be listening together to more examples of musically colorful changes between the piano and orchestral versions of different pictures. This time, they’ll draw their own imaginative abstract sketches and doodles as a way of reflecting on differences they notice between the solo piano and orchestrated versions.

Give learners paper, pencils, and a variety of colorful writing utensils (i.e. crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.) to choose from. Have learners draw a line down the middle of their paper or fold it in half to create two spaces. Select one set of excerpts from the table below. (Details about Ravel’s orchestration choices are provided for teachers to support learners’ observations, as needed.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIANO</th>
<th>ORCHESTRA</th>
<th>ORCHESTRATION NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>🎹 Catacombs: Roman Burial Place: solo piano</td>
<td>🎹 Catacombs: Roman Burial Place: orchestra</td>
<td>Instrumental choir with the sustained voices of horns, trombone, tuba, bassoon, and contrabassoon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎹 The Hut on Chicken Feet: Baba Yaga: solo piano</td>
<td>🎹 The Hut on Chicken Feet: Baba Yaga: orchestra</td>
<td>Dialogue between deep (pizzicato low strings and staccato tuba) and high (flute, piccolo, pizzicato violins, and xylophone) with murmuring middle strings underneath. Special appearances by the extremely deep, growly contrabassoon at 2:03 and mystically, metallic tam-tam at 2:16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🎹 The Great Gate of Kiev: solo piano</td>
<td>🎹 The Great Gate of Kiev: orchestra</td>
<td>Huge orchestral force! The Promenade melody is carried by members of all the families with a special weight in the brass and added clanging heft of orchestral bells and tam-tam. Concludes with cascading descending scales through the full winds and strings, supported by a solid wall of brass.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you listen together to the piano version of your chosen excerpt, give learners time to draw and doodle on one half of their paper. As you switch to the orchestral version, have learners sketch on the opposite half of the page. Repeated listenings to each excerpt will be helpful. Encourage learners to carefully consider how similar or different they want their two sketches to be (if it helps, refer back to the scale of 1 to 5 from earlier in the activity). Support them in experimenting with imaginative representations of the musical color changes they hear using their own visual choices like color, shading, and texture.

See an example of what this could look like in this model Side-by-Side Sketch.

Consider having a short “gallery walk” through the room to view one another’s art. Invite volunteers to describe their creative process and reasoning. As desired, distribute more paper and keep creating colorful abstract sketches as you listen together to additional pairs of excerpts.
Wassily Kandinsky was an artist known for incorporating musical elements like color, rhythm, line, shape, and texture into his paintings. For some abstract visual inspiration, check out Kandinsky’s colorful interpretations of Musorgsky’s music.
ACTIVITY 2 COVERING OR REMIXING A MUSICAL PICTURE

Goal: Examine contemporary approaches to remaking music and make connections to Ravel’s orchestration of Musorgsky’s original work. (15 minutes)

Invite your class to share some of what they already know about reimagining someone else’s music:

Have you ever made a new version of a piece or song that was originally created by someone else? What did you do to make the version your own?

Who can describe some examples they’ve heard where an artist makes a new version of someone else’s music?

Do you care about how much remaking or changing an artist does when reimagining a piece? Why?

Start defining qualities of two specific styles of reimagining a piece of music: making a musical cover version and making a remix. Display the T-chart on the next page, making connections back to ideas that came up in your class conversation.
Cover

- A new version of an original song or piece made by someone other than the original artist
- Most musical ideas stay the same: melody, rhythm, form, etc.
- Keeps most of the same musical layers as the original, but may have other instruments or voices perform them
- Has new unique spin or creative twist, but still recognizable as the same song or piece as the original

Remix

- A remake of a song or piece, usually done by someone other than the original artist
- Many musical elements are changed so that it sounds like a brand new creation
- Completely new musical layers can be added
- Layers from the original can be removed, or changed dramatically
- Sometimes only small parts of the original song are still recognizable

Note: If you have favorite examples of covers and remixes to help fuel the conversation, insert a short cover/remix listening party here!

Review or introduce the fact that Ravel created the orchestrated version of Musorgsky’s original piano version of *Pictures at an Exhibition*. (This idea is explored in greater depth in Activity 1 of this Unit).

**Explain:**

Ravel made a new version of Musorgsky’s original music for *Pictures at an Exhibition*. He didn’t change the pitches, rhythm, or form of Musorgsky’s original piano version, but he did change who played Musorgsky’s musical ideas. Ravel created an orchestrated version of the piece, so instead of just piano, the music is made up of many combinations of instruments from the orchestra.

Have learners consider this question:

*Do you think Ravel’s orchestrated version of *Pictures at an Exhibition* is more like a cover or a remix … or something else entirely? Why?*

Display this flow chart to extend the chain reaction of creativity and inspiration.

Reflect:

*If you were going to make the next link in this chain reaction would you rather imagine a new cover version of one of the musical pictures, or a remix? Why?*

*What would your new version be like? What changes would you make?*
SPECIAL PROJECT:
CREATE A DIGITAL COVER OR REMIX

Use a DAW of your choosing to create a new Cover of Musorgsky’s piano version of The Old Castle or employ a variety of processing techniques to make a Remix of The Great Gate of Kiev for orchestra. We used AudioMass.

The Old Castle Covers:

Access the files for midi piano versions of the left hand ostinato from an excerpt of The Old Castle here:

The Old Castle Stems(s)

Watch New York Philharmonic Teaching Artist Murat Colak walk through the basic steps for your cover.

The Great Gate of Kiev Remixes:

Access the files for the orchestral version of The Great Gate of Kiev here:

The Great Gate of Kiev Stems(s)

Experiment with effects like reverberation and delay, changing the speed and pitch, and cutting or reversing sections of the music. Watch a video explanation to learn more.

Share your Covers and Remixes on Padlet, here.
LISTENING EXTENSION: REMAKES GALORE

Find more inspiration in some of the many imaginative remakes of movements from *Pictures at an Exhibition* that already exist:

Latin Jazz: Ray Barretto *The Old Castle*

British Prog Rock: Emerson, Lake & Palmer

Contemporary Chamber Orchestra: Clarice Assad
ACTIVITY 3 ADDING TO THE EXHIBITION: ARCHITECTURE WITH EVERYDAY MATERIALS

Goal: Step into Hartmann’s shoes as an artist and architect and create building models inspired by Musorgsky’s music. (30 minutes)

Let learners know that in addition to being a painter and illustrator, Hartmann was an architect, someone who designs buildings for a living. From his sketches and paintings one can see that architecture inspired him. He loved observing and sketching the buildings and gardens he came across, and dreamed up designs for fantastical new structures.
Explain:
The buildings Hartmann imagined and painted sparked Musorgsky’s musical ideas. We’re going to flip that spark around and let Musorgsky’s music inspire us to build.

While several sections of *Pictures at an Exhibition* have connections to architecture, narrow your building focus to *The Old Castle* or *The Great Gate of Kiev*. You may choose one as the spark for all the class creations, or if you have time, listen and brainstorm to both *The Old Castle* and *The Great Gate of Kiev* and let each individual learner choose one to be their inspiration.

**Begin by listening to at least one minute from each of the two musical pictures below.**

![Listen to The Old Castle](#)  ![Listen to The Great Gate of Kiev](#)

As they listen, have learners gather ideas using strategies like those below:

- Sketch or draw
- Use the *Hear–Feel–Think–Wonder Thinking Routine*
- Freewrite
- Listen with eyes closed to support imaginative visualization

**Use reflection to help learners formalize some of their inspirations:**

*What did you hear that helps you picture something about your building design?*

*Are you imagining something realistic or fantastical?*

*What are some words you wrote that could help inspire the style or features of your building?*
Have ready an assortment of useful, everyday materials for learners to repurpose in their construction. Some suggestions are provided.

**Useful Materials:**
- Cardstock
- Cereal boxes
- Business cards
- Old postcards

Follow [this link](#) for more ideas. [“Creating a Treasure Bin doc”]

NYC DOE schools: consider visiting the [Materials for the Arts](#) warehouse in Long Island City for materials and creative reuse ideas.

If the entire class is using the same picture as inspiration, you may choose to play the music while they construct. Check in periodically and reorient students back to their musical sources of inspiration. As they finish their creations, distribute index cards and have learners write a sentence or two about what they hope viewers notice and / or what big ideas inspired their building’s design. Make time for learners to view one another’s creations and reflect on the class’s array of imaginative architecture!

Share photos of finished projects, and find some building templates, [here](#).
ACTIVITY 4 ADDING TO THE EXHIBITION: SPARKING IMAGINATIVE MOVEMENT

Goal: Use physical movement and dance to experience and express key musical elements of a movement-inspired musical picture. (35 minutes)

Lead a short physical movement warm-up, isolating and combining multiple regions of the body and incorporating movement prompts related to the three elements of the movement palette students will be using later in the activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Angular, straight, curved, twisted, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>High, medium, low, reaching up or down, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locomotor Movement</td>
<td>Any movement that travels through space (i.e. walk, crawl, skip, hop, slide, gallop, tiptoe, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While any section from Pictures at an Exhibition could inspire movement, on the next page are four suggested excerpts of Musorgsky’s musical pictures with especially vivid connections to movement. Select one you think will work best with your particular group of learners, have the class choose one based on their previous explorations with Musorgsky’s music (most familiar with or least familiar with could both be interesting angles!), or lead a short listening party and reach a class consensus.
### Gnome

A Gnome

![Excerpt from Gnome](image)

### Tuileries

Children playing and teasing one another in a beautiful city park

![Excerpt from Tuileries](image)

### Polish Ox-Cart

Workers and oxen struggling with a difficult physical task

![Excerpt from Polish Ox-Cart](image)

### Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

Little canary chicks dancing around, still covered in their shells

![Excerpt from Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks](image)

Once you’ve chosen an excerpt, brainstorm movement ideas by listening to the excerpt four times through as a class, with a different focus each time.

1. Listen with still bodies and eyes closed (if comfortable). Learners can begin visualizing movements that feel like a good fit with the music. Encourage them to begin imagining connections to **shapes**, **levels**, and **locomotor movements**. Quickly collect some observations on a class chart.

2. Listen and move! Learners explore physical **shapes** that connect with what they hear.

3. Listen and move! Learners experiment with movements on different **levels**.

4. Listen and move! Learners try out **locomotor movements** inspired by the music. (As needed, add additional parameters related to the room you’re working in, personal space awareness, etc.)

Continue working as a class or divide learners into collaborative pairs or small groups. Have learners share favorite movement ideas with each other. Choose three or four ideas and begin to decide how to connect them into one short dance.

Display or ask the questions below to guide their choreography:

- **What feels like a good beginning movement?**
- **A good ending movement?**
- **Are there movements that can be combined?**
- **Will you repeat any ideas, or do each just once?**

Once a form starts to take shape, listen and move along with the excerpt again. Encourage learners to revise as needed and continue making choices that help their movements feel even more connected to ideas in the music whenever possible.

Share the class’s final movement creation(s). Reflect together on ways Musorgsky’s musical imagination sparked learners’ own creative movement ideas.
EXTENSION:
COSTUME DESIGN

Repurpose materials to create life-sized or model-sized costumes that could be part of the movement performance learners have imagined.

How will your costume help the movements you chose or the feeling of your choreography come across more clearly?

Will your costumes make performers look like a “character” from the musical picture, or be separate from the idea of acting like a person in a musical story?

Share photos of your costumes, or videos of your movement performances, here.
Audio Resources

MUSORGSKY / Orch. Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*

- Promenade
- *Gnomus (Gnome)*
- Promenade
- *Il vecchio castello (The Old Castle)*
- Promenade
- *Tuileries*
- *Bydlo (Polish Ox-Cart)*
- Promenade
- *Ballet des poussins dans leurs coques (Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks)*
- *Limoges: Le Marché (The Marketplace at Limoges)*

- *Catacombs: Sepulcrum Romanum (Catacombs: Roman Burial Place)*
- *Con mortuis in lingua mortua (With the Dead in a Dead Language)*
- *La Cabane sur des pattes de poules (Baba–Yaga) (The Hut on Chicken Feet: Baba–Yaga)*
- *La Grande porte de Kiev (The Great Gate of Kiev)*

New York Philharmonic: Alan Gilbert, conductor

Recorded 2012. Courtesy of New York Philharmonic
Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives

About the Artists

- **Jerry Hou** conductor
- **Justin Jay Hines** host
- **Materials for the Arts** creative partner
- **Doug Fitch** director / designer