

About the Project: Pictures at an Exhibition

In the summer of 2009, RSO Music Director Steven Larsen invited a group of professional photographers to discuss a project that would address his vision for part of the RSO's 75th anniversary season. One of the pieces on the final Classics Series concert, *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky, offered a unique opportunity.

Mussorgsky's composition was inspired by an exhibition of artwork created by his recently departed friend, the artist Victor Hartmann. *Pictures at an Exhibition* was intended to honor Hartmann, and the exhibition of his work that inspired the composer to write this masterpiece.

Maestro Larsen's vision included a sequenced series of images inspired by the music – a turn of tables from Mussorgsky's inspiration from the artwork. These images would depict Rockford in its myriad aspects – the river, the architecture, the natural beauty, and of course, the people who live and work in the Forest City. Eight professional photographers from the Rockford area were challenged to provide images that were inspired by the music and reflected their views of Rockford. The RSO then partnered with the Rockford Park District to produce photo-choreography of the images coordinated with the music to project above the orchestra during the performance. The choreography of the Rockford photographs with the music brings this integration of music and visual art full circle.

This celebration includes three performances and additional activities. *Pictures at an Exhibition* was featured at two performances of the RSO's annual Youth Concert on Friday, April 23. More than 3,000 students from a seven county area attended these performances. Art work created by students in the Rockford Public Schools was incorporated into the photo-choreography presentation for these Youth Concerts.

In conjunction with the concerts, two photography exhibitions have been coordinated with the Rockford Art Museum. The exhibition, also titled *Pictures at an Exhibition*, in RAM's Anderson Gallery (April 9 – June 27) includes selected work by the photographers featured during the concert. Images provided by the Rockford Photo Club are on display in RAM's Art Annex (April 2-25).