



**RSO**

**Rockford Symphony Orchestra**  
*Steven Larsen, Music Director*

**PRESENTS**

**2010 Youth Concert**

**PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION**

**By Modest Mussorgsky**

**Friday      April 23, 2010**

**Coronado Performing Arts Center**

Graciously sponsored by  **Alpine Bank**  
*A bank you can actually like.*

## Welcome Students and Teachers

The Rockford Symphony Orchestra is YOUR orchestra. It's part of our city and everyone who lives in this community. The RSO is the third largest orchestra in the state of Illinois and we are celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this season. Every year for more than 30 years, the orchestra has performed a concert for students from all over Northern Illinois. That means that more than 100,000 students and teachers have come to the Youth Concert.

The RSO believes it is very important for YOU to have the chance to hear a LIVE symphony orchestra. We hope you'll agree that there's a big difference between hearing music on the radio and hearing it performed before your eyes and ears. For one thing, watching the musicians play their instruments right in front of you can be amazing. Pay close attention to what they do. Choose one or two musicians to focus on and see how they are concentrating carefully on playing their music and watching the conductor. Also, observe the conductor lead the entire orchestra. It's really amazing that so many people play exactly together.

The music you will hear at the Youth Concert was written by a man who lived in Russia more than 100 years ago. Yet, the music isn't really out of style. Great music and great art lasts for a long, long time. It can make people smile, or laugh, or cry the same way it might have done when people heard it generations ago. But like anything worthwhile, sometimes knowing a more about what you will hear, see, and experience makes a big difference in how much you enjoy it.

We hope you will learn more about Pictures at an Exhibition with your teacher before you come to the concert. It's the best way to have the best experience!

We can't wait to see you on April 23!



Steven Larsen, Music Director



Lorie Langan, Education Director

The RSO Youth Concert is graciously sponsored by Alpine Bank  with additional

funding from the National Endowment  and from the Arts Illinois Arts Council 

## Meet Modest (MŌ- dest) Mussorgsky (mu-ZORG- sky)



In the 1800's, Russia was a land ruled by Tzars (also spelled Czar) and wealthy landowners who managed farming estates. The people living as **serfs** were little more than slaves; they were very poor and did not have the opportunity to receive much education. It was into this time that Modest Mussorgsky was born March 21, 1839 in Karevo, Russia. His family owned an estate and planned for their son to pursue a military career as an officer. Mussorgsky's parents made sure he received a good preparatory education and he studied piano with his mother from an early age. Young Modest was sent to St. Petersburg at the age of 10 to study more intensively and prepare for cadet school. While training to become a military officer, he demonstrated an early interest in **composition** (writing music) and began studying composing at the age of 18. He joined the Imperial Guards Regiment in 1865, only to resign his commission three years later. After leaving the army, he made the decision to devote himself completely to writing music.

He made a living mostly from the income from his family's estate, but in 1861, all serfs were **emancipated**. This destroyed Mussorgsky's ability to write music without working at another job because he did not sell enough music for publication or performance to make the money he needed to support himself. During this time, he became more interested in living a "starving artist's" life – drifting in and out of different apartments and not worrying about paying bills. This of course caused a problem for him in terms of his ability to write and create music.

Mussorgsky was part of an important group of composers known as the "The Mighty Handful" or "The Five" as they were also known. In the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was going through many changes. As smaller principalities and kingdoms joined together as whole countries, the idea of loyalty to one country became more widespread – this idea is known as **Nationalism**. Mussorgsky was the reluctant leader of "The Five" – Mily Balakirev, Alexander Borodin, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, and César Cui were the other members of the group. All of these composers wanted a distinctly Russian sound to their music. They often included Russian

or peasant folk music in their compositions, or wrote music inspired by folk tales they remembered from their childhood.

It was probably in 1870 that Mussorgsky met artist and architect Viktor Hartmann. Both men were devoted to the cause of creating Russian art and quickly became friends. Their meeting was likely arranged by the influential critic Vladimir Stasov who followed both of their careers with interest.

Hartmann died from an aneurysm (a blood clot in the brain) in 1873. The sudden loss of the artist, aged only 39, shook Mussorgsky along with others in Russia's art world. Stasov helped organize an **exhibition** of over 400 Hartmann works in the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg in February and March 1874. Mussorgsky lent works from his personal collection to the exhibit and viewed the show in person. Fired by the experience, he composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* in six weeks. The music depicts an imaginary tour of an art collection. Titles of individual movements allude to works by Hartmann; Mussorgsky used *Hartmann* as a working title during the work's composition. He described the experience to Stasov in June 1874: "*Hartmann* is seething as *Boris* was. Sounds and ideas float in the air and my scribbling can hardly keep pace with them."

## **Pictures at an Exhibition**

Mussorgsky's master piece includes 15 different sections – each one inspired by the Hartmann exhibition. As your students listen to the music (you will receive a study CD in the mail following your payment for attending the performance), point out the following in each section. Perhaps their imaginations see something else from listening to the music! Invite creative discussion about what kind of emotions, feelings and images they experience from listening

### **The Promenade**

This section of the music is introduced and repeated four times – each one is slightly varied with changes in instruments, **tempo**, and **dynamics**.

The purpose of the Promenade is to give the listener the idea that they are moving from one picture gallery to another. It connects one musical idea to another in the first half of *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

### **The Gnome**

This short section stops and starts in the way that an old man might walk with a hesitant style. The artwork created by Hartmann no longer exists, but was described as a short man with a Nutcracker-like face.

### **The Castle**

This section has a large spacious feel – like you might experience if you were taking a tour of a large castle.

### **Tuileries**

A large beautiful garden in Paris, France was the inspiration for a watercolor painting by Hartmann as well as the music written to describe the people who often walk leisurely through the Tuileries garden.

### **Bydlo**

The music describes Hartmann's painting of a large country cart with gigantic wheels typically used on farms in Poland.



### **Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells**

This lively section shows the activity and delightful curiosity of newly hatched chicks as they come out of their shells to discover the world.



### **Samuel Goldenberg and Schumulye**

This section contrasts two Jewish men – one rich, the other poor.

## Limoges – The Market

Limoges (lee – MŌJ) is a city in central France. The market is a very busy, active, and pleasant place.



## Catacombs

This section starkly contrasts with the one before it. Catacombs are underground burial grounds.

## The Legend of Baba Yaga

Baba Yaga is well known to Russian and Slavic children as part of the folk tale tradition in Eastern Europe. In Russian tales, Baba Yaga is portrayed as an old woman who flies through the air in a **mortar**, using the **pestle** as a rudder and sweeping away the tracks behind her with a broom made out of silver birch. She lives in a log cabin that moves around on a pair of dancing chicken legs, and/or is surrounded by poles with a skull on each one. The keyhole to her front door is a mouth filled with sharp teeth; the fence outside is made with human bones with skulls on top, often with one pole lacking its skull, leaving space for the next victim. In another legend, the hut does not reveal the door until it is told a magical phrase: *Turn your back to the forest, your front to me.*

Baba Yaga is sometimes shown as evil, and sometimes as a source of guidance; there are stories where she helps people with their quests, and stories in which she kidnaps children and threatens to eat them. Seeking out her aid is usually portrayed as a dangerous act. An emphasis is placed on the need for proper preparation and purity of spirit, as well as basic politeness. It is said she ages one year every time she is asked a question, which probably explains her reluctance to help. This effect, however, can be reversed with a special blend of tea made with blue roses. See the picture on the next page.



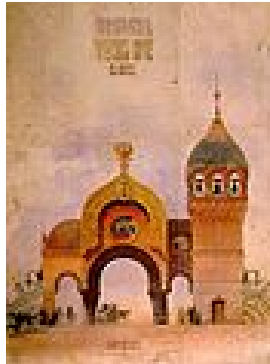
**Baba Yaga flying in her mortar and pestal**



**Baba Yaga's cabin on chicken legs**

### The Great Gates of Kiev

The final section of the piece shows us the grand and patriotic gates to the Russian city of Kiev. Hartmann designed a monumental gate for **Tsar** Alexander II to commemorate the monarch's narrow escape from an assassination attempt on April 4, 1866. Hartmann regarded his design as the best work he had done. His design won the national competition but plans to build the structure were later cancelled.



## Vocabulary

The following basic vocabulary for *Pictures at an Exhibition* can be used in a variety of ways. As students learn vocabulary, encourage ways to reinforce understanding by looking for root words, derivation, synonyms, antonyms etc.

**Color** – in music, this term describes the variations of sound that an individual instrument makes

**Compare and Contrast** – to consider the similarities and differences of two things or groups of things

**Composition** – this term describes the final result of a creating a piece of music including how all the basic elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and dynamics come together

**Dynamics** – how loud or soft music is played; dynamics effect the emotional impact of the music

**Instrumentation** – the different musical instruments, as well as the number of each instrument, that the composer includes to play in a piece of music

**Mood** – how the music makes you feel as you listen to it; describes the emotion in the music

**Mortar and Pestle** – a tool used to grind food or prepare elements for medicine

**Nationalism** – loyalty and devotion to a specific country

**Promenade** – to walk or amble from one place to the next, or a walkway in a garden

**Serfs** – a class of servants who were bound to a Tsar, ruler or landowner to work farmland

**Tempo** – the pace the music is played; fast or slow

**Timbre** – the unique sound a musical instrument makes

**Tsar (or Czar)** – the supreme ruler in Russia prior to the Russian Revolution in 1917; like a king

## **CONCERT MANNERS 101**

**Please review the following points with your students before coming to the concert. Good concert manners help everyone understand what to expect and will help students feel more comfortable with the concert experience.**

### **KEEPING IT SIMPLE**

- FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY IS NOT ALLOWED DURING THE PERFORMANCE. THIS CAN BE VERY DISRUPTIVE TO THE MUSICIANS' CONCENTRATION.
- STAY WITH YOUR GROUP AT ALL TIMES. IF YOU NEED TO USE THE RESTROOM, YOU MUST GO WITH A CHAPERONE.
- NO FOOD OR BEVERAGES ARE ALLOWED IN THE THEATRE. THIS INCLUDES GUM. THE CORONADO IS AN HISTORIC THEATRE AND THIS RULE MUST BE FOLLOWED.
- KEEP YOUR VOICES QUIET SO OTHERS MAY ENJOY THE CONCERT. BE COURTEOUS TO YOUR FELLOW AUDIENCE MEMBERS.
- APPLAUD WHEN THE PIECE IS FINISHED AND MAESTRO LARSEN LOWERS HIS ARMS.

# FAQs

## **1. What will a Classical Music concert be like? Will it be boring?**

Listening to a live musical performance can be really exciting. Watch the musicians while they are working. Imagine what is going on inside their head as they tune their instruments, read the music as they play, and watch the conductor for directions. How do they play when the music is really fast, or really slow?

## **2. Who is the person who comes in right before the conductor and why does she stand there with her violin?**

This person is the Concertmaster. The Concertmaster for the Rockford Symphony Orchestra is Michele Lekas. She is the first, or principal violin - that means she leads the string section and usually has all the violin solos that might be performed in the program. When she comes out on stage, it is considered appropriate to applaud. She signals the principal oboe player to play an A, and each section of the orchestra tunes to that note. Then she sits down, and the conductor comes out.

## **3. What is the conductor really doing with the little stick he or she holds?**

The stick is called a baton and it is used as a tool for the musicians to see what the conductor is directing them to do. He or she uses certain patterns to keep the time in order to have everyone playing to the correct beat. The conductor uses both arms to communicate to the orchestra what he wants them to sound like and remind them of places in the music where they should play loud or soft.

## **4. How will we know when to clap?**

When the conductor lowers his arms to his side, that means the piece is over and it is time to applaud. Musicians love to hear applause because it lets them know how much the audience appreciated all their hard work.

# Pictures at an Exhibition – RSO Youth Concert

## Classroom Activities

Activities and suggested discussion meet the following ISBE Goals and Standards:

25 A - Identify elements and expressive qualities such as tone color, harmony, melody, form, rhythm/meter and dynamics in a variety of musical styles.

26a – Classify musical sound sources into groups (instrument families)

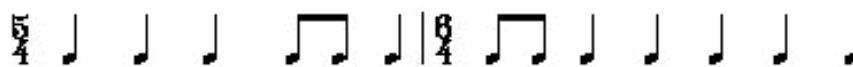
27B – Identify and describe how the arts communicate the similarities and differences among various people, places and times

1A – Read and comprehend unfamiliar words using root words, synonyms, antonyms, word origins and derivations. (see vocabulary list and suggestions)

2B – Relate literary works and their characters, settings and plots to current and historical events, people, and perspectives. (explore the Baba Yaga folk tales)

4A – Ask and respond to questions related to oral presentations and messages in small and large group settings

The **Promenade** section of the piece has a distinctive 11 beat pattern. The theme is divided in to a 5 beat bar followed by a 6 beat bar. Listen to the music and count out the beats.



### Compare and contrast

- Listen to the four Promenade sections. How are they different? How are they alike?
- Think about things like *instrumentation*, *tempo*, and *mood* when comparing.

Hint:

- Promenade 1 begins with trumpet, horns and other brass, then strings
- Promenade 2 begins with French horn, clarinets, bassoon, and flutes (woodwinds\_
- Promenade 3 begins with trumpets and low brass (trombones, tubas), then strings; back and forth almost in “conversation” ending with horns
- Promenade 4 begins with piccolo and flutes, then other winds – oboe, bassoon, (woodwinds) then low strings, modulating to a minor key (listen to the ‘foreboding’ tone)

**Promenade** means a walk, or to walk around. How does the tempo of each section look when you walk to the beat of each of the Promenade sections?

## Word Search

Look for these words in the following search:

Composition

Orchestra

Timbre

Instrumentation

Promenade

Tempo

Tsar

Rhythm

Baba Yaga

Dynamics

Mussorgsky

Nationalism

Exhibition

Promenade

S E S T O O K M E S E T G H T L I  
 T X A D S F L M X E V O Z A E R T  
 R H I C T A R W A S T E D I L D S  
 O I W E M U S S O R G S K Y G H T  
 U B A R G P R O B B E X S G A R H  
 L I E E N C O B N I T T O T S A R  
 L T A S T O N E O M M G H E C S T  
 K I P R O M E N A D E Q U M C I T  
 N O E X S P S I M C K W E P O N S  
 O N A D R O S T C S T T B O P S D  
 O R C H E S T R A R Q R N E M T E  
 F N C T S I D M U L A H E X S R I  
 T E R O O T I B A B A Y A G A U R  
 H W S I T I D F G H I T M P R M O  
 U I T K N O R R E X U H Q U N E T  
 H J O D Y N A M I C S M K U N N R  
 P K P O H H W E F N N T G K N T O  
 O U R R T A N E R A V E R L N A N  
 O Q C O M P O S I T I O N O O T U  
 Q A U L K F U D S I Y U I U M I Q  
 U D R O E T H K M O C D H U L O U  
 I A T C K M O P S N M L D T E N G  
 R O H D R F T K B A S T O H F L E  
 R R K E I O L C E L N K W E M L W  
 L T N O N W O P M I T T L O P I S  
 D S I H E O N L M S R E L O Q U X

