Mussorgsky wrote the larger piece Pictures at an Exhibition for piano in 1874 to honor his friend, artist Victor Hartmann, who had passed away. Each movement, or chapter, was based upon a particular piece of Hartmann’s artwork. Maurice Ravel, a French composer, later took Mussorgsky’s musical ideas and transcribed them for a symphony orchestra in 1922. This piece is much more popular and frequently performed. The piece Gnomus is written in the key of Eb minor. Though there are no surviving examples of Viktor Hartmann’s vision of Gnomus, we know that the Gnome is thought to be an old, creepy nutcracker with large teeth brought to life. Some depictions include a little creature clumsily running with crooked legs. The oafish movements of the gnome are imagined in Mussorgsky’s movement through erratic, lurching tempi throughout the piece.

An excerpt of the gnome’s melody can be found here:

![Excerpt of Gnomus melody](image)

Key words:

- **Sempre vivo** - always lively
- **Meno vivo** - less lively
- **ff** - fortissimo, meaning very loud
- **sf** - subito forte, meaning suddenly loud
- **p** - piano, meaning soft
Activities

1. Gallery Walk

Have students create their own versions of what the gnome looks like. Is he friendly? Scary? Menacing? Large or small? Can you create a story of what he is doing? Set the pictures up in an art gallery format and invite parents and families to tour the classroom while the piece is playing in the background.

2. Movement Ideas

Brainstorm with students ways to create movements to model the actions of the gnome. Should movement be slow or quick? Have the students start and stop their movements to match the tempi of the piece. Acknowledge and discuss places in the music where the tempo shifts and how it affects the mood of the piece.

3. Storyboard Using the chart and pictures below, create a story about the gnome set to music. Use the following words:

- CHASE
- CREEP
- RUN
- SLITHER
- SCURRY
- SNEAK

Translate the words into other languages to include the languages spoken by your own students:

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<th>Haitian Creole</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Digital Art Created by Lina and Mya from Randolph High School.

SLITHER

SNEAK

CHASE

CREEPING

RUN

SCURRY