Promenade from Pictures at an Exhibition
By
Modest Mussorgsky (1839—1881)

Lesson Plans by Maria Doreste Velazquez and Eva Ostrovsky

Click here to watch the BSO perform this piece.

About the Composer

Modest Mussorgsky was a Russian composer and many of his works were inspired by Russian history, folklore and other national themes. He is one of The Five a group of Russian composers who were innovators of Russian music during the Romantic Period. He strove to have a unique Russian musical identity and deliberately tried to defy the established conventions of Western music.

About the Composition

Pictures at an Exhibition was written in remembrance of Mussorgsky’s friend, painter and architect Viktor Hartmann. Mussorgsky used a technique called sound painting to describe pictures using instruments and sound. It was originally composed for piano in 1874 and is a suite of 10 pieces. It was arranged for orchestra by Maurice Ravel in 1922, which is the version most recorded and performed. Promenade is the French word for walk or tour Mussorgsky begins his Pictures at an Exhibition with this fast walk around the gallery, and the piece reflects the changes in his mood while observing the different works of art.

Literacy Lesson: Create a written narrative based on the story of “Promenade”

1. Introduction
   - Create a path around the room
   - Without giving information about the piece, walk the path while listening to the piece
   - Based on their walk and the music they heard, have students guess the name of the piece
   - After sharing the reasoning behind their guesses, share the name of the piece
   - Present biography/social story about Mussorgsky and Pictures at an Exhibition
   - Listen to the piece again

2. Development
   - Have students listen to the piece again while thinking about their life experiences
**Movement Lesson:** Show recognition of melodic motif by creating and performing a matching motion

1. Introduction
   - Have students enter the room to the music played aloud. Students can move to the rhythm before taking their seats.

2. Development
   - Present the piece and the concept of melodic motif.
   - Ask students to create a movement that follows the melodic contour of the motif and mimics the act of examining a picture in a gallery, for example, clearly demonstrate a motion with their heads that shows they are looking from top to bottom of a picture.
   - To assess students' learning, play the song again and have students demonstrate the motion they created when they hear the motif.

**Instrument Families & Listening Map**

**Lesson Resources**
Click here for a [listening map](#)
Click here for a [printable instruments with Ravels orchestration](#)

1. Introduction
   - Teach or review the Instrument Families
   - Split the class into Woodwinds, Strings, and Brass

2. Development
   - Distribute the printable coloring instruments pictures so that students can color while listening to the piece. Listen to the piece again while showing the example listening map.
   - Have students raise their sheet when they hear their instrument.

**Interesting links**

- **BSO** brass plays rehearsal number 1 of Promenade
- Audio + [Full score](#) (Conductor: Fritz Reiner & Orchestra: The Chicago Symphony Orchestra)
- Video of score's orchestral: [https://youtu.be/SgBj9-5rRmganalysis](https://youtu.be/SgBj9-5rRmganalysis)
- IMSLP [Free sheet music of Ravel's Orchestration](#)