

The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Activity 3 **Pictures in Space (Art) and Time (Music)**

Teaching Objective Students will explore relationships between music and visual art.

Materials/Resources

- Paper
- Crayons or markers
- Accompanying Youth Concert CD, Tracks 3-7

Vocabulary

Promenade — a leisurely walk

Tuileries – a formal garden next to the Louvre (a famous museum) in Paris (Mussorgsky's piece suggests nursemaids and squabbling children)

Bydlo – a Polish oxcart –rolling on enormous wheel

Exhibition – public display of works of art or other items of interest

Excerpt – a short portion of a music, writing, etc.

Pre-Assessment Activity

Ask students to think of examples of pictures that are described in music — movies, TV, videos, etc. Choose an example familiar to most of the class and discuss what characteristics in the music suggest the visual image.

Teaching Sequence

1. Tell students one of the pieces they will hear the Dallas Symphony perform is *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky. One of the composer's best friends was the artist Viktor Hartmann. Hartmann died when he was only 39 years old, and Mussorgsky was heart broken. A mutual friend arranged a showing of Hartmann's paintings and drawings. *Pictures at an Exhibition* begins with a promenade— music that describes walking through the exhibition. This walking theme is repeated four more times in the piece. Many of the actual works of art Mussorgsky described in his music have been lost, but we have the titles, which give an idea of what the pictures may have looked like.
2. Tell students they will listen to excerpts from some of the short sections of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, then draw or write brief descriptions of what they think the music might represent. Let the class hear and respond to each excerpt before moving to the next.
3. After each listening/drawing experience, let students share their responses. Discuss what they heard in the music (loud/soft, fast/slow, high/low, what instruments were played, etc.) that inspired what they drew or wrote. Then tell the class the name of the original painting and discuss how Mussorgsky used music to describe it.

Culminating Activity

Challenge students to imagine they are composers. Display a picture and ask them to describe how the music might sound if they wrote a piece to describe the art.

Extension Activity

Choose a piece of music familiar to the students. Let them listen and draw pictures the music suggests to them. Mount the pictures in an exhibit and invite other classes to view it as the music is played.

Evaluation

Did student responses demonstrate an awareness of how visual art can inspire music?

TEKS Connections

English/Language Arts: 110.14b(18,29-30); 110.15b(16,27-28); 110.16b(27-28); 110.18b(16,26-27)
Music: 117.112(1A-C,6); 117.115(1A-C,6); 117.18(1A-C,6); 117.208(1A-C,5)