

Great Gate of Kiev from *Pictures at an Exhibition* – Creative Movement

National Music Standards (rev. 2014)

Performing – Interpret: Develop personal interpretations that consider creators' intent.

Present: Perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.

Learning Target

The student can work with others to create a visual representation of the music.

Lesson Plan

Materials:

Audio recording of Mussorgsky's Great Gate of Kiev from *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Visuals of town gates (SEE Resources list)

Gallery of Hartmann drawings (SEE Resources list)

10-minute plan

Warmup:

Play the Musical Detective game.

Listen to the first 30 seconds of the music. Students have partners. Ask each other these questions:

Where might you hear this music played?

What instruments are playing?

Is the tempo fast, medium or slow?

Is the texture THIN or THICK? (few instruments or many)

What country do you think this music comes from?

Share some student responses to each question.

Direct Instruction:

Modest Mussorgsky was a Russian composer who wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition* in 1874. He worked quickly on this music, writing ten pieces for solo piano in only six weeks' time. This music was based on artwork by Mussorgsky's friend, Victor Hartmann. Hartmann died suddenly leaving many friends surprised and sad so they planned an exhibition of Hartmann's works to honor his memory. Mussorgsky even loaned some of his own personal artwork by Hartmann for the exhibition.

To honor his friend, Mussorgsky wrote music to represent ten art works from the exhibition. He wrote a work called "Promenade" which provided the music for walking from one painting to the next. *Promenade* begins the entire work and is heard again two more times before the piece ends.

Mussorgsky's music did not become well-known until 1922, when a French composer named Maurice Ravel orchestrated the piano music for orchestra. Since that time, *Pictures at an Exhibition* has become one of Mussorgsky's most famous and beloved musical works.

While playing the music, show visuals of town gates from across the world (SEE Resources list).

Begin with Hartmann's art work of the gate. "The town leaders of Kiev, Russia, asked architects to submit drawings for a stone gate they wanted to build in honor of Czar Alexander II. This is the drawing that Victor Hartmann submitted." Show the location of Kiev on a world map.

30-minute plan

Guided practice:

Large-group creative movement

Teacher stands in front of class; students are scattered throughout room, each with a space around their body. Start music at 2' 5" (woodwind choir section) and let it play for about 1 minute. Teacher leads students in sustained, graceful movements with arms and body to match the mood of the music. Students respond as though they are the teacher's mirror image.

With a partner, the students take turns being the leader of the mirror movement. Begin the music where you left off when the teacher was leader (3' 5") and let the students create movement to match the music. As they are moving, remind them to use high/medium/low levels and to use other parts of the body besides only the arms. **Make sure the partners switch leaders.**

Movement suggestions for students:

- * begin at a low level, end at a high level
- * begin close together, end farther apart
- * opposite of partner – if your partner is at a high level, you are at a low level
- * large movements, small movements

Independent practice:

Small-group creative movement

In small groups (5-6 students), design a great gate

Prompts to spur student creativity:

What shape? Tall and narrow, wide and short?

Will it have something on top? Flag, bell tower, statue...

Will it be stationary or have moving parts?

Once the music starts, how will everyone get into position that fits the mood/character of the music? (no talking; use flowing or grand movement)

Guidelines for student group creations:

- * 10 minutes to design gate (practice 6 minutes with no music, then 4 minutes with music)
- * 3 minutes to practice getting into position in the character of the music
- * every student participates in the planning and performance

Performance

Each group presents individually with music

Large-group performance when all groups perform simultaneously

Assessment

Informal and written self-assessment

Volunteers share what they liked about other groups' gates

Written Assessment

a) I participated in the designing of my group's gate. Yes / no

b) One thing my group did well:

c) If we worked together again, one thing I would change is:

Resources

Pictures at an Exhibition – Wikipedia. This includes a gallery of Victor Hartmann’s art work used in Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictures_at_an_Exhibition

Town Gates – Bing images

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=town+gates&qvvt=town+gates&qvvt=town+gates&qvvt=town+gates&FORM=IGRE>