

Modest Mussorgsky

Lesson Plan for The Great Gate at Kiev from *Pictures at an Exhibition*

1. Standards/Performance Indicators
 - NYS Standard #1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts
 - NYS Standard #3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
2. Objectives:
 - Students will explore various structures for composition
 - Melody/Theme
 - Use of scales
 - Contrast
 - Tone color
 - Students will relate movement to various structures of composition
3. Materials: Music recording, audio playing device, bulletin board
4. Listening Repertoire: "The Great Gate at Kiev" from *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky
5. Procedures
 - Assign students to cooperative groups
 - Inform students that they are to create "buildings" using only their bodies. These buildings should have a main idea, some details, and a means by which imaginary people could go up and down in the building.
 - Allow time for the students to work out their ideas. This would be the noisy part! During this time challenge the groups to determine details using questions such as "where are the windows?" or "what will you put on the top of the building?" or "what is your building made of?" or "What is happening inside this window? What goes on in this building?"
 - When the students are done, give them time to present their creations to the others in the class. Take pictures of each creation and post on the bulletin board along with label of the ideas such as "these are the windows" or "this is the bell tower" or "these are stairs"
 - Using their pictures as inspiration, begin to relate their ideas to musical ideas. Their "main idea" becomes "melodic theme." Their stairs, elevators or whatever else they come up with become "scales." Their "building materials" become "tone color."
 - NOTE: For the following steps, stop the recording after each section. The times given are approximations.
 - Play the first theme from "The Great Gate at Kiev" for the students (about the first 15 seconds) this is the main idea or theme of the music. Ask the students to predict what may come next. (The theme is repeated with variations so the "building" would not be too small!)
 - Play the rest of the first section (up to about one minute) to see if any predictions came to pass.

- The softer sections can be "windows." What do they suppose is going on in the first window (the next 30 seconds)? How do they know? How did the music help you come to that idea?
- The theme occurs again, how are people in this building getting up and down inside? (use of scales)
- At 2:06 we have another window. Does this window look into the same room or somewhere different? Stop this at around 2:35, before the chimes.
- Check student pictures for their details then listen to the next section. Mussorgsky adds bells to his structure. Are there other details he adds? Wavy lines? A theme from the past (the "Promenade")?
- The theme comes back at 3:48. Do the students recognize it?
- Ask the students how does Mussorgsky feel about his building at the end? How can you tell? Student responses will vary, but should relate to what they have heard.

6. Indicators of Success

- Play through the piece in its entirety. Do the students have an understanding of how the music is constructed?
- The lesson is successful if students can discuss the music using musical terminology to relate to the structures in both the music and the building it is supposed to represent.

7. Follow-up

- Students can listen to the entire work again and draw pictures of the building that the music inspires
- Students can use the music as a movement guide as they reconstruct their body-buildings
- Art classes can look at pictures of towers or other unique constructions that may relate to the music. There is a wealth of Russian architecture the students may enjoy.
- If your PE teachers happen to be teaching gymnastics/tumbling, they may want to also build human towers
- ELA teachers can read *Pictures at an Exhibition* which is a picture book by Anna Harwell Celenza and illustrated by Joann Kitchel. It tells the story behind the Mussorgsky inspiration and composition.

8. Prior Knowledge

- Students should be familiar with scales
- While not necessary, students should know the theme from the Promenade movement

Modest Mussorgsky



Portrait by Repins

Born:	In Karevo, Russia on March 21, 1839
Died:	St. Petersburg, Russia on March 28, 1881
Education:	Cadet School of the guards
Marriage:	Never married
Occupation:	Civil Servant
Compositions:	<i>Boris Godunov</i> <i>Khovanshchina</i> <i>Song Cycles: The Nursery, Sunless Songs and Dances of Death</i>
Noted as:	One of the Russian Five who promoted Russian folk music. Others were Balakirev, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Borodin
The music you will hear at the concert	Pictures at an Exhibition – Great Gate of Kiev