

Prelude

75
years

Alive through great music!

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION • OCTOBER 5-7, 2018

MASTERWORKS #1:

The orchestra as a metaphor for community: the multi-colored and multi-textured voices of many different instruments create the power and splendor of a majestic symphony experience.



Modest Mussorgsky

Modest Mussorgsky, composer of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, *Night on Bald Mountain* (made famous by the movie, *Fantasia*), and the well-known opera, *Boris Godunov*, could have easily remained in obscurity, virtually unknown to modern audiences.

Thanks to his dear friend and composer, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who posthumously completed and prepared Mussorgsky's works for publication, Mussorgsky's compositions were preserved for modern audiences. But perhaps the greatest debt is owed to Maurice Ravel, whose brilliant orchestrations transformed *Pictures at an Exhibition*, originally composed for solo piano, into one of the "warhorses" of the orchestral repertoire.

Mussorgsky was born in 1839, and first learned music from his mother, an excellent pianist. Although a member of the "Mighty Five," (a group of Russian composers which also included Alexander Borodin, Mily Balakirev, Cesar Cui, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, with the common goal to create a nationalist school of Russian music.)ⁱⁱ Mussorgsky did not live long enough to fulfill the promise of his talent.

After the death of his mother in 1865ⁱⁱⁱ, 26-year old Mussorgsky moved into the small apartment of his dear friend Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Depressed by his mother's passing, Mussorgsky succumbed to drinking binges that often lasted for days or even weeks. He would disappear and then show up on a friend's doorstep, physically ill.^{iv} When his flat-mate, Rimsky-Korsakov, married in 1872, Modest's alcohol consumption seemed to intensify.^v It soon became evident that Mussorgsky was an alcoholic, and the addiction plagued him. Throughout his career, Mussorgsky would habitually compose in a "white-hot rush," followed by extended episodes of drinking.^{vi}

Hobbled by drinking and depression, Modest was never able to leverage his musical achievements into financial success. With never-ending financial difficulties, he made ends meet by working as a civil servant in the Russian Ministry of Communications.^{vii}

In 1873, he suffered another loss when a friend, Victor Hartmann, died of a brain aneurysm at the age of 39.^{viii}

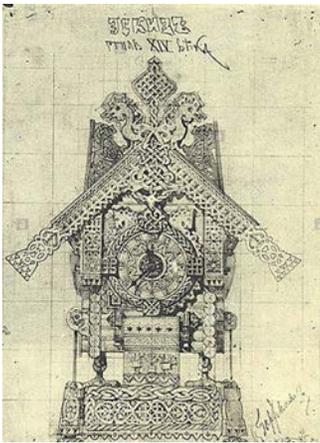
Hartmann was a prominent architect whose drawings, stage designs, paintings and sketches were placed on display as a memorial.



Hut on Two Legs

continued on next page...





Victor Hartmann –
Drawing for Clock

nonpayment of rent.^x A friend took him in, and one anecdote reports that the composer, wild-eyed, tragically declared, “There is nothing left but begging,” and then suffered a series of alcoholic seizures which led to his hospitalization.^{xi} He died within a month, just after his 42nd birthday, from complications due to long-term alcoholism.^{xiii}

At the time of Mussorgsky’s death in 1881, *Pictures* had never been performed or published. His long-time friend, Rimsky-Korsakov, found his manuscripts and revised Mussorgsky’s major works, including *Boris Godunov*, *Night on Bald Mountain* and large sections of *Pictures*.^{xiii} *Pictures* was finally printed in 1886.^{xiv}

The work remained relatively unknown outside of Russia until 1922, when French composer, Maurice Ravel, arranged it for orchestra. Today, the orchestral arrangement is arguably more well-known than the original,^{xv} a tribute to the important role of a gifted orchestrator and the compelling beauty of symphonic music.

Béla Bartók, the Hungarian composer, pianist, ethnomusicologist and teacher, emigrated to

Bela Bartok



Mussorgsky visited the exhibit, and to honor Hartmann, composed the fiendishly difficult suite for solo piano, *Pictures at an Exhibition*.^{ix} Sadly, Mussorgsky’s emotional and physical health continued to decline. By 1880, he lost his government job and was eventually evicted

the United States in 1940, as Nazi Germany extended its sphere of influence throughout Europe.^{xvi} His request for asylum in this country was granted, and his appointment to the faculty at Columbia University added immeasurably to the richness of our culture.^{xvii} A brilliant orchestrator, his *Concerto for Orchestra* was composed in 1943, while living in the United States.^{xviii}

Orchestration is the art of creating a symphonic work. It alters a piece for solo instrument by adding the colors and textures of many different instruments.^{xix} Both Ravel and Bartók are recognized among the best orchestrators of the 20th century.^{xx} In modern times, orchestration is essential for all film, television and theater music.^{xxi} Broadway composers routinely turn over their creations to specialists, who work out the orchestration.^{xxii} By adding essential depth and different voices, the orchestrator creates a sound that is lush, full, sweeping and compelling.

On our masterworks stage this weekend, we present two thrilling orchestrations, one created by Ravel, who magnified Mussorgsky’s original work and the other composed by Bartók while an immigrant in the United States. As an orchestra whose voice is shaped by diverse instruments, we recognize the beauty of a community enriched by many voices. This concert, and the Naturalization Ceremony to be held on October 6th on our stage, honors and joyfully celebrates the enhancement of our community with brand new citizens from so many different countries.

Join us!

Please join the Hartford Symphony Orchestra for a stirring performance of **Pictures at an Exhibition, October 5 - 7, 2018**, and celebrate our 75th season with the glorious sound of two great orchestral masterworks.

On October 6th, we invite all Saturday night ticketholders to join HSO’s second Annual Naturalization Ceremony. Please arrive by 6:30 to participate and welcome the newest citizens to our community!



WONDERING HOW THE MUSIC WILL SOUND?

Try HSO'S Listening Guide, with links to the pieces you'll hear on our concert stage – and more!

Watch and hear Evgeny Kissin perform the original solo piano version of *Pictures At an Exhibition*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH_Rsl7fjok

With the opening Promenade featuring legendary Principal Trumpet Adolph "Bud" Herseth, watch and hear Sir Georg Solti conduct the Chicago Symphony in Ravel's orchestration of *Pictures*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syLm-9JyhuY>

Another version was orchestrated by Leopold Stokowski, who chose to use violins instead of the solo trumpet to open the work. Can you hear other differences? It can be heard at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHstRWEBio0>

Following a brief opening explanation from the Maestro, Sir Georg Solti conducts the Chicago Symphony in Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* in a live performance in Budapest:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQb3VUljpa0>

To understand the power of orchestration, try this:

Listen to the brilliant piano version of "The Rumble" from Bernstein's *West Side Story* performed by Katia and Marielle Labèque:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3HxtAVfVvc>

For contrast, listen to the orchestral version of the same piece from the Broadway cast recording:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N44z1b1qGNc>

Fun? Next, try comparing "Mambo" also from *West Side Story*.

Listen to the electrifying version by pianists Anderson & Roe, who performed with the Hartford Symphony last season:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8v-TIX87P0>

And then, watch the most joyful orchestral version as Gustavo Dudamel conducts the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYvEvP2cmdk>

RICHARD P. GARMANY FUND
 at
 Hartford Foundation
 FOR PUBLIC GIVING
 "Together for good!"

75th Anniversary Season
 Lead Sponsor



75th Anniversary
 Season Supporting
 Sponsor

The Edward C. & Ann T.
 ROBERTS
 FOUNDATION

Masterworks Series
 Sponsor

Did you borrow this Prelude? Get your own free copy!

Whether you're a ticket buyer, donor, curious about the music, or know someone who is, just send an email to rsovrnsky@hartfordsymphony.org. We'll make sure you receive *Prelude* by email, in advance of each HSO Masterworks concert!

Casey's
Classics

Want the best recordings of the pieces you'll experience on the concert program? Coleman Casey, HSO's dear friend, Director Emeritus and beloved in-house audiophile, offers his recording recommendations of selections featured in our upcoming Masterworks Concert.

There are countless recordings of the Mussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*, but two in particular have withstood the test of time: the recordings by Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic (DG) and by Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (RCA/SONY). Both are in stunning analog sound, so memorable that even repeated hearings never wear out their freshness.

Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra* is best heard in either of two classic recordings: that of Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (RCA/SONY) and of Sir Georg Solti with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (DECCA). Both Hungarian conductors seem to possess this great score within their DNA, and the recording engineers did both performances proud with great detail, depth and range.



REFERENCES

1. <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Modest-Mussorgsky>
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. <http://www.classical.net/music/comp.1st/mussorgsky.php>
5. <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Modest-Mussorgsky>
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. <http://www.favorite-classical-composers.com/modest-mussorgsky.html>
9. <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Pictures-at-an-Exhibition>
10. <http://www.classical.net/music/comp.1st/mussorgsky.php>
11. <http://www.favorite-classical-composers.com/modest-mussorgsky.html>
12. <http://www.classical.net/music/comp.1st/mussorgsky.php>
13. Ibid.
14. <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Pictures-at-an-Exhibition>
15. <http://www.cumbria.ov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/6077/6078/6753/42072154646.pdf>
16. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bela-Bartok>
17. Ibid
18. Ibid
19. <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/Putting-It-Together-The-Art-Of-Arranging-and-Orchestrating/>
20. <http://kennethwoods.net/blog1/2015/04/19/the-official-definitive-guide-to-the-greatestorchestrators-of-all-time/comment-page-1/>
21. <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/Putting-It-Together-The-Art-Of-Arranging-and-Orchestrating/>
22. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/12/arts/music-view-composers-who-don-t-do-it-all.html>