

Eighth Note Publications

Pictures at an Exhibition Orchestral Excerpts for the Brass Section

Modeste Mussorgsky
Performance Suggestions by Fraser Linklater

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Mussorgsky was one of a group of 19th century Russian nationalist composers dubbed “the mighty five.” They endeavored to imbue their music with a spirit of Russian history and folk music tradition. Mussorgsky wrote two operas (*Khovanshchina* and *Boris Godunov*), the symphonic fantasy *A Night on Bald Mountain*, and three song cycles (*Without Sun*, *The Nursery*, and *Songs and Dances of Death*).

When one of Mussorgsky’s closest friends, the artist Viktor Hartmann, died suddenly in 1873 a memorial exhibition of his paintings was organized the following year. Viewing the works of his departed friend, Mussorgsky was moved to write a tribute: a series of musical interpretations of the paintings, hence *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Originally written for piano solo, the music has been transcribed and arranged for all manner of instruments. However, by far the most famous is the orchestral transcription completed by the French composer Maurice Ravel. This version of “Pictures” was premiered on October 19, 1922 in Paris with Serge Koussevitzky conducting. A master of brilliant orchestral colour, Ravel scored his version of Mussorgsky’s music for triple woodwinds, harp and the standard strings, as well as the following:

INSTRUMENTATION

- 4 horns in F
- 3 trumpets in C
- 3 trombones (2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone)
- 1 bass tuba
- timpani (2 drums needed)
- percussion (bass drum, crash cymbals, tam-tam, triangle, chimes)

PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

PROMENADE

Tempo: quarter note = approximately 88 to 96

- bar 3 — This is all about matching the style of the first trumpet player. Most of this excerpt is unison rhythms so the note lengths and articulations must agree.
- rehearsal 5 — Continue to match articulations and make sure that everyone unifies the shift from *tenuto* to *marcato* part way through the 2nd bar. Be sure that the octaves in the first trumpet and first trombone line up exactly. There should also be a character of finality to the last few notes of the promenade.

THE CATACOMBS

Tempo: quarter note = approximately 60 to 66

- 72 — This is very solemn, dark music. To achieve this effect, try using a soft “DOO” articulation but with lots of “weight” of air behind every note. Be sure that the octaves in the first three bars line up and go for exaggerated dynamic contrasts. Breathing together as a section and watching one another will help ensure precise beginnings of notes. The eighth note resolutions on the downbeats should be very *tenuto* and full.
- 1 bar before 73 — As needed, have the horns try balancing and tuning the open 5ths at this bar and the final diminished chord of this movement on the open instrument before playing it stopped. Also be aware that horns will likely have to increase their volume one dynamic level to compensate when playing stopped. Finally, notice at the bar before 73 that the 4th horn is written “muted” rather than stopped; this is because the note is too low to be effectively played stopped. A stopping mute could be considered as an alternative here for the low horn.
- 7th bar of 73 — The solo trumpet should have an almost mournful quality; experiment playing this both with and without vibrato. Also try to “emerge” from within the horn sound and then sink back into it at the end.
- 1 bar before 74 — The dynamic contrast here should be startling. Listen and match the length of the quarter note leading into rehearsal 74, which should have a downbeat “feel” to it, even though it’s on beat three. Remember that the quarter note is in octaves while the downbeat is a triad – judge your dynamics accordingly.
- 3rd bar of 74 — The horn section should carefully pace this *decrescendo* – maintain good section balance and don’t get too soft too soon!

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COST: \$30.00
DURATION: 3:40

DIFFICULTY RATING: Medium-Difficult
Brass Choir (3.4.3.0.1.Perc)

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THE GREAT GATE OF KIEV

Tempo: half note = approximately 69 to 76

- **103** — Blend, balance and majestic quality of sound are paramount here. Support the first trumpet melody, do not compete with it. Strive for richness of tone rather than volume. It is only one *forte*, and there is a long way to go! Also, think about phrase shape – even though all the notes are long, try to play lines of music rather than individual pitches.
- 5 bars before **105** — Remember that *crescendo* generally means to start softer so the dynamic change is more dramatic. 2 bars before **105** can almost be a *subito piano* effect.
- **105** — The effect here needs to be a rich, vibrant wall of sound. A team effort will produce greater musical results than individual “heroes.” Remember Jay Friedman’s dictum: “When everyone tries to be heard, no one is heard; when no one tries to be heard, everyone is heard.” Notice also that there are grace notes in the timpani starting at rehearsal **105**. These should be played before the beat and should be clearly heard, not swallowed up within the overall texture.
- **119** — Match the length of the *staccato* half notes in the horns; the music should feel one beat per bar here – don’t drag!
- **120** — The bass trombone and tuba must work together as a team to match intonation, articulation and style on these half notes, which should be played with a very full sound.
- 3rd bar of **120** — Feel the half note subdivision through this bar in order to place the dotted half notes accurately in time.
- 1 bar before **121** — There is often a pulling back of the time here in order to enhance the massive, majestic quality of the last statement of the theme at rehearsal **121**.
- **121** — Balance the antiphonal percussion effects here between the triangle, bass drum and crash cymbals at **121** and chimes and tam-tam a bar later. Do not obliterate the triangle or chime sounds! Also percussionists, remember to be kind to the brass section who are working very hard at this point!!
- 2nd bar of **121** — Maximum sonority and *sostenuto* is required from the brass here. Work out the breathing and releases of notes together.
- 5 bars before the end — The percussion can increase through the roll here, almost to the point of dominating the brass by bar 182. final bar — Listen to unify the length of the final note, which should ring in the hall. Remember, we are after beautiful sounds throughout — there should be nothing forced or ugly about any of this music.

GENERAL PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

Articulations: Unify articulations by speaking some of the passages with a unified syllable, such as “DOE” or “TOE”.

Tone Quality: Try blowing air patterns – without the instruments – to establish the “feel” of correct air flow. Then apply this air flow feel to the instruments.

Intonation: Sing selected passages with accurate pitch, either to a neutral syllable or to solfege. Also, build troublesome chords starting with the instruments that play the root of the chord, then adding the fifth and finally the third.

Precision: Listen to breathe together on initial entrances. Clapping portions of the excerpt is often a very telling way to establish precision, since a slight variation in time feel or exactness produces “rain on the roof” instead of a precise “smack.”

Balance: Listen for moving lines and be certain they can be easily heard. Generally speaking, timpani rolls should be slightly subdued, while single timpani strokes should be slightly emphasized. In octave passages, balance and tune to the lower octave.

Style: As always, there is no substitute for having the “sound in your head”. It would be good practice to listen and compare several different recordings of this excerpt with respect to style.

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PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Orchestral Excerpts for the Brass Section

Modeste Mussorgsky
(1839-1881)

Orchestrated by Maurice Ravel

Performance Suggestions by Fraser Linklater

PROMENADE - Beginning

Allegro giusto, nel modo russo; senza allegrezza, ma poco sostenuto

The musical score is arranged in ten staves, each with a specific instrument label on the left. The staves are: Horn 1 in F, Horn 2 in F, Horn 3 in F, Horn 4 in F, Trumpet 1 in C (with B♭ part provided), Trumpet 2 in C (with B♭ part provided), Trumpet 3 in C (with B♭ part provided), Trombone 1 (with Bass clef part provided), Trombone 2 (with Bass clef part provided), and Tuba. The score is divided into four measures. The first two measures are marked with a 5/4 time signature, and the last two with a 6/4 time signature. The key signature is one flat (B♭). The dynamic marking *f* (forte) is placed below the notes in the third measure of each staff. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'PREVIEW ONLY' is centered across the middle of the page, overlapping the trumpet and trombone staves.

1

Hn 1

Hn 2

Hn 3

Hn 4

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Tpt 3

Trbn 1

Trbn 2

B Trbn

Tuba

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Musical score for Pictures at an Exhibition, page 3. The score includes staves for Hn 1, Hn 2, Hn 3, Hn 4, Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Tpt 3, Trbn 1, Trbn 2, B Trbn, and Tuba. The music is in 5/4 time, with a key signature of two flats. A large 'PREVIEW ONLY' watermark is overlaid on the score.

PROMENADE - Ending

5

Musical score for 'PROMENADE - Ending', page 4. The score is in 6/4 time and features the following instruments: Hn 1, Hn 2, Hn 3, Hn 4, Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Tpt 3, Trbn 1, Trbn 2, B Trbn, and Tuba. The music begins with a rest for the first two measures, followed by a series of notes. The first measure of the melody is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. A large 'PREVIEW ONLY' watermark is overlaid across the middle of the page.

72 THE CATACOMBS
Largo

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top section consists of four Horn parts (Hn 1-4) in treble clef, three Trumpet parts (Tpt 1-3) in treble clef, and three Trombone parts (Trbn 1-2, B Trbn) in bass clef. The Tuba and T.T. (Tympani) parts are at the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Largo'. The score includes various dynamic markings: *p* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), and hairpins for crescendo and decrescendo. A large 'PREVIEW ONLY' watermark is overlaid across the middle of the page.

Hn 1
ff *pp* *ff* *ff*

Hn 2
ff *pp* *ff* *ff*

Hn 3
ff *pp* *ff* *ff*

Hn 4
ff *pp* *ff* *ff*
muted open

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Tpt 3

Trbn 1
ff *ppp* *ff* *ff*

Trbn 2
ff *ppp* *ff* *ff*

B Trbn
ff *ppp* *ff* *ff*

Tuba
ff *ppp* *ff* *ff*

T.T.

PREVIEW ONLY

Hn 1 *p* *pp* *ff*

Hn 2 *p* *pp* *ff*

Hn 3 *p* *pp* *ff*

Hn 4 *p* *pp* *ff*

Tpt 1 *mf* *p*

Tpt 2

Tpt 3

Trbn 1 *ff*

Trbn 2

B Trbn *ff*

Tuba *ff*

T.T.

PREVIEW ONLY

Musical score for Pictures at an Exhibition, page 8. The score includes parts for four Horns (Hn 1-4), three Trumpets (Tpt 1-3), three Trombones (Trbn 1-3), and a Tuba (Tuba). A Tam-tam (T.T.) part is also present. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). A large 'PREVIEW ONLY' watermark is overlaid on the score.

THE GREAT GATE OF KIEV - Beginning

Allegro alla breve. Maestoso. Con grandezza.

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Hn 1:** Horn 1, Treble clef, *f*
- Hn 2:** Horn 2, Treble clef, *f*
- Hn 3:** Horn 3, Treble clef, *f*
- Hn 4:** Horn 4, Treble clef, *f*
- Tpt 1:** Trumpet 1, Treble clef, *f*
- Tpt 2:** Trumpet 2, Treble clef, *f*
- Tpt 3:** Trumpet 3, Treble clef, *f*
- Trbn 1:** Trombone 1, Bass clef, *f*
- Trbn 2:** Trombone 2, Bass clef, *f*
- B Trbn:** Bass Trombone, Bass clef, *f*
- Tuba:** Tuba, Bass clef, *f*
- Timp:** Timpani, Bass clef, *f*
- B.D.:** Bass Drum, *f*

A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is centered across the middle of the page, overlapping the Tpt 3 and Trbn 1 staves.

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The top four staves are for Horns 1 through 4, all in treble clef. The next three staves are for Trumpets 1, 2, and 3, also in treble clef. The following two staves are for Trombone 1 and 2, in alto clef. The Bass Trombone part is in bass clef. The Tuba part is in bass clef. The Timpani part is in bass clef. The Bass Drum part is represented by a single staff with a square symbol for the drum head. The score consists of eight measures. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is centered across the middle of the page, overlapping the Trumpet and Trombone parts.

This musical score page, numbered 105, contains the following parts and dynamics:

- Horn 1-4 (Hn 1-4):** Dynamics range from *mf* to *ff*.
- Trumpet 1-3 (Tpt 1-3):** Dynamics range from *p* to *ff*.
- Trumpet 1-2 (Trbn 1-2):** Dynamics range from *p* to *ff*.
- Bass Trumpet (B Trbn):** Dynamics range from *p* to *ff*.
- Tuba:** Dynamics range from *f* to *ff*.
- Timpani (Timp):** Dynamics range from *f* to *ff*.
- Cymbals (C.C.):** Dynamics range from *ff* to *ff*.
- Bass Drum (B.D.):** Dynamics range from *ff* to *ff*.

A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is centered across the middle of the page.

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Musical score for Pictures at an Exhibition, page 12. The score includes parts for four Horns (Hn 1-4), three Trumpets (Tpt 1-3), three Trombones (Trbn 1-3), Tuba, Timpani (Timp), Cymbals (C.C.), and Bass Drum (B.D.). The music is in a key with two flats and a 3/4 time signature. A large 'PREVIEW ONLY' watermark is overlaid on the score.

THE GREAT GATE OF KIEV - Ending

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. It features the following parts:

- Horn 1 (Hn 1):** Treble clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Horn 2 (Hn 2):** Treble clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Horn 3 (Hn 3):** Treble clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Horn 4 (Hn 4):** Treble clef, 3/2 time signature. Part is silent throughout.
- Trumpet 1 (Tpt 1):** Treble clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Trumpet 2 (Tpt 2):** Treble clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Trumpet 3 (Tpt 3):** Treble clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Trombone 1 (Trbn 1):** Bass clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Trombone 2 (Trbn 2):** Bass clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Bass Trombone (B Trbn):** Bass clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Tuba:** Bass clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.
- Timpani (Timp):** Bass clef, 3/2 time signature. Part begins with a *mf cresc.* dynamic marking.

A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is overlaid across the center of the page, spanning the Trumpet and Trombone staves.

120

poco a poco rallentando

Hn 1

Hn 2

Hn 3

Hn 4

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Tpt 3

Trbn 1

Trbn 2

B Trbn

Tuba

Timp

C.C.

B.D.

f cresc.

f cresc.

PREVIEW ONLY

This musical score page, titled "PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION pg. 16", contains the following parts and notation:

- Woodwinds:** Four Horns (Hn 1-4) in treble clef, three Trumpets (Tpt 1-3) in treble clef, and three Trombones (Trbn 1-3) in bass clef. The Trombone parts include a Bass Trombone (B Trbn) and a Tuba part.
- Brass:** The Trombone section (Trbn 1-3) and the Tuba part.
- Percussion:** Timpani (Timp), Chimes, Triangle (Tri.), Conga/Congas (C.C.), Bass Drum (B.D.), and Tom-Tom (T.T.).

The score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is centered across the middle of the page. The notation includes various musical symbols such as accents (^), slurs, and dynamic markings (v).

This image shows a page of a musical score for the piece "Pictures at an Exhibition" by Modest Mussorgsky, page 17. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are: Hn 1, Hn 2, Hn 3, Hn 4, Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Tpt 3, Trbn 1, Trbn 2, B Trbn, Tuba, Timp, Chimes, Tri., C.C., B.D., and T.T. The music is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW ONLY" is centered across the middle of the page, overlapping the trumpet and trombone staves. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like "v." (forte).

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