four-note motif. Listen as Beethoven uses that simple idea in all sorts of different ways: stringing several versions of it in a row or stacking it up on top of itself, extending or abbreviating it, bringing it into the foreground or pushing it into the background, using one statement of it to punctuate another, etc. Every section of the movement seems to develop as a natural outgrowth of that little four-note phrase.

As in most symphonies of Beethoven’s time, the second movement is slow. Many slow movements of that era are songlike in melody and construction, and this one is no exception. Two gentle, singable tunes alternate through the movement: the first has a lilting quality and finishes with the winds making a beautiful “sigh”; the second has a more steady and noble tone. These themes are varied each time they appear with more and more elaborate decoration by the strings.

The third movement is called Scherzo, which means “joke.” (In some versions it might be called “Allegro.”) It was traditional for third movements of symphonies to be rather fast and light, and they almost always took the form of either a minuet (a light dance in a meter of 3–4) or scherzo (an energetic, rhythmically driven piece, also often in 3–4). This particular scherzo, however, is uncharacteristically dark and heavy. In many ways, its main theme is more of a march than a scherzo. However, the middle section, with its scurrying strings, captures something of the traditional spirit of a scherzo. Notice that the marchlike music is based on a rhythm that is essentially the same as the four-note phrase from the first movement. This rhythm appears in all four movements and helps tie the piece together as a whole. The prominent way it is used in this third movement makes sure that the audience can hear the relationship.

Instead of the traditional break between movements, Beethoven writes the third movement so that it leads directly into the fourth movement without any pause. This is another way in which he indicates that he is thinking of the symphony as one large unified piece, and not as four disconnected movements. The fourth movement is triumphant in spirit. By connecting the movements in this way, Beethoven creates the effect that the triumph of the final movement is a resolution to the dark, ominous quality of the preceding movements. To make this effect even stronger, Beethoven puts a little reminder of the third movement into the fourth, just before the ending. This emphasizes the way that the triumphant finale “answers” the earlier movement.

The symphony is often discussed as being representative of man’s struggle with (and ultimate triumph over) Fate. This is accomplished through repetition of the insistent motif from the first movement. Interpretations of this sort were extremely popular in the 19th century.

Modest Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition

Until the second half of the 19th century, Russia had no real classical music tradition of its own, and Russian composers generally wrote in styles modeled after the great German composers. In the 1860s, five major Russian composers formed a group (nicknamed the “Mighty Handful,” after the five fingers of the hand) that was dedicated to creating a truly Russian style of classical music that would not be as derivative of the music of western Europe. The most original and noteworthy of these five was Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881). While other
II. Listening and Understanding

Teaching Idea
Pictures of Mussorgsky show that he was a large man, weighing nearly 300 pounds. The theme in Pictures at an Exhibition, stated over and over again, suggests a very large man walking along. Without specifically mentioning this to students, have them walk to the music. Then ask how a person who walks to such a “ponderous” movement might look (or what his or her size might be).

Teaching Idea
Once students understand the premise of the piece and have had the titles of the individual movements explained to them, have them draw what they imagine the pictures to look like. Some editions of the score include pictures similar to those that inspired the music. (The original pictures have been lost.) Some of these are also available online. You can show them to students, but only after they have created their own versions. Ask students how the composer depicts these images with musical sounds.

members of the “Mighty Handful” attempted to create the Russian sound by using melodies from Russian folk songs, Mussorgsky did not borrow any actual melodies, but adapted his compositional style to have audible similarities of harmony and rhythm to the style of Russian folk music. His compositions do indeed sound somehow “Russian,” even though they are completely original.

Mussorgsky did not receive much training as a composer, and as a result, his music is not always particularly polished. On the other hand, many people feel that the raw and sometimes surprising sounds that he composed only enhance the appeal of his works and contribute to the sense that they are somehow as native to Russia as its folk music.

Mussorgsky’s greatest achievement is his opera Boris Godunov (1874) but far better known are two other works—Night on Bald Mountain (1867) (which many people know from the memorable sequence in the film Fantasia), and Pictures at an Exhibition. In 1874, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by the Russian artist Victor Hartmann was held in Moscow. Hartmann was a close friend of Mussorgsky’s and had been attempting to do for the visual arts what Mussorgsky and the “Mighty Handful” wanted to do for music—create a Russian style that did not depend on foreign influences. Mussorgsky attended the exhibition and was inspired to depict several of the artworks in musical form. The work he composed not only represents these works but also the person who is viewing them. This helps tie the unrelated images into a more cohesive whole structured around the idea of the exhibition.

Mussorgsky originally wrote Pictures at an Exhibition for piano, but in 1924, the French composer Maurice Ravel arranged the music for orchestra. It is in the orchestrated form that the work is most often heard.

As you play the piece for your students, stop and discuss the items below.

1. “Gnomus” (The Gnome)
   The image is of a threatening and grotesque dwarf.
   Promenade
   The viewer quietly walks onward to a reprise of the Promenade theme.

2. “Il Vecchio Castello” (The Old Castle)
   This picture depicts a night scene of an Italian castle, with a singer standing in the foreground. The music, in imitation of Italian folk music, is mysterious and shifting, appropriate to a night setting. Eventually the song drifts away into the distance. Listen for Ravel’s rare orchestral use of the saxophone.
   Promenade
   Another brief reprise of the Promenade, this one is more forceful than before.

3. “Tuileries” (Famous Garden in Paris)
   The scene portrays children at play in the park having an argument. The sounds of the children are depicted quite literally: the opening figure mimics the universal taunting melody of “nyah-nyah!” which is interspersed with quick, light, bubbling figures that sound very much like children’s giggling laughter. Wind instruments (flutes, clarinets, piccolos) are used to depict the children.
4. **“Bydlo”**
   This movement portrays an image of a huge, heavy Polish ox-wagon, making its lumbering way down the road. Listen to the way Mussorgsky uses a steady, rocking figure in the bass to give a sense of the wagon's weight.
   - **Promenade**
     This version of the Promenade begins quite tentatively—perhaps something has troubled the viewer. However, the next picture will probably lighten his spirits; we hear a brief preview of it before the final notes of this movement.

5. **“Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells”**
   The original drawing that inspired this movement was of whimsical “unhatched egg” costumes for a ballet. The music imagines a comical dance of chickens and eggs, using chirping sounds that imitate the actual sounds of chicks. Clarinets are used to depict the chickens’ chirping sounds.

6. **“Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle”**
   Sometimes called “The Rich Jew and the Poor Jew,” this movement is a response to two contrasting portraits—one of a rich businessman, and the other of a shivering beggar in the street. The imposing and severe theme of the rich man, and the chattering desperation of the beggar, are heard first separately and then combined.

7. **“Limoges: The Marketplace”**
   In this scene, women argue in a bustling French marketplace. The frantic and constant movement of the music captures the sense of the endless activity of the marketplace. The piece seems to capture the cries of the different sellers and combines them in a progressively more chaotic and surprising way, each interrupting the previous.

8. **“Catacombae: Sepulchrum Romanum”**
   In this drawing, the artist himself is seen in the Roman catacombs in Paris, an underground system of tunnels and burial chambers with skulls stacked on the ground nearby. Ominous chords capture the gloom and power of the scene.
   - **“Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua” (Speaking to the Dead in a Dead Language)**
     Mussorgsky explained this movement as representing his reaction to the drawing of the catacombs. In the drawing, the artist can be seen examining ancient skulls. Mussorgsky envisioned this as a sort of conversation between the living and the dead, and he is prompted to his own thoughts on death. The Promenade theme returns, but altered, as though seen through the murk of the catacombs. The whole piece is colored by shifting chords reflecting thoughts of mortality.

9. **“The Hut on Fowls’ Legs”**
   This movement is also known as “Baba Yaga.” Baba Yaga was a witch from Russian folklore who lived in a hut that could walk on the legs of a bird. Her hut not only had a bird’s legs but also could fly, aided by the blood of victims who were crushed when the house landed. Students should be able to identify what is going on in this piece, based on a description of the hut and what it represents. The pounding, rhythmic opening notes suggest a giant bird, bounding on its legs. A quieter chase theme follows, in which the hut obviously gains speed and leaps into the air. The quiet, steady theme on the violins represents the house circling, looking for a victim. There is an almost cartoonlike quality to the rhythm. It is followed by a lower and lower tone, as the house circles, until a single chord shows that the hut has thudded to the ground, presumably on top of a victim. Soon enough, the pounding rhythm returns, and the hut begins to bound into the air, building to a frenzy that leads immediately into . . .
II. Listening and Understanding

10. “The Great Gate of Kiev”

This movement, the final piece in the set, is a response to an architectural drawing of an enormous gate, imagined in a traditional Russian style. The great, noble theme that Mussorgsky uses to depict the gate also expresses a patriotic sentiment. This same sentiment can be felt in the quiet hymnlike passages that interrupt the main theme. Toward the end of the piece, the set as a whole is wrapped up by the introduction of the Promenade. A grand final statement of the “Gate” theme, suggesting a grand and royal procession through the gate, follows.

B. Musical Connections

The Renaissance

Note that Renaissance music is closely connected with the Renaissance topics in the History section (pp. 164–168), as well as with certain topics in the Visual Arts and Language Arts sections. We suggest that you teach about Renaissance music in tandem with your study of other aspects of the Renaissance. Your students’ understanding of the works discussed below will be much increased if they are able to connect the composers and music described in this section to the humanists, patrons, and city-states described in the History section.

As in the other arts, the Renaissance was a time of great advances in the sophistication and variety of music. Before the Renaissance and during the Middle Ages, music was written under considerable limitations—some resulting from the limited theoretical understanding of music, and some resulting from the specific religious and ceremonial purpose of most musical composition. As the Renaissance began in the mid-15th century, a rising interest in the rich artistic cultures of ancient Greece and Rome inspired composers to try to write more expressive works. Attention began to be devoted to music theory, and as a result, a much broader, more sophisticated musical language became available to Renaissance composers. This change, of course, took place very gradually over a long period of time.

One of the greatest Renaissance composers was Josquin Desprez [zyos-CAN duh-PRAY] (c. 1445–1521). His works are some of the finest of the entire Renaissance, despite the fact that he lived at the very beginning of this period. His music is entirely for voice, which was the norm for his time; before the late 15th century, instrumental music was almost never notated or published. Desprez’s major works are masses (large works based on the church liturgy for use in services) and motets (shorter vocal works, usually in four parts, based on Latin texts). His reputation rests in great part on the expressive qualities of his writing for voice; he was a master of capturing the emotion of a text in his music and making sure the text could be understood. His music communicated with its audience in a way no music had before. If you wish to play Desprez’s music for students, try the CD Josquin Desprez: Motets & Chansons.

John Dowland (1562–1626) was an English Renaissance composer, famed for his lute songs. A lute is a stringed instrument played somewhat like a guitar, but with a different and distinctive timbre. The lute was the most popular solo instrument of the Renaissance. For this reason, many composers, such as Dowland, wrote songs for a solo singer to be accompanied on the lute. Dowland’s songs are noted for their subtle and expressive attention to the texts. Such songs also mark the first time that the melody of a work and its accompaniment were written out.