



STUDY GUIDE PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

with Music Director Otto Tausk
& the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

GRADES K - 3

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The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

Founded in 1919, the Grammy and Juno-award winning Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is the third largest orchestra in Canada, the largest arts organization in Western Canada, and one of the few orchestras in the world to have its own music school.

Led by Music Director Otto Tausk since 2018, the VSO performs more than 150 concerts throughout Vancouver and the province of British Columbia each year, reaching over 270,000 people. The VSO has toured to the United States, China, Korea and across Canada. The orchestra presents passionate, high-quality performances of classical, popular and culturally diverse music, creating meaningful engagement with audiences of all ages and backgrounds.



Recent guest artists include Daniil Trifonov, Dawn Upshaw, James Ehnes, Adrienne Pieczonka, Gidon Kremer, Renée Fleming, Yefim Bronfman, Itzhak Perlman, Bernadette Peters, Tan Dun, and more. For the 2020-21 season the VSO has created the innovative streaming service TheConcertHall.ca, a virtual home for a virtual season, where more than forty performances will be released throughout the year.

Otto Tausk Conductor & Music Director

Dutch conductor Otto Tausk is the Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, now in his third season. He is also the newly announced Chief Conductor of recently formed Phion Orkest van Gelderland & Overijssel. Until spring 2018, Tausk was Music Director of the Opera Theatre and Tonhalle Sinfonieorchester St. Gallen. He appears as a guest with such orchestras as Concertgebouworkest, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Lahti Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, Philharmonie Südwestfalen, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestre symphonique de Québec, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Mariinsky Orchestra, the orchestras of Perth, Tasmania, Auckland, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and BBC National Orchestra of Wales, with whom he made his BBC Proms debut in August 2018. He is a hugely respected musical personality in his native Holland, working with all its major orchestras and composers.

In the 2020/21 season, Tausk continues guesting relationships with orchestras such as Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, Het Gelders Orkest, Norwegian Radio Orchestra and Turku Philharmonic Orchestra.

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In Vancouver, Tausk will lead an innovative reimagined season in response to COVID-19, showcasing the orchestra with a curated series of digital performances.

Born in Utrecht, Otto Tausk initially studied violin and then conducting with Jonas Aleksa. Between 2004 and 2006, Tausk was assistant conductor to Valery Gergiev with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, a period of study that had a profound impact on him. In 2011 Tausk was presented with the 'De Olifant' prize by the City of Haarlem. He received this prestigious award for his contribution to the Arts in the Netherlands, in particular his extensive work with Holland Symfonia serving as Music Director 2007 to 2012. In reflecting on their work together in The Netherlands, Valery Gergiev paid particular tribute to Tausk on this occasion.



Members of the Orchestra

First Violin

Nicholas Wright, *Concertmaster*
Timothy Steeves, *Associate Concertmaster*
David Lakirovich, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Jennie Press, *Second Assistant Concertmaster (On Leave)*
Jae-Won Bang
Mary Sokol Brown
Jenny Essers
Monica Pegis (On Leave)
Xue Feng Wei
Rebecca Whitling
Yi Zhou

Second Violin

Karen Gerbrecht, *Acting Principal*
Jeanette Bernal-Singh, *Acting Associate Principal*
Ashley Plaut, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Cassandra Bequary
Adrian Shu-On Chui
Daniel Norton (On Leave)
Ann Okagaito
Carina Vincenti

Viola

Andrew Brown, *Acting Principal*
Emilie Grimes, *Acting Associate Principal*
Katrina Chitty
Matthew Davies (On Leave)
Angela Schneider
Jacob van der Sloot

Cello

Henry Shapard, *Principal*
Janet Steinberg, *Associate Principal*
Zoltan Rozsnyai, *Assistant Principal*
Olivia Blander
Natasha Boyko
Charles Inkman
Luke Kim
Cristian Márkos

Bass

Dylan Palmer, *Principal*
Evan Hulbert, *Associate Principal*
Noah Reitman, *Assistant Principal*
Malcolm Armstrong
David Brown
JWarren Long

Flute

Christie Reside, *Principal*
Chris James, *Assistant Principal*
Rosanne Wieringa

Piccolo

Chris James

Oboe

Roger Cole, *Principal*
Beth Orson, *Assistant Principal*
Karin Walsh

English Horn

Beth Orson

Clarinet

Jeanette Jonquil, *Principal*
Michelle Goddard, *Acting Assistant Principal*

E-flat Clarinet

Michelle Goddard

Bass Clarinet

vacant

Bassoon

Julia Lockhart, *Principal*
Sophie Dansereau, *Assistant Principal*
Gwen Seaton

Contrabassoon

Sophie Dansereau

French Horn

Oliver de Clercq, *Acting Principal*
Andrew Mee, *Acting Associate Principal*
Vacant, Assistant Principal
Vacant
David Haskins

Trumpet

Larry Knopp, *Principal*
Marcus Goddard, *Associate Principal*
Vincent Vohradsky

Trombone

Brian Wendel, *Principal*
Andrew Poirier

Bass Trombone

Ilan Morgenstern (On Leave)

Tuba

Peder MacLellan, *Principal*

Timpani

Aaron McDonald, *Principal*

Percussion

Vern Griffiths, *Principal*
Michael Jarrett
Tony Phillips

Harp

vacant

Piano

vacant

Otto Tausk

Music Director

Andrew Crust

Associate Conductor

Bramwell Tovey

Music Director Emeritus

Kazuyoshi Akiyama

Conductor Laureate

Education Staff

Christin Reardon MacLellan, *Director, Education & Community Programs*

Yvanna Mycyk, *Education Programs Coordinator*

Erica Binder, *Student Education Assistant*

Emily Richardson, *Student Education Assistant & VSO SoM Assistant*

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String Family

The four major instruments in the string family, the violin, the viola, the cello and the double bass, are built the same way. The instruments are made of many pieces of wood which are glued together. The body of the instrument is hollow, thus becoming a resonating box for the sound. Four strings made of animal gut, nylon, or steel are wrapped around pegs at one end of the instrument and attached to a tailpiece at the other. They are stretched tightly across a bridge to produce their assigned pitches.

The **violin** is the soprano voice in the string family. It is held under the chin, resting on the shoulder. The violin has a lovely tone that can be soft and expressive or exciting and brilliant.



The **viola** is the alto voice in the string family. Like the violin, it is held under the chin, resting on the shoulder. Unlike the violin, the viola is slightly larger and is tuned five notes lower. It has a richer and warmer tone quality than the violin but is not as brilliant.



The **cello** is the tenor voice in the string family. While shaped like a violin, the cello is much larger and is held between the player's knees. Because it can produce beautiful sounds from its lowest to its highest notes, it is a popular instrument.



The **double bass** is the largest and lowest instrument of the string family. The double bass has sloping shoulders, instead of rounded shoulders like the other string instruments. This allows the player to have more room to move his or her arms, hands, and fingers in front of the instrument. Because of its size, the player stands or sits on a high stool to play the double bass.



Woodwind Family

The three branches of the woodwind family have different sources of sound. Vibrations begin when air is blown across the top of an instrument, across a single reed, or across two reeds. Reeds are small pieces of cane. A single reed is clamped to a mouthpiece at the top of the instrument and vibrates against the mouthpiece when air is blown between the reed and the mouthpiece. Two reeds together are commonly known as a double reed. The double reed fits into a tube at the top of the instrument and vibrates when air is forced between the two reeds.

Originally made of wood, the **flute** is now made from silver or gold and is about 2 feet in length. It looks like a narrow tube with a row of holes covered by keys along one side. The player blows air across the small hole in the mouthpiece to produce a sound that can be either soft and delicate or bright and piercing.

The **oboe** is similar to the clarinet in many ways. Both are made from wood and have metal keys that can produce many notes rapidly. Unlike the clarinet, the oboe does not have a mouthpiece, but has two reeds tied together. By placing them between one's lips and blowing air through them, the reeds vibrate and produce a sound.

Made from wood, the **clarinet** produces a fluid sound when air is blown between a single reed and the mouthpiece. By pressing metal keys with the fingers of both hands, the player has the ability to play many different notes very quickly.

The **bassoon** is a large double reed instrument with a lower sound than the other woodwind instruments. Its double reed is attached to a small curved tube called a bocal which fits into the bassoon. When the player blows air between the reeds, the vibrating column of air inside the instrument travels over nine feet to the bottom of the instrument, then up to the top where the sound comes out.



Percussion Family

Percussion instruments are the loud instruments in the back of the orchestra that produce sound when they are struck with another object, usually a drumstick or mallet. There are two types of percussion instruments: definite-pitch instruments make pitches just like the other instruments of the orchestra, while indefinite-pitch instruments make neutral rhythmic sounds.

The **bass drum**, snare drum, and triangle are indefinite-pitch instruments that are hit with a drumstick or a beater.



The **marimba** and xylophone are definite-pitch instruments that are played with yarn-covered or rubber mallets.



The **timpani** are the most visible instruments in the percussion family, because they are placed on a platform at the back of the stage, in the centre. Timpani are usually played in sets of four, with each drum a different size and pitch. The player uses a pedal to tighten or loosen the skin on the top of the drum to change the pitch.



The tambourine and **cymbals** are also indefinite-pitch instruments, but they do not require a beater to play. The tambourine is struck with the player's right hand, while the cymbals are crashed together.



Brass Family

Brass family instruments produce their unique sound by the player buzzing his/her lips while blowing air through a cup- or funnel-shaped mouthpiece. To produce higher or lower pitches, the player adjusts the opening between his/her lips. The mouthpiece connects to a length of brass tubing ending in a bell. The shorter the tubing length, the smaller the instrument, and the higher the sound; and the longer the tubing length, the larger the instrument, and the lower the sound. The brass family can trace its ancestry back to herald trumpets, hunting horns, and military bugles. The main instruments of the brass family include the trumpet, horn, trombone, and tuba.

The **french horn** consists of about 12 feet of narrow tubing wound into a circle. The player obtains different notes on the horn with a clear mellow sound by pressing valves with the left hand and by moving the right hand inside of the bell.

Made of about 16 feet of tubing, the **tuba** is the lowest sounding member of the brass family. The tuba has three to five valves and is held upright in the player's lap.

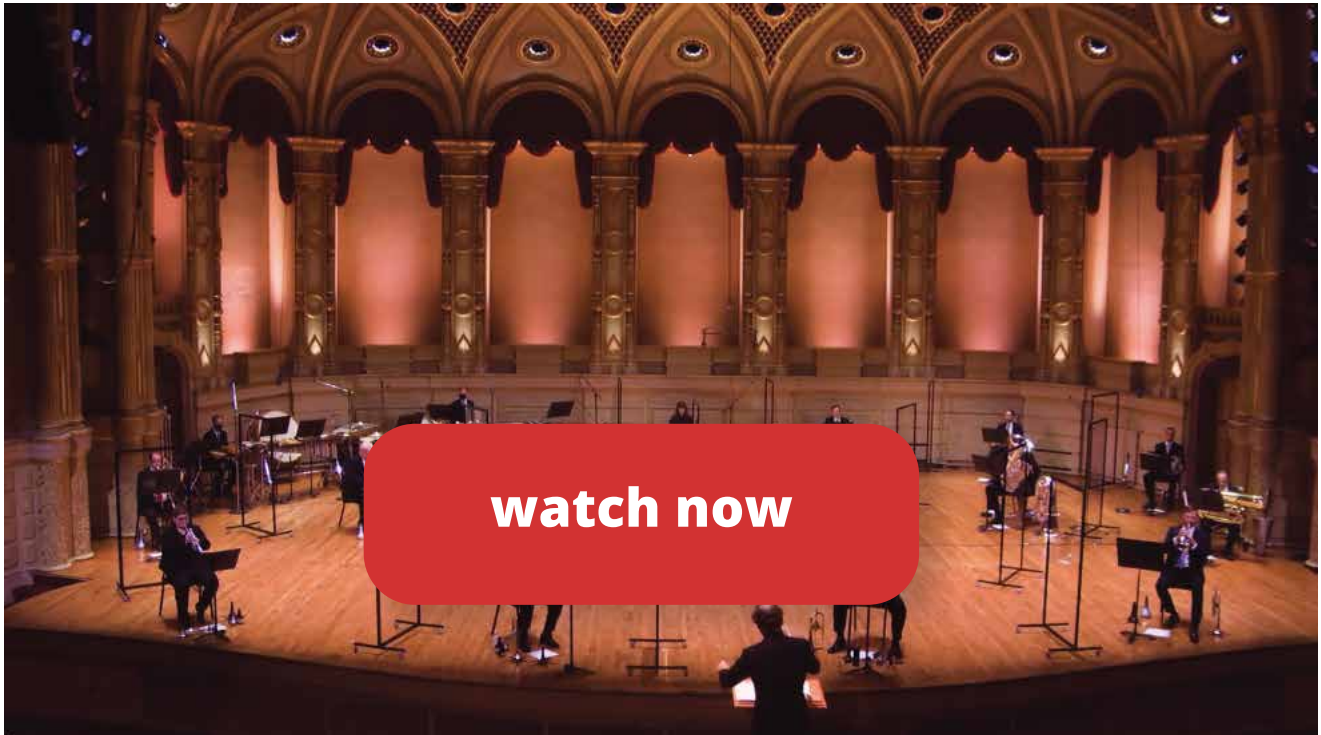
The mouthpiece of the **trombone** is larger than that of the trumpet and gives the instrument a more mellow sound. Instead of valves, the trombone has a slide which changes the length of its approximately 9 feet of tubing to reach different pitches.

The **trumpet** is the highest sounding member of the brass family. The brilliant tone of the trumpet travels through about 6½ feet of tubing bent into an oblong shape. The player presses the three valves in various combinations with the fingers of the right hand to obtain various pitches.

These brass instruments are featured in the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's performance of Pictures at an Exhibition. Can you spot them all?



Pictures at an Exhibition



Horn

Oliver de Clercq, *Acting Principal*
Andrew Mee, *Acting Associate Principal*
Nick Anderson*
Holly Bryan*

Trumpet

Larry Knopp, *Principal*
Marcus Goddard, *Associate Principal*
Vincent Vohradsky
Chris Mitchell*
Matheus Moraes*
Candice Newberry*

Trombone

Brian Wendel, *Principal*
Jeremy Berkman*
Robert Fraser*

Euphonium

Andrew Poirier, *Second Trombone*

Tuba

Peder MacLellan, *Principal*
Ellis Wean*

Percussion

Vern Griffiths, *Principal*
Michael Jarrett

*denotes extra player

Meet a Musician!

Vincent joined the VSO in 2011 as Second Trumpet.

How old were you when you started playing the trumpet and why did you choose it?

I started playing the trumpet when I was eight years old. I played the piano beforehand, but for me the piano was always a mystery (and largely remains that way today).

Around six years old, I started begging my parents to let me play the trumpet.

Since my father was an amateur trumpet player, the sound of the trumpet was in my ear. I loved it. I was told that I had to wait for my permanent front teeth to come in. Once they did, I began practising. I took to the trumpet almost immediately and it has been a joy to play ever since.



Vincent Vohradsky,
Second Trumpet

What's the funnest thing about being a brass player?

In orchestra music, the brass music is usually integral, demanding, and often very intense. Additionally, I also really enjoy the variety of music that playing the trumpet offers: I play in quintets, jazz ensembles, wind ensembles, and orchestra.



Teacher Tool Kit

The activities and resources in this guide are intended to prepare students for the experience of watching the complete 35-minute performance of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, available on TheConcertHall.ca.

Mussorgsky wrote this work in memory of his good friend, artist Victor Hartmann. *Pictures at an Exhibition* depicts Mussorgsky taking a walk through an art gallery and looking at several of Hartmann's drawings. Each section of the suite describes a different drawing, or picture. Mussorgsky also included travelling or walking music in between each picture, called a "Promenade."

The original piano suite has been arranged for various ensembles over the years. The version that you'll be listening to, arranged for brass and percussion, was prepared by the English conductor, composer and arranger Elgar Howarth (b.1935).

Here are the movements and their descriptions:

Promenade: this theme occurs a total of 6 times throughout the work. Each time is different, reflecting the mood of the various pictures as the piece progresses. [4:23]

The Gnome: a child's toy, a nutcracker for use at Christmas-time, in the shape of a gnome. [6:14]

The Old Castle: an Italian castle with a troubadour standing in front of it playing a lute. The troubadour's melancholy song is played here by the flugelhorn. [9:48]

The Tuileries Garden: the busy Paris park and gardens, crowded with children and their nurses. [14:55]

Bydlo: "bydlo" is the Polish word for "cattle"; the picture represents a large cart drawn by oxen. The music begins quietly, growing louder as the cart becomes closer and then becoming quieter as it moves into the distance. The lumbering tune is taken by solo tuba. [15:57]

Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells: based on Hartmann's designs for a ballet, "Trilby", in 1871. The woodwinds represent the active chicks. [19:40]

Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle: this is a musical portrait inspired by Hartmann's drawings of some men in a Jewish district near Warsaw. [21:12]

The Weekly Market at Limoges: a busy outdoor scene at a famous market place where people are shopping and haggling with vendors. [25:16]

The Catacombs: this section is Mussorgsky's reflections on the death of his friend, Hartmann. The drawing shows Hartmann being led by a guide with a lantern through underground tombs. [26:50]

The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba-Yaga): the image is of a 14th century clock shaped like a hut standing on chicken's feet, and with two heads. Baba Yaga was a witch who took flight in a mortar to chase her prey. [30:34]

The Great Gate of Kiev: a stone gate to the city of Kiev, intended to commemorate Tsar Alexander's escape from assassination in April, 1886. [34:16]

Activity I

What Do You See?

Materials and Links

1) Link to the video of *Pictures at an Exhibition*:

<https://theconcerthall.ca/episode/pictures-at-an-exhibition>

2) Unless students are able to listen independently on different devices, we suggest focussing on the following 2 movements for this activity:

- Ballet of the Chicks in their Shells ([19:45] but initially start at [19:58] to avoid showing the picture)
- The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba Yaga) ([30:30] but initially start at [30:44] to avoid showing the picture)
- Picture of the Ballet costumes for the Ballet of Chicks in their Shells: [19:52]
- Picture of Baba Yaga's Hut on Hen's Legs: [30:39]

3) Art materials and techniques of your choice (painting, drawing, etc.)

Introduction

Introduce Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the 2 special features of this work:

1) The VSO's performance is a version that showcases the brass and percussion instruments; and 2) Mussorgsky wrote this music after seeing his friend's art exhibit.

Each section of music either depicts his "promenade" (his walk from one picture to the next), or it is his musical response to the picture (see *Teacher Tool Kit*). Music that tells a specific story, or is about something specific, is called program music.

Activity I

1) Play the 2 movements for the class without telling the class what they are called. Can students guess what the picture was that inspired these works? Encourage students to support their guesses with connections to something they heard in the music.

2) Reveal the titles of the two movements, and what they represent.

3) Reiterate the story about walking through an art gallery, and tell students they are going to recreate the images based on what they hear and visualize in the music. They may choose to base their art on the titles of the piece, or if they strongly feel that the music sounds like something else, they may choose to depict that idea in their art instead.

4) Play the music, along with periods of silence, while students work on their art. Students may choose to focus on one or both of the movements. Encourage students to spend the first minute listening and planning; point out that the music changes over time, and encourage students to listen to the entirety to inform their work.

5) Display the artwork, and ask students to explain how their art was suggested by the music. Are they surprised to see the original artwork that inspired Mussorgsky? (See above)

Extension

Encourage students to "seek out meaning" in all music they listen to. Even if a piece of music was not specifically written to tell a story, they can create their own meaning based on how the music makes them feel, or what it reminds them of.

Assessment:

Ask students to describe their work and how it relates to the music, using grade-appropriate musical terms.

Activity II

Fun with Rhythms!

The diagram illustrates the rhythmic structure of a musical piece. It features a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 6/8. The notation includes a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. Below the staff, there are four rows of rhythmic notation:

- Tuba Solo:** A single note on the staff, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes.
- Big Beats:** A sequence of numbers: 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. These are aligned with the first and fourth beats of each 6/8 measure.
- Smaller Beats:** A sequence of numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. These are aligned with each of the six eighth beats in every 6/8 measure.
- Ostinato:** A sequence of eighth notes, each followed by a quarter rest, creating a repeating pattern.

Introduction

Students get to play along with the VSO in this improvisational rhythmic activity! While listening to “The Old Castle”, students connect with the pulse and respond with their own rhythmic accompaniments.

Activity II

1) Listen to “The Old Castle” (9:45 - 14:20)

2) Try to count and tap to the beat on the big beats (see diagram) | |: 1-2-1-2-1-2 :| |

Hint: It’s very helpful to watch Maestro Tausk at the beginning of the piece, as he shows us the beat through his conducting. See if you can follow along!

3) Now, listen closely for an ostinato rhythm that runs for much of this piece: (see diagram)

Continue listening to the movement, while tapping the ostinato rhythm.

Discuss: Which rhythm did you prefer?

4) While listening to “The Old Castle”, come up with other repeated rhythm patterns as a class that would work well with this piece. Experiment with different ways of tapping or using body percussion to sound the rhythm. Can it get louder or softer?

5) Return to the beginning of “The Old Castle”. This time students take turns leading the class, using their example, not words, to show the rhythm, the dynamic (how loud or soft) and the body percussion that they would like everyone to use. Between turns, students keep the basic beat as the music continues.

Extension

Bonus: point out the flugel horn solo at [10:06]. Ask students if they can name this instrument!

This movement is titled “The Old Castle”. Based on the music, what do students see in and around this castle?

Activity III

Creative Responses to Orchestral Music

Part 1 - Discussion & Brainstorm

Choose 2 movements (we recommend one of the pieces we've already looked at in this guide - *The Old Castle* [09:45]; *The Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells* [19:45]; or *The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba-Yaga)* [30:30]).

As you listen to them, ask students to consider these prompts and write down words that come to mind:

What do you see?

What are some describing words for what you hear?

What direction does the music go in?

What feelings or ideas does it remind you of?

What does the music remind you of?

Part 2 - Creating a Poem

1) After listening and brainstorming individually, discuss the words that you came up with as a class.

2) Choosing one of the pieces, work together as a class to create an acrostic poem using the title of the piece. Ask students to vote or come to consensus on several options for each letter; discuss which terms best describe the piece and why. For example:

BOUNCY

ANIMATED

LOVELY

LITTLE

EXCITING

TRUMPETING

3) Split students into small groups and ask them to create their own acrostic poems using the name of another movement, or one of the instruments that plays in this piece.

Thank you!

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