

California State University, Northridge

Effective Rehearsal Methods, Conducting Gestures and Techniques
of Pictures at an Exhibition

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Conducting

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Abstract

Effective Rehearsal Methods, Conducting Gestures and Techniques of *Pictures at an Exhibition*

By

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Master of Music in Music, Conducting

After the Romantic era, which materialized the fundamental concepts of aesthetics, the patriotism among the public was induced from the emancipation of serfs during mid-19th century, and there were Russian musicians who attempted to express the unique color of Russia in music and free their music from the influence of German music. Amidst such movements, a group of Russian nationalist composers known as “the Five” was formed, and among this group, Mussorgsky became the leading figure. One of his well-known piano pieces, *Pictures at an Exhibition* was the most noted program music. It featured realism escaping from the nationalistic elements and romanticism, which were the main interest of composers at the time.

Many composers have arranged Mussorgsky’s piece, but one of the most played is the orchestration by Ravel. In this paper, I will discuss effective rehearsal methods and conducting techniques for the Ravel orchestration. This paper not only analyses musical structures and meaning intended by the composer, but also identifies potential issues that can occur during rehearsal and discusses whether these issues occurred or not. Mussorgsky has added his own unique creative and rich imagination to the piece rather than simply describing the image the picture. This paper will describe how the conductor can express the composer’s intentions through various conducting techniques. Additionally, this study will also describe how issues resolved during rehearsal are reflected in actual performance, and how players were able to establish an open communication channel based on the actual performance held during the Master’s Graduation Recital, presented on December 5, 2014. The rehearsal methods and conducting techniques presented in this paper resulted in a great performance which fully reflected the intentions of the conductor, and it also produced a persuasive interpretation of *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Chapter 1: A Brief Mussorgsky Introduction

Born as the youngest child of a rich family with four children, Mussorgsky grew up under the care of his nanny together with his third brother. During his youth, Mussorgsky learned Russian legends and folk songs, and these experiences are said to have been the critical influence in the nationalistic characteristics in his works. The music education of Mussorgsky was limited to piano lessons from his first music instructor, Anton Herke, and most of his conducting studies were actually self-studies.¹ Mussorgsky showed outstanding talent in composing, and in 1852, he composed his first amateur piece, *Porte Enseigne Polka*. This work exists only as a text reference, but it is interpreted to be a piece emphasizing traditional Russian characteristics.² Through employing the characteristic Russian modes and irregular rhythms, Mussorgsky became one of the leading figures of modern nationalistic music, and his style had significant influence on various other contemporary musicians, including Debussy.³ As such, Mussorgsky continued to pursue a music style unique to himself, although his peers in “the Five” did not regard his work highly. During these times, Mussorgsky composed *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

¹ M. D. CALVOCORESSI. *MODEST MUSSORGSKY: Chapter I, The Auto biographical Documents* (Boston: CRESCENDO PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1956), 2.

²Ibid., 234-237

³Ibid., 306-307

Chapter 2: Pictures at an Exhibition

Background

Architect and painter, Viktor Hartmann, was Mussorgsky's friend. In 1873, when Hartmann was at the peak of success as a nationalist painter, he died from a heart attack. Under the host of the music critic, Vladimir Stasov, a memorial exhibit for Viktor Hartmann took place at the academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Paintings displayed were watercolors, sketches and building blueprint designs, and after visiting the exhibition, Mussorgsky composed several short piano pieces under the title of Pictures at an Exhibition. Mussorgsky described his feelings as he composed Pictures at an Exhibition in the form of a letter directed to Vladimir Stasov.⁴

To Vladimir Stasov

Wednesday, some day or other [the 12th?] in June' 74

My Dear généralissime.

Hartmann is boiling as Boris boiled-the sounds and the idea hung in the air, and now I am gulping and overeating, I can hardly manage to scribble it down on paper. Am writing 4 numbers-with good transitions (on "promenade"). I want to do it as quickly and steadily as possible. My physiognomy can be seen in the intermessi. I consider it successful so far. I embrace you and I take it that you bless me- som give me your blessing!

MUSSORGYANIN

⁴Edited and Translated. Jay Leyda and Sergei Bertensson. *The Mussorgsky Reader*. V. Entr'acte (New York: W.W. NORTON & COMPANY 1947)

On June 21, 1874, the completed *Pictures at an Exhibition* was dedicated to the exhibition planner, Stasov. However, it was a piece difficult to comprehend at the time due to its irregular rhythm, tune and style, so the piece was never performed in public during Mussorgsky's life time. This piece was very unique and significantly different from the piano music of Liszt and Chopin, and it is regarded as one of the most unique piano works. In other words, *Pictures at an Exhibition* is a unique piece that merges Mussorgsky's creative and imaginative interpretations of visual images of different pictures. The piece is categorized as program music, and there are ten programs each of which has unique and independent characteristics.

History of Orchestral Arrangement

Pictures at an Exhibition is a piece that describes Mussorgsky impressions of pictures, and each movement of the piece is very bold and strong in its presentation. The piece has given inspiration to many composers in training. Some composers even arranged this piano piece into an orchestral piece. The first composer to have arranged the piece is a Russian composer and conductor, Touche Malott. When Malott was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, he arranged some movements of the piece but not the whole piece. Only eight movements were arranged. Later, in 1915, a British conductor, Henry Wood, arranged the piece while omitting four promenades.

The first arrangement of the whole piece was done by conductor and violinist, Leo Funtek in 1922. In 1919, when conductor Sergey Koussevitzky was praised by Ravel for his *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Koussevitzky asked Ravel to orchestrate the piece. In 1922, when the arrangement was complete, Ravel was given an exclusive performance right for five years. Ravel's orchestral version of the piece is the most commonly performed arrangement today. Without of doubt, Ravel's arrangement is outstanding, but another arrangement that vitalized Mussorgsky's original intention was arranged by Sergei Gortschakow. While preserving the framework arranged by

Ravel, Gortschakow supplemented the points considered as flaws in Ravel's arrangement. The point Gortschakow took care the most was "uniformity among all programs."⁵

A single movement within the piece has multiple characters, to successfully conduct this piece, a conductor is required to employ various conducting techniques that suit the wide range of characters featured in *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

⁵ Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictures_at_an_Exhibition

Chapter 3: Musical Characteristics and Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

Promenade

Musical Characteristics

Upon personal analysis of this piece, the first impression of the Promenade was a sensation which describes the tension and psychological state of Mussorgsky as he made his first step into the exhibit in the gallery holding the work of his passed friend. In general, the trumpet, which starts the introduction of this piece, symbolizes joy, victory, royal authority and dignity. Considering the fact that it is an instrument used as the signaling horn during war and the fanfare instrument for kings, I believe the trumpet solo at the beginning of *Pictures at an Exhibition* holds significant meaning.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

From a rhythmic perspective, the piece is very simple with multiple overlapping parts players can follow easily. The time signatures of the piece are a mix of 5/4, 6/4 and 3/2. The piece can be conducted in two 6/4 patterns. The first pattern can be a 2+2+2 pattern similar to that of a 3/4 divided conducting, or it can be a pattern identical to traditional 6/8 pattern. Due to cell⁶ splitting, the conducting of 3/2 that appears occasionally within the piece can technically be conducted in the same way as a 3/4 divided conducting.

The opening is not technically difficult to conduct. The critical point is to have a clear concept for which pattern to use when conducting 5/4 and 6/4. In case of conducting 6/4, there are two major patterns. The first is the pattern with a 2+2+2 structure and a pattern with a typical 6/8 pattern. There is no set pattern to follow. However, to provide an accurate cue sign to orchestra players

⁶ A group consisting of 2 or 3 notes. Refer to attached image.

and to implement a phrasing suiting the piece, the two patterns must be used accordingly in suitable locations. A typical 5/4 and 6/4 patterns are as the following:

Image 1) 5/4 Patterns

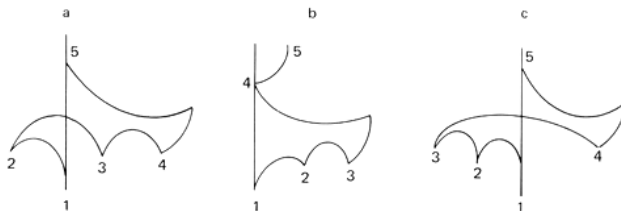
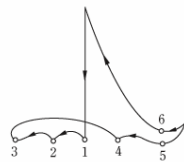
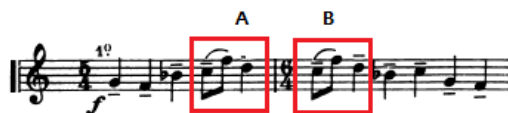


Image 2) 6/4 Pattern



Personally, I utilized 3+2 pattern in rehearsals as well as performances. The main reason is because the last two down beats in the first measure are played as the same pattern of the first two down beats starting with 6/4 of the following measure. As shown in the following image, I believe 3+2 pattern is more fluid as the rhythm of A and B are repeated.

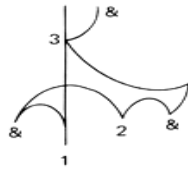
Image 3)



Also, the interval of the 6/4 measure is C-F -> D, B-> C and G->F. As such, two notes with intervals of these steps can be seen in a single group. In this perspective, the 6/4 shifting at the second measure can also be seen as a single phrase with a 2+2+2 pattern. Then the first two measures become a single rhythmic pattern. When a conductor conducts, he/she should not see

them as two measures but should see them as a small single phrasing with two measures.⁷The other reason the 6/4 should be 2+2+2 pattern is found at measure 6. The first two beats of the horn, trombone III and tuba are rests. So the three instruments start on the third beat.

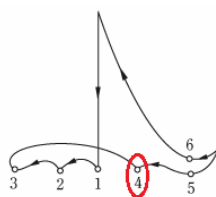
Image 4) 2+2+2 3 Pattern (Divided three-beat pattern)



Considering that trombone III makes its first appearance, the conductor can conduct with a divided three-beat pattern to accurately make an ictus, allowing the first entrance of trombone III to be accurate.

In measure 9, when the string parts begin, the 2+2+2 pattern shifts to a typical 6/8 pattern. In my opinion, the measures in 6/4 times between measure 9 and 19 should be conducted with a German 6 is the most effective method in the musical phrasing.

Image 5) 6/8 Pattern



There is a *fermata* in the last measure. Whether to pause at the end of the first Promenade is up to the conductor's personal interpretation. However, I believe it is appropriate for the conductor to rest for one or two beats. During a performance, Gnomus was performed after all sounds from

⁷ In a personal note, there is a clear difference between the conductor knowing the concepts of rhythm separation and not knowing it.

every instrument were cleared. The main reason is because all instruments end with a full forte. I believe the echoes of the notes played on the last beat should diminish before moving on to the next. It is more effective to start the next note after the echoes have fully diminished to vitalize the character of the newly starting Gnomus.

Gnomus

Musical Characteristics

The sketch of this movement draws a gnome awkwardly walking with bent legs. A gnome is a dwarf protecting the treasures underground. Its awkward walking and the wood wind sound featured in rehearsal #8 reflect the dark and gloomy mood of the underground. In particular, the first five measures describe the small gnome, and at rehearsal #11 the tune describes a giant. The most technically challenging part in this piece is the part where the gnome protecting the treasure flees in fear of the giant.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

Quick, accurate conducting technique is critical, but at the same time, subtle changes in mood must be led wisely by the conductor. At the same time, the players' performance level and their understanding of the movement have to be high. In particular, the string parts undertake a significant role. For example, the tempo of this piece is *vivo*, and its time signature is 3/4. Ravel's score does not have a metronome mark. However, the original version is dotted half note = 120. Then the conducting must be done in 1 beat pattern rather than in 3, and there are a few issues that arise when conducting in 1.

Image 6)



As shown in the image, most of the players who are not familiar with this movement will play 3 eighth notes in the first measure as a single group because it is easier to play. That is why I rehearsed the woodwind part and brass part to start the rehearsal first, and then added the string part later.

The time signature is 3/4, and the 3/2 was played in 3 like the 3/4 pattern like that in the first promenade. So in the minds of the players, a concept of in 3 was already established. When the three eighth notes are played as a single group, the tension of the “Gnome” as in its title and the vivo selected by the composer are completely lost. Furthermore, the natural symbol (♮) attached to the pitch “D” could not be expressed. In this regards, conducting in a three-beat pattern like 2 eighth notes as a single group is more appropriate way for the performance.

If the articulation of this single measure is set to 3/4 beat, and if the first “Ab” note and the third “D♮” are played with an accent, the mood of this piece changes completely.

Image 7) 3 eighth notes as a single group

2 eighth notes as a single group



The first beat of the first measure starts with “*ff*” (with *Vivo*). Then the second measure requires a cue sign of a strong “*f*” to the horn. It is easy to conduct in a one beat pattern. However, in my personal perspective, simple conducting methods can never fully express the true nature of this piece. Even when the conductor conducts freely, if the conductor can accurately indicate the down beats, the players will be able to play the movement accurately. However, audiences of today are no longer satisfied by music alone when they attend a concert. They also pay attention to how well the conductor conducts the emotion of music.

Image 8) 2measures before #7



2measures before #9



During rehearsal, the 3rd viola player asked me whether he should slow down his play as the 4th measure has a *meno vivo* indication. My answer was to not slow down because, unlike earlier measures, the score shows a “*p.*” As the color of sound is different, I interpreted the difference without a *rit.* In addition, the mood of *meno vivo* can fully be expressed through the change of sound, so there was no apparent reason to slow down.

The first two rehearsals were executed as sectionals in the following structure; one with woodwind, brass and percussion and another with strings only. Generally, the rehearsal of woodwind, brass and percussion did not have parts slowing down. After the woodwind plays in the first measure and the brass immediately follow, the remaining parts easily followed their counts. This is mainly due to the fact that the brass part had to be cut off at the third measure.

On the other hand, the rehearsal with the strings had a few issues. As the rehearsal was a section rehearsal, the rest measures must clearly indicated although the beating of the conducting. In particular, cues must be made to the 1st and 2nd violins on the measure before rehearsal #7.

Image 9)



The other issue arose at the measure before Rehearsal #9. This whole measure is a rest, and it has a *fermata*. The question here is whether the conductor should give a down beat or not. My answer is that there is no need to. It is because all players know that this measure is a rest. In general, all players must look at the conductor after a *fermata*. Therefore, even at the smallest degree, there is no need for a down beat motion. Because the conductor has to breathe in, make eye contact with players and make a pose for the next beat while the conducting has paused.

I believe that motion itself can be the measure itself. Some players asked why there was no down beat, but the explanation I provided was sufficient enough for the players to understand. As a conductor, I believe unnecessary motion which can possibly disturb the flow of music can be adjusted and agreed upon. The part where I have conducted differently from other conductors is #11: *Poco meno mosso, pesante*. Most conductors conduct this part using a fast 4/4 pattern.

Image 10)



However, during actual rehearsal, I conducted using in 2 beat pattern, and during the actual performance, I conducted in 2 for A part and in 4 for B part to vitalize the meaning of *poco meno mosso pesante*.

Next is the most difficult part of this movement, #18.

Image 11)



The issue of this part is that it does not smoothly connect from the previous part. It is a difficult part for both the conductor and players, because it starts right after *fermata* and two quarter rests.

The first rehearsal was not easy for orchestra members to play and keep rhythm.

The most effective way to resolve this issue is to have the conductor conduct in 3 at a slow tempo.

Through repeated practices, players acquire the internal beating. The players were not able to play

together at the first practice. However, through repeated practice made through the method described above, players were able to master this passage. Another important element is the conductor's techniques. Conducting in 3 is not appropriate for this passage, because it is fast tempo. The conductor must remain in one and give a very clear down beat on the measure that starts with 2 beats rest.

I would like to suggest two methods. First, at the *fermata* (it is ideal to have both hands at the point where the conducting gesture starts), gently raise both hands with a breath, then give a strong down beat to allow players to have time to breathe and to have time to play the pickup note. The critical element here is that the following measure must also be given a strong down beat. In other words, there are two points of down beats, and the first down beat is to pick up the quarter note and the second down beat is to prepare for the next measure. The second method has a different hand location from the first method when *fermata* is cut off. Rather than having both hands cut off, the left hand is cut off and the right hand is raised. The raising of the right hand is to give a preliminary beat for the following phrasing. This method requires some practicing if the conductor is not familiar with this beating. The reason this gesture is not easy is because two different motions are simultaneously performed. This is why I believe the piece can be connected more fluently through this method as it can save one motion.

The decision of which style to conduct this movement is solely dependent on how long the conductor will rest and how much tension the conductor will add to the movement. The first method has a longer delay between notes so it can add more tension to the movement. However, if the echo in the performance hall is dry, the second method would be more effective. When performing this movement, I chose to use the second method.

Promenade

Musical Characteristics

The promenade describes the steps an audience takes from one painting to the next. The movement was composed based on Mussorgsky's personal experience of the exhibit, and I believe that each promenade describes the next painting to some degree.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

Compared to the first promenade, this one is a relatively simple and short movement. The musical elements of the first promenade are preserved. The time signature, rhythm pattern, horn replacing the trumpet at start, and it is played in "*p*" rather than "*f*" is elements that appeared to hint the next painting. As supporting evidence to such speculation, a *ritardando* takes place which was not in the first promenade. It generates a similar mood to the following piece in the last two measures. As mentioned above, the last two beats of the 5/4 in the first promenade hinted at the 6/4 pattern of the following measure. In the second promenade (one beat = 104), when *ritardando* takes place in the last two measures, one beat = 60-64, the tempo of the second piece Il Vecchio zcastello, can be hinted from it. Building up the musical mood for fluid transaction between the two pieces also depends on the conductor's skills

Il Vecchio Castello ("The Old Castle")

Musical Characteristics

This movement describes a painting where a bard sings in front of an old castle with a high tower.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

This is a movement that can drag tempo.

There are two things I requested to the saxophone player after the final dress rehearsal.

One, do not make the crescendo too early, and two, breathe with me when playing any last note on tie. If these two things can be accomplished by the conductor and the player, this piece can be finished without possible slowing or speeding. If the conductor can maintain a constant tempo, this piece does not have particular difficulties.

Promenade

Musical Characteristics

This Promenade has a similar tempo to the first promenade. Like the earlier promenade, the last two measures of this promenade also hint at the piece that follows.

Tuileries

Musical Characteristics

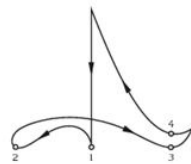
This painting features a group of children and a nurse in Tuileries Garden. In this movement, there is a tune that describes a mother or an adult and a tune that describes children. In particular, the first measure describes the eye blinking of children as they stare at an item of. Four measures before #35 describes a child touching something and startles at it steps back through the first and second beat of descending flute/oboe, and then the child approaches again with newfound curiosity through the third and fourth beat of clarinet ascending.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

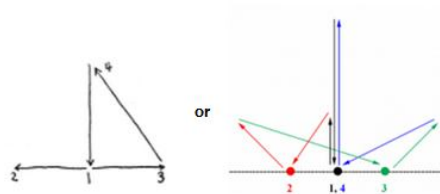
From the perspective of conducting, the main issue was when to conduct in 2 or in 4. To prevent any confusion to the players during rehearsal, I conducted the movement in 4. After the players fully understood the movement, it was easy to go back and forth between in 2 and in 4.

I believed that it would be appropriate to emphasize the main points and simplify the overall conducting because the piece was a short, 30 measures movement. In particular, when the tune for children and the tune for the mother were introduced, a clearer conducting method was required. Even when conducting in 4, conducting with “B” as in the following image was more effective, and in the perspective of the players and the audience, the conductor does not appear to be congested or be in a rush.

Image 12) A



B



For a movement with fast tempo, conducting with straight gestures like percussive style⁸ is more effective than conducting with curved gestures. As shown in the score below, the second and fourth rhythm is an eighth note. Playing the eighth notes shorter than an actual eighth note will vitalize the character of the note.

Image 13)



If there was difficulty for the players, it would be how well the sixteenth note’s character was presented. On the sixteenth note group, the flute part has a double slur and the oboe has a slur on four sixteen notes, so unifying the two parts with two different articulations was critical. The

⁸ Opposite of vowel style like more curve motion

following score is the first part when the tune for the mother or an adult is introduced. At rehearsal #35, there is a '*sulla tastiera*' indicated on the 1st violin. It means to whisper or to be a sound of the wind.

To allow the violin to play this mood naturally, the clarinet must in decrescendo one measure before rehearsal #35 when playing the sixteen note group.

Image 14)

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal 35. The score is written for several instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Harp (Harpe), Violins (Vols.), and Cellos/Double Basses (Vlles.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. Rehearsal 35 is marked with a box containing the number 35. The Flute part starts with a first-octave trill (1^o) and a dynamic marking of *p*. The Clarinet part has a first-octave trill (1^o) and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The Harp part is silent. The Violin part starts with a dynamic marking of *pp* and the instruction 'sur la touche'. The Cello/Double Bass part has a dynamic marking of *pp* and the instruction 'sur la touche'. A blue arrow points to the 'Adult Tune' label next to the violin part.

It is necessary to accurately show the new mood during the quarter rest after the clarinet plays the sixteen notes. It is mainly because the dynamic of the following violin starts with "*pp*," so an accurate ictus on the last beat, quarter rest, will not be able to describe the characteristic of the violin dynamic, *sulla tastier*.

Bydlo

Musical Characteristics

A Bydlo is commonly known as a group of cattle pulling a Polish wagon with large wheels. The reason people refer to it as a Polish wagon is because the word Bydlo means “a group of bulls” in Polish.⁹

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

If there is a difference between this arrangement and the original movement composed by Mussorgsky, it is the dynamics. Various interpretations can be made, but in my perspective, I would say that the reason the original movement starts with *ff* is to describe the sudden death of Mussorgsky’s friend. Mussorgsky depicts the wagon to pass right in front of him, and Ravel depicts the wagon appearing from far away and then disappearing.

Throughout the movement, a rhythm of repeating eighth notes appears. This is not very difficult for the players. However, it is the job of the conductor to deliver the true meaning of the movement. Even though this movement is in 2/4, most conductors prefer to conduct it in 4. In the first rehearsal, I conducted the movement in 4, and then at the end of this movement, I conducted in 2. I also explained the movement a little. In order to describe the socially inferior farmers living through the difficulties of life, I decided to begin my conducting in 2 rather than in 4, and as the piece reached the climax, I changed to in 4. To express *f* and *tenuto* simultaneously, I thought in 4 would be more effective.

The conductor must show the flow by starting small, reaching a climax and then getting small again, and the balance between crescendo and decrescendo is critical. The first section that becomes strong is where the tuba repeats the main theme of the movement. Delicate conducting

⁹ The origin of the word Bydlo comes from Russia. In general, a Bydlo is used to describe people of the lowest class of the society, factory workers who did not receive any form of education and the poor.

by the conductor is critical, and it is necessary to mention to the other players that they should discreetly enter crescendo when the tuba repeats the main theme. I believe that this is an opportunity for the players to learn the ability to listen to other instruments within the orchestra. The same applies to the decrescendo. When the tuba plays the main tune in “*f*” again, it must be explained that the other parts must become softer and play as accompanists.

Promenade

Musical Characteristics

I would recommend the conductor clearly conduct the two silent beats at the beginning. An important characteristic of the promenade is that it hints at the following piece during the last two or three measures. The sixteen note rhythm in measure 9 is also a representation of the following movement.

Ballet des Poussins dans leur Coques (“Ballet of Chicks in their Shells”)

Musical Characteristics

Hartmann sketched a picture of children wearing a canary mask and dancing with egg shells attached to their bodies during the ballet, Trillby, which was premiered on 1871. The irregular rhythm describes the waddling of chicks quite well.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

In case of the Scherzo, it can be conducted either in 1 or in 2. As long as the conductor can give a precise down beat on “a” when conducting in 1, the transition can be easily executed on the part where it shifts to Trio as shown in the score below.

Image 15)



In addition, if the piece is started in one, the players can move on to the Trio part without confusion. However, the issue is that there is a limit in describing the waddling of chicks by using in 1 conducting.

Image 16)



As in Image 16) above, the flute plays the ornament notes and staccato, and the oboe plays the trill staccato at the second and fourth eighth notes in measure 5. If conducting in 2 can be implemented, I believe it would be more effective in 1.¹⁰ During actual rehearsal, I conducted in 2

¹⁰ The conductor must show the players conducting gestures that match the mood of the piece.

at the beginning, but at the fermata before shifting to the Trio part, the flute was unable to play the last note accurately with my beat.

There were some parts where communication was not established during the first rehearsal. So, on the advisement of Dr. Roscigno, I implemented a conducting method shifting in 1 and in 2. After the players became familiar with the mood and tempo changes, the flute player was able to play the next note regardless of how I conducted. At the actual performance, the part was simply and accurately played in 2.

In general, the conductor must mandate that the players look at him/her at points with tempo shifts during the first rehearsal. When the piece is played for the first time or when there is a confusing transition part that is difficult, the conductor needs to explain the part. In this piece, most of the notes are played short and the piece is a fast tempo piece, so the precision among players is critical. When the 1st violin plays the Trill part, the players tend to play a quarter note even though it is a half note. As shown in Image 16), the first two measures are half note, and the third and fourth are quarter note, so the player must play the notes as a full half note.

Samuel Goldenberg Und Schmuyle

Musical Characteristics

This movement depicts a rich Jew and a poor Jew in Poland. The strings play a tune that describes the haughty attitude of the rich Jew, and the trumpet melody is a tune that describes the poor Jew. When the woodwind part is added to the string part tune, the tune describes the two Jews being in conflict with each other, and the piece ends with the fury of the rich Jew.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

It is important to note that there is one tune that differs between the original version and Ravel's version.

Image 18) Original Piano Version



Ravel Version



In my own perspective, the two versions show opposite results. The original version uses a repeating tonic pitch to show the strong will of the rich Jew against the poor Jew. However, Ravel uses a type of passing note to express the sympathy the rich Jew has for the poor Jew.

The tempo of this piece is *Andante. Grave - energico*. Think of it as eighth note equals 60. For this reason, most conductors use a divided 2 beat pattern rather than the standard 4 beat pattern.

Image 19)



As shown in Image 19), it is not easy to play the sixty fourth notes¹¹ accurately, and it is difficult to give accurate cues to the players when conducting with 4 beat pattern. In the case of conducting techniques, it is critical to accurately conduct the pickup note by subdividing beat 4. The first Triplet, “A,” can also be clearly conducted. Also, there is a *tenuto* allowing a natural slow. The second Triplet, “B,” is a pick up note, and it is important that the players play these pickup notes together and the conductor must continue to show a clear subdivided beat.

Image 20)

A



In Image 20), look at the second bar of the first system as well as the 1st bar of the second system. The tempo changes to Andantino at the 1st bar of the second system. The top part is the trumpet solo.

By conducting with a standard 4 beat pattern from one bar (letter “A”) before *Andantino* will allow the trumpet soloist to play at the accurate tempo. During the actual rehearsal and performance, the conducting technique did not raise any major issues. The key point in this piece is that the trumpet soloist must play the 17 measures with accurate rhythm. The biggest issue here

¹¹ hemi demisemiquaver

is the breathing of the trumpet player. The first eight measures must be played on one breath. Then at rehearsal #60, the conductor needs to pay attention where the rich Jew tune appears again. The strings must play a sixteenth note at beginning of rehearsal #60 and an eighth note at beginning of rehearsal #61, but they always played both as the eighth note rather than a sixteenth note because the rich Jew tune was played with an eighth note in beginning of this movement. In this regards, the strings get confused with the same melody line of the two rehearsal numbers.

After this movement, about 10 seconds is given to the clarinet player. The reason is that this movement uses “A” clarinet, and the following uses “Bb” clarinet.

Limoges –Le Marche (“Limoges – The Market Place”)

Musical Characteristics

This is a movement describing ladies chattering in the Limoges market of central France. The fast moving sixteenth notes describe the busy market atmosphere. The irregular *sforzando* and the use of chromatic scale also describe the scene of a market.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

In order to guarantee a well-played performance, the articulation among instruments must be well considered. As shown in Image 1), there is a *sforzando* on weak beats in the string parts. These *sforzando* on weak beats must be emphasized.

Image 21)



The tempo of this movement is *Allegretto vivo*. Quarter note is marked 120-132 metronome mark. To allow the brass instruments and strings to play accurate rhythm, the rehearsal took place at quarter note = 80. Like the 5th Ballet Des Poussins Dans Leurs Coques, the articulation among players is a key. As the horn part must play fast sixteenth notes, the conductor must give an accurate upbeat to horn players with eye contact.

At the early rehearsals, the 3 horn players were not able to play simultaneously. The main reason was my conducting. I was only focusing on a strong downbeat¹² during conducting. I forgot about the fact that the upbeat¹³ is critical to brass players. So I fixed this by giving a clear preparatory beat.

Image 22)

The image shows a musical score for measures 68, 69, and 70. The parts are for Violins (Vols), Violas (Vlles), and Contrabass (C.B.). The score includes dynamic markings like *mf* and *sf*, and performance instructions such as *Arco*, *Pizz.*, and *V.* The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

As shown in Image 22), most players play after the downbeat. Therefore, the conductor must conduct clearly and precisely. Even though there is a dynamic of “*ff*”, the conductor must conduct an *ff* with impact on the ictus rather than an “*ff*”, with large motion. As mentioned earlier, the piece itself is not a piece technically challenging to conduct. The conductor’s personal interpretation must be reflected in very clear technique.

¹² The first beat of the measure
¹³ Unaccented beat like preceding downbeat.

Image 23)



Image 24)



For example, Image 23) is the end of this movement. And Image 24) is the start of the preceding movement. One interpretation is to *poco accel* the last measure and then immediately moves on to the next piece. The other interpretation is to rest one or two beats and then move on to the next piece.

In the actual performance, the *poco accel* was implemented for the last measure and the following piece started immediately. The reason is because the start of the next piece, Catacombae, contains the ending elements of the entire work. Also, ending with an incomplete, fast tempo is not common even though there is staccato on the very last note, and the fast sixteenth notes have the tendency of leading to the next piece. Harmonically, the first chord of Catacombae, B, can be interpreted as the dominant chord of Limoges which is Eb major.

Catacombae (Sepulchrum Romanum & Cum Mortuis In Lingua Mortua)

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

There are no significant conducting difficulties in this piece. However, I believe the character of "ff" should be shown by conductor two ways. In Image 25), "ffs" of the first measure and fourth measure are not large gestures or strongly attacked downbeats, but should be expressed as a heavy "ff". It is common to think large motion or strong accent is needed for conducting "ff". Catacombae is a short movement with only 30 measures, but it has 10 "ffs".

As “*ffs*” are repeated frequently, I believe that it is necessary for the conductor to employ various conducting patterns rather than using a single conducting gesture.

I believe “*ff*” in Image 25) is more effective when conducted in a restrained, heavy mood. I also believe that in order to effectively conduct the remaining 7 “*ffs*”, there should be a restraint in the conducting gestures.

Image 25)

72 **Largo**

2 CLARINETTES EN LA

CLARINETTE BASSE EN LA

2 BASSONS

CONTREBASSON

4 CORs CHROM. EN FA

3 TROMPETTES EN UT

1^{er} ET 2^e TROMBONES

3^e TROMBONE ET TUBA

The musical score for Image 25 is a page from a symphony orchestra score, starting at measure 72, which is marked "Largo". The score is written for a variety of instruments, including woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The woodwind section consists of two clarinettes in E-flat (labeled "2 CLARINETTES EN LA"), one bass clarinet in E-flat ("CLARINETTE BASSE EN LA"), two bassoons ("2 BASSONS"), and a contrabassoon ("CONTREBASSON"). The brass section includes four chromatic horns in F ("4 CORs CHROM. EN FA"), three trumpets in C ("3 TROMPETTES EN UT"), and one first and second trombone ("1^{er} ET 2^e TROMBONES") and one third trombone and tuba ("3^e TROMBONE ET TUBA"). The score shows dynamic markings of *p* (piano) and *ff* (fortissimo) throughout. The tempo is marked "Largo".

Image 26)

The image shows a page of a musical score for a brass ensemble, specifically Rehearsal #73. The score is arranged in a system with six staves. From top to bottom, the staves are labeled: 'Bons' (Bassoons), 'C. Bon' (Contrabassoon), 'Cors' (Horns, with 1st and 2nd parts), 'Trb.' (Trumpets, with 3rd part), '3rd Trb./Tuba' (Third Trumpet/Tuba), and 'C.B.' (Contrabass). The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of dynamic markings: 'ff' (fortissimo), 'p' (piano), 'pp' (pianissimo), and 'ppp' (pianississimo). There are also performance instructions: '3rd Sourd.' and 'ôtez la Sourd.' (remove the mute). A box with the number '73' is placed above the first staff and below the last staff. The bottom of the page has the marking 'pp'.

The “*ff*” at Rehearsal #73 in Image 26) is more appropriate when conducted in a large, grandeur motion. It is because the one bar before Rehearsal #73 is complete, and unlike the first part of this piece, every instrument plays simultaneously, so a larger upbeat gesture should be made. During the actual rehearsal and performance, the two conducting styles were employed.

The next point is to make use of the left hand. As shown in Image25), the dynamic changes from “*ff*” to “*pp*”, and then to “*ff*”. So the conductor must use his left hand to indicate the dynamics. At the same time, the conductor must use his listening to recognize the difference in the dynamic change.

This movement requires high levels of listening from the conductor. Woodwind instruments have relatively smaller volume than brass instruments. As this piece has more brass writing, the conductor must balance each instrument carefully. In particular, the balance of horns is critical. It is because while the 1st horn holds a note (F#), the 4th horn plays the chromatic scale.

Image 27)



Lastly, there is a trumpet solo within the piece, and during rehearsal, it was played early because of miscounting. The request made to the trumpet soloist was to make eye contact with the conductor for accurate entrance. It is important to deliver sufficient trust between the player and conductor.

La Cabane Sur Des Pattes De Poule (“The Hut on Fowl’s Legs”)

Musical Characteristics

The subtitle, “Baba Yaga,” is a witch that eats children in Russian folktales. Hartmann is said to have drawn the witch’s house on drumsticks to use as a design for a clock. The tempo and rhythm of this movement is similar to Ballet Des Poussins Dans Leurs Coques.

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

This movement can be conducted with a two beat pattern or a one beat pattern. If the movement is played excessively fast, the string part cannot be performed properly from Rehearsal #81 and on, and especially from #101 and on. In case of Rehearsal #81, the interval leap on the tune is a fourth. When there is a large interval in a melody, it is difficult to play accurately at fast tempo. My personal interpretation is that quarter note = 132 is an appropriate tempo making.

Both two beat pattern and one beat pattern were attempted during rehearsals, and the tempo reached up to quarter note = 144, but due to the issues mentioned above, the performance took place at quarter note = 132.

Image 28)



In the actual performance, a one beat pattern was used up to Rehearsal #81, and a two beat pattern was employed from Rehearsal #81.

Image 28-1)



The conducting pattern discussion was made because eighth notes appear starting from Rehearsal #81, and because brass instruments start playing on the second beat as shown in Score 28-2).

Image 28-2)



Image 29)

Musical score for rehearsal #84, featuring Violins (Vns), Altos, Violas (Vlles), and Cello/Double Bass (C.B.). The score is in 3/4 time and includes markings for Pizz. (Pizzicato), Arco (Arco), and simile.

There were sections where the two patterns were employed back to back. In case of Rehearsal #84, it was more effective when the first two measures were conducted with a two beat pattern, and the third and fourth measures were conducted using a one beat pattern.

Image 30) below is a transition almost identical to that in #6.

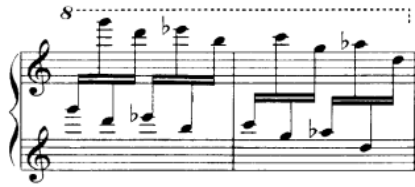
Musical score for rehearsal #90, featuring Trumpet (Trp.), Flute (Fl.), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The score is in 3/4 time and includes markings for *Andante mosso*, *1^o Solo*, and dynamics like *ff* and *mf*.

At Rehearsal #90, the tempo changes to *Andante mosso*, and again the trumpet plays four measures.¹⁴ The beat follows the tempo of Rehearsal #91 allowing the flute player to have the tempo he will be playing in advance of his entrance.

Another part the conductor must consider is the part between Rehearsal #101 and the ending.

¹⁴ #6 played 4 beats.

Image 31)



The conductor must give accurate cues to players of each part. In addition, the same issue raised at the end of #7 connecting with #8 also rises in the ending of #8. In the rehearsal and performance the two movements were connected.

La Grande Porte De Kiev (“The Great Gate of Kiev”)

Rehearsal & Conducting Technique

The half note is conducted as one beat, and at Rehearsal #115, one measure is conducted as one beat.

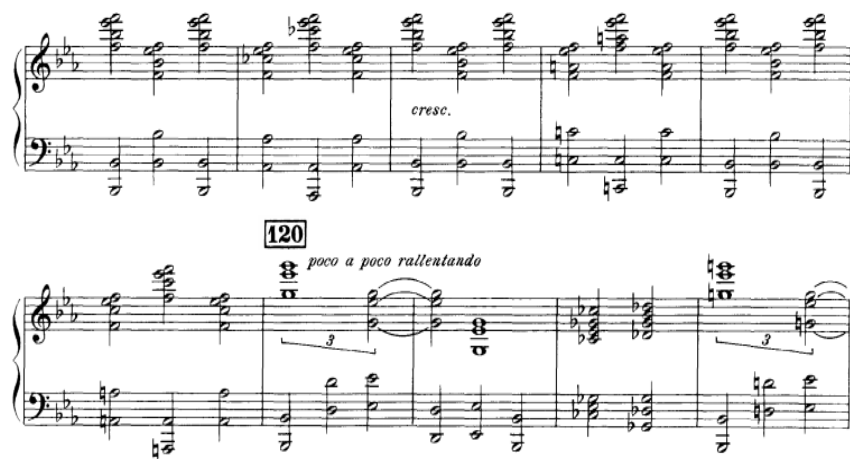
Image 32)



During rehearsals, Rehearsal #115 was the first point where my conducting beats and the players' tempo did not match. It was simply because there was no metronome marking. Also, as the time signature is 3/2, the players believed that the half note was one beat, and I conducted one measure as one beat. If had mentioned that one measure would be conducted in one, the players may have caught up to the beat.

The actual tempo of the flute and clarinet, which play the main melody of this movement, is nearly identical to the starting tempo with a slight decrease. Also, the last tempo change takes place four bars before Rehearsal #120.

Image 33)



One measure conducted as one beat by the conductor should be changed to a three beat pattern from this point. The reason is because there is a *Poco a poco rallentando* from Rehearsal #120. The time signature changes again to 2/2 at Rehearsal #121, so the piece can come to an end with one measure conducted as one beat.

Conclusion

Among “The Five” Russian Nationalist composers, Mussorgsky is the most creative composer and has been receiving the most attention from the world. In particular, “Pictures at an Exhibition” is known to be the gatekeeper to the works of Mussorgsky as well as his most noted piece. “Pictures at an Exhibition” is also a very important piece positioned at the contact point between art and music. In the end, the pictorial image of this piece was merged with another colorful artist by Maurice Ravel who was influenced by a new trend in music, impressionism.

When preparing and conducting Pictures at an Exhibition, it is necessary to closely consider how to implement conducting methods that suit the characteristics of this movement. I have invested most of my thoughts on considering the most appropriate way to conduct the piece and which gesture would be the most appropriate way to conduct the indications on the score. The conducting methods for rehearsal and performance slightly differed, but as a conductor, it is the continuous decision making that helps trust develop between conductor and players resulting in an exciting musical performance.

Depending on the conductor’s technique, the sound of the piece can change significantly. One must visualize the various paintings and drawings as well as the suite structure, Russian romanticism and realism and develop a technique that perfectly suits the piece. The conductor’s interpretation should reflect the nationalism of Mussorgsky and the impressionistic orchestration of Ravel in a way that is clear to the musicians.

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