

The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

inspiration: painting by Victor Hartmann

composer: Modest Mussorgsky

orchestra arrangement: Maurice Ravel



Viktor Hartmann
Hartmann
was an architect
and
artist.



Modest Mussorgsky
played the piano
and
composed music.

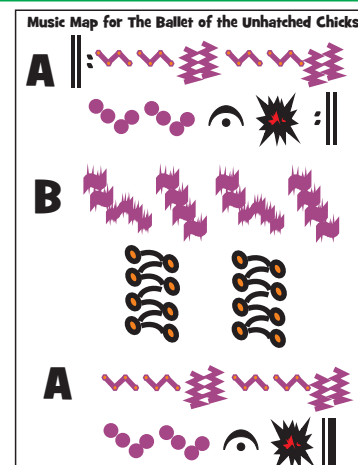


Modest Mussorgsky's (1839-1881) and Viktor Hartmann were very good friends. Mussorgsky played the piano and wrote music. Hartmann was an artist who painted and designed costumes for theatre shows.

Hartmann's friends were all surprised and sad when he died at the age of 39. His friends organized an exhibition of his works to be seen at the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, Russia "Pictures at an Exhibition". When Mussorgsky walked through the hall filled with his friend's pictures, he was inspired to write piano music for each of the pictures there. Mussorgsky played the music for his friends, but not in public.

Many years later, in 1922, a conductor wanted to include Mussorgsky's music in a public performance by an orchestra. But the music was written for only piano. The conductor (Serge Koussevitzky) commissioned Maurice Ravel to arrange the music for an orchestra to play. The music that is famous today was written by Mussorgsky, and arranged by Ravel.

**for music map,
and description of videos
see back pages**



Active Listening Music The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

Do you listen as a dancer, an instrument player, or simply as an audience member? Depending on your class, you can offer each of these options and then take time to compare and contrast different ideas/feelings from each perspective.

Alternatively, choose one or two of the “listening views” below to explore this delightful piece of music and the story of its creation.

Most people depend on visual cues more than audio ones. For this reason, **if you are able to learn from the videos so that you can teach the lesson without using them, student listening skills will grow.** The videos could be shown later, just for fun.

The Music's Story

There was a person whose name was Victor Hartmann, and another person whose name was Modest Mussorgsky (Muzz-org-ski). They were very good friends. Mussorgsky played the piano and composed music. Hartmann was an architect and artist. He painted this to show ideas for costumes for children dancing in a ballet. (show copy of painting re “Unhatched Chicks”, see next page). What are the children dressed up as?

Yes ---chicks coming out of eggs!

Just a short time later, Hartmann died very suddenly. His friends and family got together to celebrate all his work. They put up over 400 paintings to look at.

Mussorgsky looked at the paintings. “Hmmm --if I compose music to go with some of them, it will help people remember what a great artist my friend was.” So that’s what Mussorgsky did.

Listen to the music Mussorgsky composed to go with the dance costumes.



Play Video mp4

The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks #1

(play the video with a blank screen to focus attention on the audio)

<https://natasha-turovsky.com/>

The video was created by Natasha Turovsky who gave full permission for it to be used on this website and in your classrooms. It’s a delightful, “listener’s” version using her art combined with the music. Check out her website for other art/music combinations from Montreal.

Teacher’s Note: Mussorgsky (1874) composed the piece for piano. Maurice Revel arranged the piece for orchestra (1922). It can be confusing at first because they sound nearly like different pieces.

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The picture, "The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks", shows Hartman's design of costumes for staging a ballet called Trilbi. The cast included boys and girls from the theatre school dressed as canaries and eggs.

A Listen as a Dancer

Before class, decide which approach to take. Either using your own ideas or ideas generated with the class, choreograph a dance. OR using the words/images in one of the videos suggested here for teacher use, choose movements to dance the music.



Teacher Prep Video mp4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7fxH6mlAf8>

Simple, easy to follow movements that go along with both the music and the storyline. Unfortunately I wasn't able to track down "Mrs. Stark" to seek permission to use the video outside of YouTube.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYFUmf11EYs>

Video is intended for preschoolers or kindergarten, but does provide many ideas for primary teachers. The movements and words superimposed on the music fit together well.



CanDo Music: Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks #2

Breaks down the music into segments to offer an easy way to add movements that repeat with the repeated music.

"If you were a dancer, playing a chick inside the egg, what would you be trying to do? (get out of the egg) "Let me out !" (4 movements with wings)

ideas

- *jab shell with elbow
- *push straight out with hand/hands
- *jab with other elbow

"What else could you do?" scratch with claws? peck with beak? run and hit a wall?

Practice with students and perform. **The goal of practice is to be able to perform the movements without the aid of visual prompts** (using the video). As long as the video is shown, student focus will be on the screen. Taking the video away, pushes the focus to listening.

**See the file for
The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
for more ideas!**

B Listen as a Musician (Instrument Player)

During the Pandemic, Covid, Sandra Frančišković made some videos for her students to follow at home. She's given her permission for her version of "The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks" to be offered here. It's a delightful and simple orchestration, easy to learn and present to your class ---or, to use the video for your class to follow until they can play it with just the sound.

If you are inspired, create your own orchestration using either found instruments, body percussion or the collection of instruments in your classroom.

Mussorgsky wrote the music just for piano. Many years later a conductor wanted to have his orchestra play the music. The conductor (Serge Koussevitzky) asked another composer, Maurice Ravel, to arrange the music so that many instruments, working together, could play it.

Today, you are the orchestra. You need a jar lid(metal) and two pens that click open and shut and a table. What family do you think these instruments belong to? (percussion) (hand out instruments)

Ready to play? follow along with the players in the video.



Play Video

mp4

OR



Play Music

mp3

The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks #2

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Listen as the Audience

In 2015, the Toronto Symphony posted a video of them playing "The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks" on YouTube. In this section, invite your class to be the audience!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HPtSftZ3b0



Use the audio from one of the previous videos.

Reflections/Analysis

Name the ways the class "listened" e.g. as dancers, music makers or audience.

For each, ask: **How was this a good way to listen?**

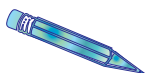
How was this not-so-good a way to listen?

After explore: **Which was your favourite and why?**

Enjoy the Repertoire

Student Choice of Song or Dance

New Repertoire



Los Pollitos

The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

(active listening music)

The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

Videos Included

Listening As Audience

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Listening As Dancer

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Breaks down the music into segments to offer an easy way to add movements that repeat with the repeated music.

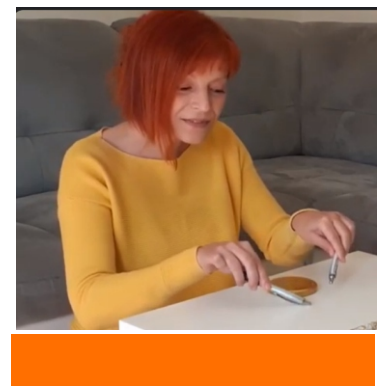
See next page for youtube videos with multiple ideas for movement.

Listening As Musician

The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks #3

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Suggested Additional Videos

Listening As Audience

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Listening Just For Fun!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4kgkdoGjyw>

Most videos use Ravel’s orchestration for the music. This video from Russia, features the original piano music. The animation is based on a painting, that comes to life. Gentle, light cartoon ending with the eggs/chicks returning to their mother.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EK4jqaWDJk>

For a completely different way of “hearing” the music, watch an artist draw as the music plays.

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Music Map for The Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

