

Travis Hatton, Music Director

# A Family Concert of Young Voices & Music of Modest Mussorgsky



**7:30pm Friday, January 18, 2019**  
**3:00pm Sunday, January 20, 2019**

[beavertonsymphony.org](http://beavertonsymphony.org)  
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## Our Guest Artists



Westside Youth Choir (WYC) has been enriching the lives of young people since 2005 by creating a nurturing, family-like experience of teaching and promoting the joys of singing. Our choirs are places where all young people with a desire to sing are welcomed and encouraged to participate. We are the only dedicated youth choir in Washington county. Students from surrounding counties also participate in the program. Are you interested in joining our musical family? Open auditions are January 22nd and February 5th, with choirs for K-12 students. Grades 5-8 are encouraged to apply! More information at [info@wychoirs.org](mailto:info@wychoirs.org)



The video presentation that accompanies the orchestra's performance of *Pictures at an Exhibition* is the work of Portland-based video artist **Mercer Hanau**. A recent graduate of Whitman College with a B.A. in Studio Art and a minor in Film & Media Studies, most of her work involves digital media or printmaking. She draws inspiration from intersections of science and culture, often featuring animals, religious imagery, and a touch of the surreal.

[mercerhanau@icloud.com](mailto:mercerhanau@icloud.com)  
[mercerhanau.myportfolio.com](http://mercerhanau.myportfolio.com)



The art exhibit in the lobby was created by students at Kaleidoscope Expressive Arts, where we combine a variety of art forms to intuitively express feelings. We encourage participants to ignore the "rules" and tap into their innate creativity. This process-based experience seeks to increase authenticity and emotional awareness. For today's collaboration, we told stories of Baba Yaga, danced like chicks, stomped like cattle, and imagined descending into the catacombs. After embodying the spirit of the movement, we painted to the music. This project creates a full circle: from art to music, and back to art.

-- Michelle Rowe

# Beaverton Symphony Orchestra

Travis Hatton, Music Director

Modest Mussorgsky  
(1839-1881)

## **Night on Bald Mountain**

arranged for orchestra by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Amy F. Bernon  
Mary Lowry  
Arr. Chuck Bridwell  
Hugh Martin &  
Ralph Blaine

## **Throw Open Your Shutters**

## **Mary Did You Know?**

## **Various Themes on “Fa-la-la”**

## **Have Yourself a Merry Little**

Westside Youth Choir, directed by Reece Sauve

## **I n t e r m i s s i o n**

Modest Mussorgsky  
(1839-1881)

## **Pictures at an Exhibition**

arranged for orchestra by Maurice Ravel

(by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.)

Promenade

Gnomus

Promenade

The Old Castle

Promenade

Tuileries

Bydlo (Oxen)

Promenade

Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells

Portraits of Two Jewish Men: One Rich, One Poor

The Market at Limoges

Catacombs – Roman Sepulchers

With the Dead in a Dead Language

Baba Yaga’s Hut on Fowl’s Legs

The Great Gate of Kiev

## Program Notes by Hugh Ferguson

### Modest Mussorgsky and “The Five” who created Russian Music

Five young composers found each other in St. Petersburg in the 1860's and discovered that they were driven by a common cause: the creation of a uniquely Russian classical music identity. Only one of the five, Mili Balakirev, had any significant musical training. The others — Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Borodin, César Cui, and Modest Mussorgsky — were amateurs, self-taught and proud of it.

Tchaikovsky, their contemporary, was at that time actively composing and widely recognized. But he was not included in the group. The Five (as they came to be known) considered him too steeped in German musical methods to represent the true Russian spirit.

The polar opposite to Tchaikovsky was Modest Mussorgsky. The most passionate, most original, and most unfortunate of the group, he is generally regarded as the one who had the greatest influence on the later course of Russian music.

Born in 1839 into a wealthy land-owning family 250 miles south of St. Petersburg, Mussorgsky had his first piano lessons at age six. At age 13 he was enrolled in the Cadet School of the Guards in St. Petersburg, where his piano-playing made him popular: at parties, he would play dances interspersed with his own improvisations. But it may also be that it was at the Cadet School that he first fell prey to alcohol addiction.

Mussorgsky was graduated at age 17 and received a commission with the Russian Imperial Guard. He met another officer, 22-year-old Alexander Borodin, while serving at a St. Petersburg military hospital. Mussorgsky's friendship with Borodin — and his skill at the piano — quickly led to a widening circle of musicians. Soon after beginning compositional studies with Balakirev, Mussorgsky resigned his commission in order to devote himself entirely to music.

For Mussorgsky, with the backing of talented colleagues and a wealthy family, the 1860's began auspiciously enough with a number of compositions completed. But when, in March of 1861, Russia's serfs were emancipated, Mussorgsky's family was suddenly deprived of half its estate, and he was forced to take a job as a civil servant. In April of 1865, Mussorgsky's mother died, an event that likely precipitated his first serious bout of alcoholism.

In May 1867 he was dismissed from the civil service. That summer, living in the country at his brother's house at Minkino, Mussorgsky composed and orchestrated *Night on Bald Mountain*. Returning to St. Petersburg, he was brought up short when his mentor Balakirev criticized and refused to conduct it. It was never performed during his lifetime.

The following year, 1868, Mussorgsky started working on his masterpiece, *Boris Godunov*. He finished the score in December 1869, but the first production did not take place until February 1874. The premier of *Boris Godunov* marked the zenith of Mussorgsky's career as a composer, but the popular triumph was overshadowed by a critical drubbing in the press.

Mussorgsky resumed drinking. For a time he was able to maintain his creative output. His compositions from 1874 include the piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

In early 1881 he suffered four seizures in rapid succession. A friend, the artist Ilya Repin, painted the famous red-nosed portrait in what were to be the last days of the composer's life. A

week after his 42nd birthday, he was dead.

After Mussorgsky's death, his friends prepared his manuscripts for publication and created performing editions of his unfinished works so that they could enter the repertoire. Most of the editorial work was done by Rimsky-Korsakov. At the unveiling of a monument to him in 1885, the other members of The Five lifted the four corners of the veil.

***Night on Bald Mountain*** is an orchestral tone poem inspired by Russian literary works and legend. Mussorgsky composed it on the theme of a witches' sabbath occurring on St. John's Eve. The score is annotated with the following:

*“Conceived in 1866. Began to write for orchestra 12 June 1867, completed work on the eve of St. John's Day, 23 June 1867.”*

Elsewhere, Mussorgsky described the piece in greater detail: *“So far as my memory doesn't deceive me, the witches used to gather on this mountain, ... gossip, play tricks and await their chief—Satan. On his arrival they, i.e. the witches, formed a circle round the throne on which he sat, in the form of a kid, and sang his praise. When Satan was worked up into a sufficient passion by the witches' praises, he gave the command for the sabbath, in which he chose for himself the witches who caught his fancy. So this is what I've done. At the head of my score I've put its content: 1. Assembly of the witches, their talk and gossip; 2. Satan's journey; 3. Obscene praises of Satan; and 4. Sabbath ... The form and character of the composition are Russian and original ... I wrote St. John's Eve quickly, straight away in full score, I wrote it in about twelve days, glory to God ... While at work on St. John's Eve I didn't sleep at night and actually finished the work on the eve of St. John's Day, it seethed within me so, and I simply didn't know what was happening within me ... I see in my wicked prank an independent Russian product, free from German profundity and routine, and, like Savishna, grown on our native fields and nurtured on Russian bread.”*

In 1886, five years after Mussorgsky's death, Rimsky-Korsakov published an arrangement of the work, and it is through this version that *Night on Bald Mountain* achieved lasting fame. Premiering in Saint Petersburg in 1886, it soon became a concert favorite. Half a century later, in 1940, it achieved perhaps its greatest exposure when an arrangement of it by Leopold Stokowski, based on Rimsky-Korsakov's version, appeared in a segment of Walt Disney's animated film *Fantasia*.

***Pictures at an Exhibition*** is a suite of ten piano pieces, interleaved with a recurring Promenade theme, composed by Mussorgsky in 1874. His most famous piano composition, it has become a showpiece for virtuoso pianists. It is more widely known, though, in its arrangement for orchestra by Maurice Ravel, which we hear on this concert.

Mussorgsky had become good friends with the artist, architect, and designer Viktor Hartmann. They were both devoted to the cause of an intrinsically Russian art identity. Hartmann had given two paintings to Mussorgsky, and the composer had dedicated music to Hartmann. So when Hartmann, only 39, died suddenly of an aneurysm on 4 August 1873, it shook Mussorgsky and many others in Russia's art world. The loss plunged the composer into deep despair.

To honor Hartmann, the influential critic Vladimir Stasov, a friend of both men, helped to organize a memorial exhibition of over 400 of Hartmann's works in the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg in February and March 1874.

The following June, still feeling the loss of his friend, Mussorgsky was inspired to compose *Pictures at an Exhibition*, setting to music the experience of viewing Hartmann's memorial exhibit. The music depicts his tour of the exhibition, with each of the ten numbers of the suite serving as a musical illustration of a work by Hartmann.

There's no record of any public performance of *Pictures* during Mussorgsky's lifetime. It was left to Rimsky-Korsakov, musical executor of Mussorgsky's estate, to edit the manuscript and bring *Pictures* to the light of day.

The first arrangement for orchestra was by a student of Rimsky-Korsakov and premiered ten years after Mussorgsky's death. Others followed, but in 1922 Maurice Ravel produced the version that has remained the most popular ever since. Commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky, it has been described as "a virtuoso effort by a master colorist."

***Promenade*** — The suite begins with a bold announcement of the Promenade theme by the solo trumpet, which is then joined by the rest of the woodwinds and brass, and finally the strings. The videos that accompany the four recurring Promenades take place in spaces where the public can view artwork and interact with the artist, either metaphorically through the temporal window of a picture frame or by speaking to the present artist. The music reflects the leisurely pace of observation and absorption into unique lenses of artists.

***Gnomus*** — This gnome, designed by Hartmann, is a child's toy in the form of a nutcracker. Mussorgsky/Ravel's nutcracker is darker and more grotesque than the one in Tchaikovsky's ballet. The video shows a journey through woods populated by gnomes hiding in plain sight.

***Promenade*** — A quiet restatement of the theme by solo horn and woodwinds.

***The Old Castle*** — Among the architectural watercolors that Hartmann composed in Italy, it is interesting that the title did not appear on the list at the exhibition. The alto saxophone stands in for a troubadour singing a solo before its ancient walls.

***Promenade*** — A short reprise of the Promenade theme leads to ...

***Tuileries*** — This is a delightful depiction of the Parisian park, the Tuileries, awash with children. The children play while their caretakers and a local cat look on.

***Bydlo (Oxen)*** — The word is Polish for "cattle" and the lumbering quality of the piece describes the movement of an oxcart while the driver, embodied by the solo euphonium (tenor tuba), sings a plaintive folk tune.

***Promenade*** — A brief minor key revisit to the theme by the woodwinds and strings ...

***Ballet of Chicks in Their Shells*** — Hartmann designed ballet costumes and the chicks refer to the children dressed as eggs. The light and fleeting scoring is interspersed with the cluck of the horns.

***Portraits of Two Jewish Men: One Rich, One Poor*** — Two drawings, *A Rich Jew Wearing a*

*Fur Hat* and *A Poor Jew: Sandomierz*, were made by Hartmann in Poland and were owned by Mussorgsky. The rich man is given his voice by the strings, while in contrast the poor man is voiced by the trumpet, tasked with one of most distinctive solos in orchestra literature. The video uses historical footage to explore how people's lives are shaped by their economic condition. They are both old men, but their backgrounds and identities are still very complex.

***The Market at Limoges*** — Another one of Mussorgsky's little vignettes, the outdoor marketplace is a scene filled with people shopping and enjoying a sunny day. The video for this lively scene was filmed at local markets in Portland and Palo Alto.

***Catacombs*** —Hartmann, among other figures, appears in this painting below the streets of Paris in a catacomb. The brass section injects the beginning with an unmistakably somber, brooding mood. These dissonant chords die wistfully into the caverns of the dead.

***Cum mortuis in lingua mortua (With the Dead in a Dead Language)*** is a ghostly transformation of the *Promenade* theme. The video features books and illustrations about where we come from.

***Baba-Yaga's Hut on Fowl's Legs*** — Mussorgsky, a composer very much caught up with the nationalist sentiments of his time, was inspired by Russian folk themes. In this dark Russian fairytale, the witch Baba-Yaga chases her victims in a flying mortar, which conveniently doubles as a means to grind their bones. Ravel's unique scoring takes us along for a terrifying ride. Hartmann's painting of a metal clock, shaped like a hut on chicken legs, is one of the few surviving pictures from the original exhibition.

***The Great Gate of Kiev*** — Mussorgsky's musical rendering of the gates is based on a design for gates of stone, which were never built. Kiev never had more than wooden gates, which would hardly seem to rate the majestic ode to which Mussorgsky treats us, a solid Slavic monument adorned by Ravel's bells. It is one of the unforgettable moments in all of symphonic literature. The video depicts a processional to a Russian Orthodox church service, glowing with golden tones and symbolism.

*The descriptions of the movements are derived from notes by Jonathan Myers for the Berkshire Symphony Orchestra, October 2009 and the video artist, Mercer Hanau.*

### **A note on ekphrasis:**

An ekphrastic poem vividly describes a scene or, more frequently, a work of art. *Pictures at an Exhibition* is an ekphrastic work, as each movement describes a work of art, not in words, but in sound. In several cases in which a movement's original painting is unknown, the video component brings the sensory and artistic experiences full-circle, delivering visuals based on only a title, imagery the music suggests to the video artist, and sometimes additional background information. Each new reinterpretation puts artists and composers who are inspired by each other's work into creative conversation across time and space.

In a nod to Hartmann's artistic media of choice, the videos employ digital templates (Creation Art Effects for Adobe After Effects) that give the appearance of a variety of physical media, ranging from watercolor to pencil and pastel.

## The Orchestra

### Violin I

Rachael Susman, *Concertmaster*  
David Abbott  
Anne Haberkern  
Pamela Jacobsen  
Susan Booth Larson  
Jonathan Novack  
Sarah Novack  
Kris Oliveira  
Spencer Shao  
Sohyun Westin  
Regan Wylie

### Violin II

Robin Erickson, *Principal*  
Maria Cardona  
Nancy Downie  
Caroline Fung  
Charity Glass-Cotton  
Elle Hohn  
Kim Talbot McCoy  
Christina Reynolds  
Laura Semrau

### Viola

Bev Gibson, *Principal*  
Jane Brown  
Stephanie Gregory  
Lindsey Lane  
Adele Larson  
Jazzy Leemhuis  
Jillian Logsdan  
Ethan Smith

### Cello

Marcy England, *Principal*  
Kristin Dissinger  
Annie Harkie-Power  
Holly Hutchason  
Michelle McDowell  
Erin Ratzlaf  
Jackson Ross  
Janelle Steele

### Bass

Veronika Zeisset, *Principal*  
Carl Geczy-Haskins  
Vyatas Nagisetty  
Elizabeth Pedersen  
Deanna Pretlow  
Emily Wood

### Flute & Piccolo

Ellen Bercovitz  
Linda Hartig  
Jerry Pritchard

### Clarinet

Richard Boberg, *Principal*  
Milt Monnier

### Oboe

Sharon Ross, *Principal*  
Lindsey Meyers

### English Horn

Celeste Martinez, *Principal*

### Bassoon

Tricia Gabrielson, *Principal*  
Frank Kenny

### Alto Saxophone

Mark Pipes

### French Horn

Kippe Spear, *Principal*  
Jennifer Anderson  
Greg Gadeholt  
Heather Campbell

### Trumpet

Mayne Mihacsi, *Principal*  
Jason Bills  
Norm Schwisow  
John Galvin

### Trombone

Paul Hanau, *Principal*  
John Zagorski  
Eric Olson

### Euphonium

Paul Hanau

### Tuba

Jay Klippstein, *Principal*

### Percussion

Tom Hill, *Principal*  
Justin Johnson  
Lisa Nguyen  
Yoshie Yamasaki

### Celesta

Paul Hanau



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The BSO notes with great sadness the passing of trombonist Tim Webb, the husband of violinist Sarah Brody Webb. Tim was always ready to help fill in when an additional player was needed. He will be sorely missed.

## **Upcoming BSO Events**

To stay informed about upcoming BSO events, please sign up for email updates at our website, [www.beavertonsymphony.org](http://www.beavertonsymphony.org), and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

### **Spring Concert** – BSO and Oregon Chorale

Friday March 15, 2019 at 7:30 pm at Liberty High School, Hillsboro and

Sunday March 17, 2019 at 3:00 pm at Village Church

The Oregon Chorale joins the BSO for a special all Vaughan Williams concert featuring works for voices and orchestra.

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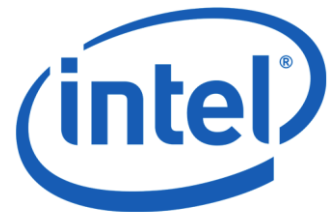


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## Travis Hatton, Music Director

Travis Hatton's versatile conducting career spans a broad range of musical organizations around the world. He has led opera and ballet companies throughout Europe and America, and has appeared as a guest conductor with orchestras in Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and in Boston, Tennessee, Indiana, California, Alaska, Colorado, Washington, Oregon and Texas. He holds a Bachelors of Music degree (awarded Magna Cum Laude) in Music Theory and Composition from the University of the Pacific and a Masters of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music.



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Beaverton Symphony Orchestra

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