

Masterpieces - The Sound of Art

Spoken Program Notes

Narrator/Artist:

Welcome to Masterpieces, The Sound of Art.

My name is ____ and I will be your gallery tour guide as we explore music inspired by great works of art.

You will also have an opportunity to watch as I create a painting onstage today inspired by the music that is being played.

The first work the band will play is Pictures at an Exhibition by Modest Mussorgsky, (MOE-dest Moo-SORG-skee) and arranged by James Curnow (CUR-noe). This was originally a piano piece, depicting a walking tour through an exhibition of drawings by artist Viktor Hartmann (VIC-tor HEART-mahn) that was arranged after his untimely death at the age of 39. Mussorgsky was great friends with Hartmann and even lent drawings from his own collection to the exhibition. Though some of the original drawings have been lost, as the band plays you'll be able to see some of Hartmann's work that inspired the music. To play Pictures at an Exhibition please welcome to the stage the ____ Band, and their conductor _____.

PLAY PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Conductor:

Thank you ladies and gentlemen, I'm _____. As you can see [Narrator/Artist] is a little busy right now so let me tell you about the next piece. Mosaic by Stephen Paulus depicts in music the many intricate pieces of a mosaic. However, instead of being represented by tiles and colour, the pieces are musical fragments. The composer's palette is made up of the colours of the different instruments, the different dynamics (or volume) of the sounds and interlocking rhythms. Though simple and out of place alone, these pieces fit together to make a cohesive whole. Mosaic, by Stephen Paulus.

PLAY MOSAIC

Narrator/Artist:

While visiting a museum composer John Gibson encountered a relief sculpture by Ms Kaethe Kollwitz (KEH-ta KOL-vits) titled "Resting in the Peace of His Hands".

Composer John Gibson knew nothing of the artist, the origin of the work or the title at the time. He knew only that the work expressed to him a remarkable sense of peace. He discovered that Kollwitz was a significant German artist who was constantly exposed to the suffering of the unfortunate and to the forgotten people of society through her husband; a doctor assigned to care for the needy. She experienced her own hardships too - losing her own son and grandson to each world war. Her artistic expression of this suffering earned her enormous respect among artists and enemies within the Nazi government.

“Resting in the Peace of His Hands” was a very personal work for Ms. Kollwitz, intended to express “the feeling of utter peace”, contrary to the major body of her work, intended to express utter torment. She intended that it be the central element in the headstone of her family tomb.

The band will now play Resting in the Peace of His Hands.

PLAY RESTING IN THE PEACE OF HIS HANDS

Conductor:

[ARTIST] has been very busy. An idea we’d like to explore today is what music and art have in common, so I’d like to ask him/her to describe his process so far.

(Ad lib. between conductor & artist - etc. colour, line, melody, background, foreground etc.)

When composers hear the word colour, they’re thinking of the sound of the different instruments and we often use the French word, timbre. Let’s listen to the different timbres of the instruments here today. Listen for each has a different ‘signature’ if you will. (Demonstrate woodwind, brass, percussion timbres)

We’re now going to take you on a gallery tour through the magnificent Louvre Museum in Paris. In 1964 NBC Television shot a documentary on the history of this great museum and the original music by Norman dello Joio won an Emmy award. The movements you’re about to hear, chronicle the Louvre’s development during the Renaissance using themes from composers of that time. To accompany this music you’ll see images of the Louvre today in all its grandeur, along with paintings from the Louvre collection. Listen for the majesty of the brass, the playfulness of the woodwinds and the pomp and ceremony of the percussion. This work is in five movements, so please hold your applause until the end.

PLAY SCENES FROM THE LOUVRE

Narrator/Artist:

Can we please give the band another hand? As you can see my painting is coming along
(Ad lib...progress update on painting)

Conductor:

[ARTIST] has been very kind in donating this work painted today to raise funds for the band. You might not know that something as simple as some beaters for the triangle cost over \$100 and the music for each piece we play costs \$100-200. So to take home this wonderful piece of art look for the silent auction box at interval and place your bid. (You don’t have to take it home wet tonight - [ARTIST] has agreed to look after it while it takes two weeks to dry!).

Narrator/Artist:

Before we play the next piece I wanted to draw your attention to a slip that you have in your programs.

You will find a “**FRIENDS OF THE BAND FORM**”.

Please take a moment to complete them with your name, your email and your phone number and drop your completed form in the box in the foyer to be eligible to win four tickets to our next concert _____ and also a print drawn by [Member of the Band].

The band as always will be seeking feedback in evaluations sent by email and phone surveys. Please take a moment to complete the form and win some great prizes, even if you're already on our mailing list. We'll draw the prize at the end of today's concert.

If you've seen our posters, flyers and programs you've already seen the painting that inspired our next piece Blue and Green Music by Samuel Hazo (HAY-zo). It was painted by American artist Georgia O'Keeffe in 1921. She wanted to express the “idea that music could be translated into something for the eye” - similar to what I'm doing here today onstage. Composer Samuel Hazo took it as his job to translate it back to something for the ear.

The entire piece is based on one musical theme. Although Hazo tried to make certain parts of the music tie to specific aspects in the painting he didn't want the listener to be influenced by his decisions. He says, in fact: The more I go over the piece, the more I can see many different match ups of musical and visual textures. After this piece we will take a short intermission. This is 'Blue and Green Music'.

PLAY BLUE AND GREEN MUSIC

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INTERMISSION

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Conductor:

Welcome back everyone. We hope you took the time to enjoy the artworks in the foyer created by our multitalented musicians.

The next piece is **Colours** by Roger Cichy (SEE-chee), an impressionistic work based not so much on the outward appearance of each colour, but rather the pigments that are combined to produce the particular colour. Taken a step further, the composer has drawn on the symbolism of each colour - for example green symbolising warmth, organic, immortality and neutrality. Each colour was chosen to contrast sharply against those around it. So in this piece, let your imagination run wild at what each colour might symbolise for you, and what it may have meant to the composer. This work has six movements, please hold your applause to the end.

PLAY COLOURS

Narrator/Artist:

Well, as you can see ladies and gentlemen I've been hard at work and the painting is really taking shape.

Conductor:

Michael can you tell us a bit more about how you built up the painting?

Narrator/Artist:

Colour, light to dark, balance foreground and background.

Conductor:

What we thought we'd demonstrate is how similar [ARTIST'S] painting is to how we create a beautiful rich band sound. We can divide the instruments in the band into three basic groups of high, middle and low voices. Different balances of these musical colours create music that sounds and feels different, just like the balance of colours would alter your impression of a painting. We start with the lowest sounds as our foundation, and the strongest sound. Then we add the middle so it sits on top of that, slightly quieter, then finally we add the highest instruments, the icing on the cake. [PLAY]

It would be very difficult to make out Michael's painting if he started with the highlights first then worked on filling in the background, and so it is with us. If we have the highest instruments play first, then the middle then the low, it sounds very different. [PLAY]

Narrator/Artist:

The next piece is a great example of that beautiful, rich, balanced sound to reflect warm, glowing light. Eric Whitacre's Lux Aurumque (LOOKS A-ROOM-kway) translates as "Light and Gold" and was originally composed for a cappella choir with words from poet Edward Esch (ESH):

"Light, warm, and heavy,
Pure, pure like gold,
They sing and sing and sing,
To the newborn babe"

Ladies and gentlemen, Lux Aurumque.

PLAY LUX AURUMQUE

Narrator/Artist:

It's been a delight taking you on this musical and artistic tour today and we've nearly reached our grand finale. But before we seduce you with Picasso's Spanish passion we'd like to draw our prize for four tickets to our next concert _____, on _____ - featuring So the winner of the tickets and this print is.....

Conductor:

It's been marvellous seeing this painting take shape today and it's time to announce the winner of our silent auction who'll get to take home this great painting (once the paint has dried!).

Thank you again for joining us and we do hope to see you at [NEXT CONCERT].

Could you please join me in thanking our volunteers X, Y & Z. Finally can we put our hands together for our very own artist in residence today [ARTIST].

Narrator/Artist:

Our final piece today is called, Pablo! It depicts the various stages of creativity in the life of world renowned artist Pablo Picasso. The music is divided into five distinct sections:

The Main Theme – very Spanish in style - depicting the town Malaga where Picasso was born in 1881.

Variation 1 depicts Picasso's sombre Blue Period which was started as a result to the suicide of his friend.

Fellow artist Carlos Casagemas (Ka-sa-JEY-mas). Casagema's musical name is spelt out in musical notes: C-A-A-G-E-A).

Variation 2 depicts the lighter rose period, often depicting harlequins and jugglers.

Variation 3 employs minimalist techniques to represent Picasso's "Cubist" technique in which images were broken down into smaller fragments then reorganized.

Variation 4 depicts Picasso's love of the bullfight. I will remind you now to Listen out for the toreadors!

PLAY PABLO!