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91423



914230



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## Level 3 Music Studies, 2018

### 91423 Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work

9.30 a.m. Monday 26 November 2018  
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work.	Examine in depth the influence of context on a substantial music work.	Examine perceptively the influence of context on a substantial music work.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should answer ONE of the essay questions in this booklet.**

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Excellence

TOTAL

07

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**INSTRUCTIONS**

Write an essay on a substantial music work that you have studied, in response to ONE of the questions below.

Give the details of the work in the box at the top of page 3.

**QUESTIONS** (Choose ONE)

1. Regardless of the genre, music-making often involves people with specialist skills in order to be effective.  
With reference to this statement, discuss the role of specialisation in the conception, production and interpretation of your chosen work.
2. Music has long been regarded as a way for people to communicate and share stories, meanings and beliefs.  
Discuss the role of communication in the conception, production and interpretation of your chosen work.
3. Once a music work has become well-known, it may be interpreted in different ways by musicians in different contexts. These interpretations may involve a change of style.  
Compare and contrast different stylistic interpretations of your chosen work, referring to the conception, production and interpretation of the music.
4. Music is best appreciated for its own sake without reference to any external factors. In fact, knowledge of the background of a music work may distract the listener.  
Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this statement, with reference to the conception, production and interpretation of your chosen work.

Work title(s): Pictures at an Exhibition

Composer(s) /performer(s): Modest Mussorgsky /Maurice Ravel Instrumentation

Genre/style/period: Romantic period

### **PLANNING (OPTIONAL)**

Consider the following aspects of the work:

- its conception
- its production
- its interpretation.



You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 750 words. The quality of your ideas is more important than the length of your essay.

Support your response with musical evidence from the work(s). Manuscript paper is provided on page 9 in case you wish to include musical quotations.

Begin your essay here:

Question number: 2

"Music is a language with no barriers." This is a quote that has been used throughout time that expresses the powerful messages that music can convey, regardless of who it is trying to reach. This saying is clearly evident <sup>in</sup> Mussorgsky's work, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which utilises the power of music to share numerous stories and ideas to those who listen to it. //

Composed in 1874, *Pictures at an Exhibition* is a ten-movement piano suite, with additional recurring themes scattered in between the movements. The work was written in remembrance of Mussorgsky's friend and revered artist, Viktor Hartmann, who had passed away in 1873 from an aneurysm. After his death, around 400 of Hartmann's works were displayed at an exhibition, which Mussorgsky personally attended. Fascinated by the works, Mussorgsky selected ten artworks and composed music to fit the theme of each artwork, resulting in the development of this suite. However, only artworks 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 have survived //



to this day, meaning that we cannot be sure of exactly which artworks inspired the other movements. Ravel's orchestration of the work in 1922, is known to be one of the greatest orchestrations of any musical work, giving Mussorgsky's music a new sense of life and vibrancy. This orchestration will also be discussed. //

Being based upon artworks, Mussorgsky and Ravel aimed to share the stories and meanings behind Hartmann's art through the form of music.

The suite's 5th movement, "Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks" interprets Hartmann drawing of a children's ballet from "Trilby", where ~~the~~ the children are dressed as chicks in eggshells. In this movement, Mussorgsky sets ~~the~~ a  $\frac{2}{4}$  meter and Vivace tempo, matching the lively atmosphere of the children's dance. He also applies a consistent use of staccato movement, mimicking the playful nature of the "chicks". Ravel further adds to this effect through his instrumentation, where he allocates acciaccatura-bound <sup>①</sup> staccato notes to the upper end of the woodwind and strings sections, being carried by the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and violins. By voicing these short and jumpy notes in the top register, Ravel adds further bounce and liveliness to the music, allowing listeners to visualise the ballet itself through melodic ideas. To contrast the idea of these chicks hopping around on stage, Ravel gives //



the lower-end of the ensemble an ascending <sup>chromatic</sup> bassline, which gives listeners a slight feeling of suspense, as if the chicks' clumsiness will cause them to fall at any moment. In section B of the movement, the flutes, oboes and violin play a set of very light trills, which conveys the motion of newborn chicken flapping its wings and calling out to each other, which is answered by the rest of the ensemble. Mussorgsky incorporates various compositional devices which Ravel further enhances in bringing this movement to life, allowing Hartmann's story of the ballet to be received by listeners through this carefully and brilliantly crafted movement. //

Movement nine of the suite, "The Hut on Hen's Legs" depicts Hartmann's drawing of a clock house, which is said to be the home of Baba Yaga, an evil witch ~~is~~ in Russian folklore. As a Russian nationalistic composer who preferred to explore traditional and distinctively "Russian-sounding" music as opposed to the ~~likes~~ likes of conservatory-trained composers such as Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky showed great interest in this work and aimed to share the story of this Russian folklore through his music. To convey the dark and cunning nature of this witch, Mussorgsky uses many instances of dissonance and ascending chromatic movement to build suspense. //



and to create a feeling that the witch is sneaking up on her prey and could strike at any moment. Section A also consists of a trumpet fanfare-like theme, which possibly symbolises the witch's triumphant-position as she flies above the scared and helpless people. As opposed to the fast-paced and agitated nature of the first section, Ravel employs the use of quieter and more mellow voices such as the clarinets and flutes in Section B, although much tension is still being created through the use of Mussorgsky's harmonic dissonance. Here, listeners can imagine a scene where the witch is trying out her spells, with sudden and sparse hits on the glockenspiel<sup>②</sup> possibly mimicking her reaction when something succeeds. Although these ideas have been well interpreted by Mussorgsky from the basis of Hartmann's artwork, Ravel adds further colour to the movement through his creative choice of timbre, allowing listeners to fully engage with the music and <sup>immerse</sup> ~~immerse~~ themselves within the story, which is what all music should aim to convey. //

The final movement "The Great Gate of Kiev" is based on Hartmann's drawing of a grand gate, embellished with distinct Russian patterns and ornaments. As a nationalist, Mussorgsky showed great patriotism towards his country, and he aimed to convey these nationalistic beliefs. //



through his music. The theme of the movement is written in the Eb major diatonic scale, often used to symbolise triumph and grandness. Mussorgsky's choice of "grand" chords aided by Ravel's brass orchestration and trumpet solo<sup>③</sup> imitates the proud Russian spirit; a mass chorale singing in a church or cathedral. Mussorgsky expresses his pride in his culture through this section, and portrays this belief to listeners. In Section B, Mussorgsky takes inspiration from a Russian Orthodox hymn and weaves this between his melodic ideas, once again showing patriotism and desire to showcase his country's music. The intent of this hymn is to explore the stillness of each individual's spirit, and Ravel orchestrates this meaning through mellow timbre in the clarinets, oboes and flute, which is aided by quiet and light movement in the rest of the ensemble. Through the use of allusions to various other musical ideas, Mussorgsky is able to incorporate elements of traditional Russian sounds and share this idea and his own belief of Russian nationalism with listeners, and Ravel further adds to this through his own unique approach to the music. //

Although written solely with a purpose to ~~remember~~ remember and cherish the life of Hartmann, what Mussorgsky created was a suite of music that conveyed meaningful ideas and shared powerful stories with its listeners. The suite has survived the test of time and <sup>has</sup> given Mussorgsky an everlasting mark in the history of music, sharing his stories with many more generations to come.



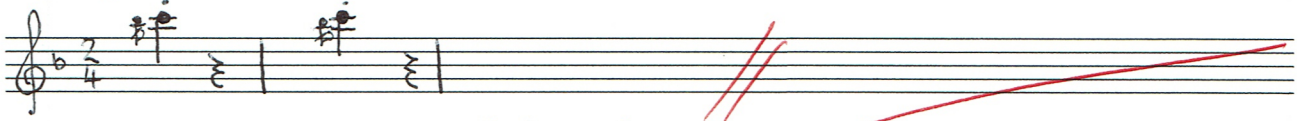
# MUSICAL QUOTATIONS (OPTIONAL)

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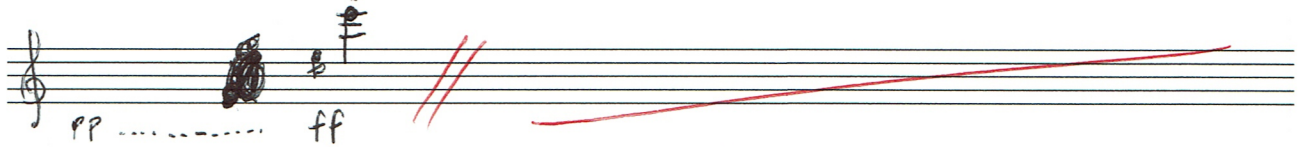
Make sure it is clear which part of your answer any quotation relates to.

- ① Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks - Flute/Oboe/Clarinet

virace



- ② The Hut on Hen's Legs - Glockenspiel



- ③ The Great Gate of Kiev - Opening trumpet solo



## Excellence Exemplar 2018

Subject	Level 3 Music		Standard	91423	Total score	07
Q	Grade score	Annotation				
1	E7	<p>There is an insightful discussion throughout this response on the role of communication in a range of aspects of the conception, production and interpretation of the work. The candidate makes frequent use of well-chosen musical examples combined with accurate musical terminology. Each paragraph has a clearly defined purpose and relates specifically to a perceptive response to the question. This essay could have been even further enhanced by more consideration to the ways in which aspects of context have combined to shape the overall musical work.</p>				