



### The Big Idea

***Listening to and exploring pieces of music by great composers enhances students' appreciation of the music of different eras, such as the Renaissance.***

#### Text Resources

73 Ludwig van Beethoven

#### What Students Should Already Know

Students in Core Knowledge schools will be familiar with

- the music of Grieg, Hubert, Rogus, Saint-Saëns
- composers: Mozart, Prokofiev, Humperdinck, Dukas, and Tchaikovsky
- Vivaldi and *The Four Seasons*
- Bach and *Minuet in G major*; *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*; *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*
- Beethoven and *Symphony no. 6 ("Pastoral")*: first movement and from "Thunderstorm" to end of symphony
- Tchaikovsky and *Suite from Swan Lake*
- Sousa and *Stars and Stripes Forever*
- Copland and *Fanfare for the Common Man*; "Hoedown" from *Rodeo*, "Simple Gifts" from *Appalachian Spring*
- Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*, part one: "The Sea and Sinbad's Ship"
- Handel and "Hallelujah Chorus" from *Messiah*
- Haydn and *Symphony no. 94 ("Surprise")*
- Mozart and selections from *The Magic Flute*, including: Overture; Introduction, "Zu Hilfe! Zu Hilfe!" (Tamino, Three Ladies); Aria, "Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja" (Papageno); Recitative and Aria, "O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn!" (Queen of the Night); Aria, "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen" (Papageno); Duet, "Pa-pa-gena! Pa-pa-geno!" (Papageno and Papagena); Finale, Recitative and Chorus, "Die Strahlen der Sonne" (Sarastro and Chorus)
- Gregorian chant

#### What Students Need to Learn

- Ludwig van Beethoven: *Symphony no. 5*
- Modest Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition* (as orchestrated by Ravel)
- Renaissance music (such as choral works by Josquin Desprez, and lute songs by John Dowland)
- Felix Mendelssohn: Overture, Scherzo, and Wedding March from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

#### What Students Will Learn in Future Grades

In Grade 6, students will extend their learning about classical music by studying the baroque, classical, and romantic periods.

## II. Listening and Understanding

### Materials

#### Instructional Masters 60–62

*Music Appreciation Ideas for Young Students*, p. 402

*Questions to Ask Students About Music*, p. 402

*A Classical Crossword*, p. 405

#### CD, audiotope, or videotape

*Symphony no. 5*, Beethoven, pp. 402–403

*Pictures at an Exhibition (as orchestrated by Ravel)*, Mussorgsky, pp. 404–406

Renaissance music of Desprez and Dowland, pp. 406–407

*Overture, Scherzo, and Wedding March from A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mendelssohn, p. 407

**recordings of Renaissance music**, p. 406

**information on a local lute player**, p. 408

**photographs of lutes and recordings of lute music**, p. 408

**chart paper**, p. 408

### Vocabulary

#### Student/Teacher Vocabulary

**chamber music**: music intended for performance in a small room (or chamber) by only a few musicians (T)

**choral**: relating to a chorus or a choir (S)

**incidental music**: music used in a play (or movie) to create a mood or enhance the dramatic action (S)

**lute**: a stringed instrument related to the guitar but with its own distinctive timbre; the most popular solo instrument during the Renaissance (S)

**motet**: in the Renaissance, a choral composition, generally based on a sacred text (T)

**overture**: an instrumental piece played before the start of a dramatic work such as a play or opera, sometimes introducing musical ideas to be heard later in the work (S)

**promenade**: a stately walk, or music that accompanies such a walk (T)

**scherzo**: “joke”; an energetic, rhythmically driven piece (or movement), often lighthearted and often in a meter of three (S)

**symphony**: a musical piece for a large orchestra; usually consists of four movements or sections (S)

#### Domain Vocabulary

*Ludwig van Beethoven and associated words:*

Haydn, classical, Romantic era, Bonn, Vienna, deafness, early middle and late periods, “Ode to Joy,” motif, unified, Fate

*Modest Mussorgsky and associated words:*

The Mighty Handful, folk music, Night on Bald Mountain, orchestration, exhibition, “Gnomus,” “Il Vecchio Castello,” “Tulleries,” “Bydlo,” “Limoges,” “Baba Yaga,” “Kiev,” ballet, catacombs

*Renaissance and associated words:*

art, architecture, Josquin Desprez, John Dowland, masses, church, liturgy, lute songs

*Felix Mendelssohn and associated words:*

Shakespeare, Puck, Wedding March

*Instruments and associated words:*

orchestra, strings (violin, viola, cello, bass), woodwinds (flute, piccolo, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, saxophone), brass (trumpet, trombone, french horn, tuba), percussion (timpani, snare drum, xylophone, glockenspiel, tambourine, bass drum), guitar, keyboard, piano, organ, harpsichord

*Musical forms and associated words:*

concerto, opera, song, string quartet, march, dance, sonata, movement, suite





## Cross-curricular Connections

### Language Arts

#### Fiction and Drama

Drama

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### History and Geography

#### World: The Renaissance and the Reformation

The Renaissance

### Visual Arts

#### Art of the Renaissance

## At a Glance

The most important ideas for you are:

- Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer whose works had unparalleled importance in changing musical styles at the start of the 19th century.
- Beethoven's nine symphonies are some of the most important and influential works in all of classical music. His *Symphony no. 5*, beginning with the famous four-note figure, shows his masterful style.
- Modest Mussorgsky was one of the most original and accomplished Russian composers of the 19th century. He belonged to a group that wanted to create a new and distinctly Russian style.
- Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* is a musical depiction of an exhibition of paintings and drawings by a friend of the composer.
- The period of the Renaissance was, in music as in the other arts, a time of major stylistic advances that broke away from the limitations of the Middle Ages.
- Josquin Desprez was one of the foremost composers of the Renaissance, known for his expressive vocal works. John Dowland was a prolific Renaissance composer, noted particularly for his writing for the lute.
- Felix Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is incidental music meant to accompany Shakespeare's play, but it became popular on its own as well.

## What Teachers Need to Know

### A. Composers and Their Music

#### Ludwig van Beethoven: *Symphony no. 5*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) is one of the central figures in the history of European classical music and in many ways the most influential. His life spanned a period of major stylistic advancement in music, and many of the innovations of his personal style guided the next several generations of composers. His earliest works are in a classical style very similar to that of his teacher, Haydn. But early on, he began developing the distinctive voice that was to be so

## II. Listening and Understanding

fundamental to the composers of the Romantic era. He wrote more adventurous music that used startling extremes to obtain expressive effects never before heard.

Beethoven was born in the German town of Bonn, the son of a local musician. After a childhood spent cultivating his musical talent, he moved to Vienna to study with Haydn and pursue a career as a composer and pianist. He would stay there for the rest of his life.

His reputation as one of the greatest composers of the era grew steadily. During the first decade of the 19th century, his name and works became known throughout Europe. He was known for having remarkably bad manners and a hot temper, but we now know part of the reason why his behavior often seemed antisocial—he was gradually going deaf. The knowledge that his hearing was slowly failing embarrassed and depressed him deeply. For a while he kept it a secret, knowing that it would be a great humiliation for a composer to admit he was unable to hear. He was essentially completely deaf by 1819. For the last 10 years of his life he composed without being able to hear a note of what he had written, guided only by his inner ear and the skills he had learned from a lifetime of composition. <sup>73</sup>

Musicians often refer to Beethoven's works as being divided into three periods, each with its own distinctive style. His early period, 1794–1800, contains works written within the tradition he inherited from Haydn. The middle period, 1801–1814, contains most of Beethoven's most beloved works. These pieces show him in full command of a more expansive and freely expressive style than what preceded. The late period, 1814–1827, found Beethoven's style becoming more and more personal and challenging. The most famous of the late works is his great *Symphony no. 9*, the choral finale of which contains one of the world's most celebrated melodies, the "Ode to Joy."

Beethoven composed in many genres, including an opera, *Fidelio* (1805–1814), a *Violin Concerto* (1808), songs, and many chamber works (works for small instrumental groups). However, his greatest achievements are generally held to be his sets of five piano concertos, 32 piano sonatas, 16 string quartets, and the nine symphonies.

Beethoven's nine symphonies are central to the orchestral repertoire and, in the 200 years since their composition, have always been considered some of the greatest achievements in classical music. *Symphony no. 5* (1807–1808) is one of the most familiar of the symphonies, with its opening phrase among the most widely known musical motifs in the world. The symphony is a good example of two aspects of composition that particularly interested Beethoven. First, he liked to compose music by assembling small, simple building blocks to make larger structures. Second, he didn't want the separate movements of his symphonies to feel like several unrelated pieces, so he created different kinds of connections between the movements to make the symphony feel more unified, like one long piece.

The first movement is the most famous example of Beethoven's ability to construct elaborate works using a single, simple idea as a building block. Almost everyone can hum the first four notes of this movement, but it is what happens afterward that shows Beethoven's genius. The entire movement is built around the

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Music Appreciation Ideas for Young Students

These appreciation can be assigned and difficult for students. It is important to engage students and reach them how to learn to music. There are a number of ideas that could be used over a series of lessons. It is important for students to have to the music multiple times, as their activities could take place over the course of a week.

1. First, ask students about listening behavior (e.g., listening quiet, closing eyes, leaning on their heads).
2. Ask students to close their eyes and listen to selections of the music (about 10 minutes).
3. Ask students to tell about or draw how the music makes them feel. (This could easily connect, warm up and follow-up.) Ask students to listen to more about the music.
4. Ask students to identify any instruments they hear in the music.
5. Ask students to move carefully to the music. (Provide structure for this to the music, could easily get out of control.)
6. Ask students how the music makes them feel. How was the feeling described in the pieces of music?
7. Ask students the name of the piece and the composer. Show students on a map where the composer lived. Ask students to draw about the background of the composer and the piece.
8. Read stories that tell the story of the music to words and pictures. Read the lesson multiple times and have the piece in the story in the music.
9. Play the music at the background during quiet time (as only as loud as possible to a listening center). This will allow students to "internalize" the music.
10. Read examples where the music is used in stories or commercials. This will demonstrate to students how music plays a part in our lives.

Source: 80 Grade 5 Music

Use Instructional Master 60.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions to Ask Students About Music

1. Is this piece "real," meaningful, or just a song? (Ask the following questions: Do you like it? Do you like it because it's a song? Which instruments do you hear?)
2. Is this music good or bad? (Ask: How do you feel about it? Do you like it?)
3. What is the story of this piece? (Ask: Do you have an imagination and could you tell the story?)
4. What story is the composer telling to the piece? (Ask: Do you have a story for this music?)
5. Do you hear/feel any music in this piece?
6. How does this music make you feel? (Ask: Do you like the piece of music? Why or why not?)

Source: 81 Grade 5 Music

Use Instructional Master 61.





four-note motif. Listen as Beethoven uses that simple idea in all sorts of different ways: stringing several versions of it in a row or stacking it up on top of itself, extending or abbreviating it, bringing it into the foreground or pushing it into the background, using one statement of it to punctuate another, etc. Every section of the movement seems to develop as a natural outgrowth of that little four-note phrase.

As in most symphonies of Beethoven's time, the second movement is slow. Many slow movements of that era are songlike in melody and construction, and this one is no exception. Two gentle, singable tunes alternate through the movement: the first has a lilting quality and finishes with the winds making a beautiful "sigh"; the second has a more steady and noble tone. These themes are varied each time they appear with more and more elaborate decoration by the strings.

The third movement is called Scherzo, which means "joke." (In some versions it might be called "Allegro.") It was traditional for third movements of symphonies to be rather fast and light, and they almost always took the form of either a minuet (a light dance in a meter of  $\frac{3}{4}$ ) or scherzo (an energetic, rhythmically driven piece, also often in  $\frac{3}{4}$ ). This particular scherzo, however, is uncharacteristically dark and heavy. In many ways, its main theme is more of a march than a scherzo. However, the middle section, with its scurrying strings, captures something of the traditional spirit of a scherzo. Notice that the marchlike music is based on a rhythm that is essentially the same as the four-note phrase from the first movement. This rhythm appears in all four movements and helps tie the piece together as a whole. The prominent way it is used in this third movement makes sure that the audience can hear the relationship.

Instead of the traditional break between movements, Beethoven writes the third movement so that it leads directly into the fourth movement without any pause. This is another way in which he indicates that he is thinking of the symphony as one large unified piece, and not as four disconnected movements. The fourth movement is triumphant in spirit. By connecting the movements in this way, Beethoven creates the effect that the triumph of the final movement is a resolution to the dark, ominous quality of the preceding movements. To make this effect even stronger, Beethoven puts a little reminder of the third movement into the fourth, just before the ending. This emphasizes the way that the triumphant finale "answers" the earlier movement.

The symphony is often discussed as being representative of man's struggle with (and ultimate triumph over) Fate. This is accomplished through repetition of the insistent motif from the first movement. Interpretations of this sort were extremely popular in the 19th century.

## Modest Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Until the second half of the 19th century, Russia had no real classical music tradition of its own, and Russian composers generally wrote in styles modeled after the great German composers. In the 1860s, five major Russian composers formed a group (nicknamed the "Mighty Handful," after the five fingers of the hand) that was dedicated to creating a truly Russian style of classical music that would not be as derivative of the music of western Europe. The most original and noteworthy of these five was Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881). While other

### Teaching Idea

The coda to the final movement of Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5* prominently features the piccolo; this is one of the earliest pieces to make use of the piccolo. What does it bring to the texture? How does Beethoven use the instruments of the orchestra to enhance the effect of his symphony? While listening to the piece, discuss its orchestration as a class. Pay attention to the contrast between phrases played by solo instruments, phrases played by whole sections of the orchestra, and phrases played by the entire orchestra.

### Teaching Idea

Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5* is more than half an hour long and is one of the most structurally elaborate works that students will have studied to this point. Allow sufficient time for the class to become familiar with the piece. This will require many repeated listenings and perhaps even more active involvement with the themes of the different movements. You may wish to have the class break into 4 groups, and assign each to study 1 of the 4 movements and present their findings to the class. Make copies of the score available to these groups and encourage them to identify the major themes and structures of each movement.



## II. Listening and Understanding

### Teaching Idea

Pictures of Mussorgsky show that he was a large man, weighing nearly 300 pounds. The theme in *Pictures at an Exhibition*, stated over and over again, suggests a very large man walking along. Without specifically mentioning this to students, have them walk to the music. Then ask how a person who walks to such a “ponderous” movement might look (or what his or her size might be).

### Teaching Idea

Once students understand the premise of the piece and have had the titles of the individual movements explained to them, have them draw what they imagine the pictures to look like. Some editions of the score include pictures similar to those that inspired the music. (The original pictures have been lost.) Some of these are also available online. You can show them to students, but only after they have created their own versions. Ask students how the composer depicts these images with musical sounds.

members of the “Mighty Handful” attempted to create the Russian sound by using melodies from Russian folk songs, Mussorgsky did not borrow any actual melodies, but adapted his compositional style to have audible similarities of harmony and rhythm to the style of Russian folk music. His compositions do indeed sound somehow “Russian,” even though they are completely original.

Mussorgsky did not receive much training as a composer, and as a result, his music is not always particularly polished. On the other hand, many people feel that the raw and sometimes surprising sounds that he composed only enhance the appeal of his works and contribute to the sense that they are somehow as native to Russia as its folk music.

Mussorgsky’s greatest achievement is his opera *Boris Godunov* (1874) but far better known are two other works—*Night on Bald Mountain* (1867) (which many people know from the memorable sequence in the film *Fantasia*), and *Pictures at an Exhibition*. In 1874, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by the Russian artist Victor Hartmann was held in Moscow. Hartmann was a close friend of Mussorgsky’s and had been attempting to do for the visual arts what Mussorgsky and the “Mighty Handful” wanted to do for music—create a Russian style that did not depend on foreign influences. Mussorgsky attended the exhibition and was inspired to depict several of the artworks in musical form. The work he composed not only represents these works but also the person who is viewing them. This helps tie the unrelated images into a more cohesive whole structured around the idea of the exhibition.

Mussorgsky originally wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition* for piano, but in 1924, the French composer Maurice Ravel arranged the music for orchestra. It is in the orchestrated form that the work is most often heard.

As you play the piece for your students, stop and discuss the items below.

- Promenade

The piece opens with a stately theme, which is meant to represent the composer (or any viewer at the exhibition) as he or she strolls from one picture to the next. This theme will return occasionally throughout the piece, and is the one idea that ties the whole set together.

1. “Gnomus” (The Gnome)

The image is of a threatening and grotesque dwarf.

- Promenade

The viewer quietly walks onward to a reprise of the Promenade theme.

2. “Il Vecchio Castello” (The Old Castle)

This picture depicts a night scene of an Italian castle, with a singer standing in the foreground. The music, in imitation of Italian folk music, is mysterious and shifting, appropriate to a night setting. Eventually the song drifts away into the distance. Listen for Ravel’s rare orchestral use of the saxophone.

- Promenade

Another brief reprise of the Promenade, this one is more forceful than before.

3. “Tuileries” (Famous Garden in Paris)

The scene portrays children at play in the park having an argument. The sounds of the children are depicted quite literally: the opening figure mimics the universal taunting melody of “nyah-nyah!” which is interspersed with quick, light, bubbling figures that sound very much like children’s giggling laughter. Wind instruments (flutes, clarinets, piccolos) are used to depict the children.



#### 4. "Bydlo"

This movement portrays an image of a huge, heavy Polish ox-wagon, making its lumbering way down the road. Listen to the way Mussorgsky uses a steady, rocking figure in the bass to give a sense of the wagon's weight.

#### • Promenade

This version of the Promenade begins quite tentatively—perhaps something has troubled the viewer. However, the next picture will probably lighten his spirits; we hear a brief preview of it before the final notes of this movement.

#### 5. "Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells"

The original drawing that inspired this movement was of whimsical "unhatched egg" costumes for a ballet. The music imagines a comical dance of chickens and eggs, using chirping sounds that imitate the actual sounds of chicks. Clarinets are used to depict the chickens' chirping sounds.

#### 6. "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle"

Sometimes called "The Rich Jew and the Poor Jew," this movement is a response to two contrasting portraits—one of a rich businessman, and the other of a shivering beggar in the street. The imposing and severe theme of the rich man, and the chattering desperation of the beggar, are heard first separately and then combined.

#### 7. "Limoges: The Marketplace"

In this scene, women argue in a bustling French marketplace. The frantic and constant movement of the music captures the sense of the endless activity of the marketplace. The piece seems to capture the cries of the different sellers and combines them in a progressively more chaotic and surprising way, each interrupting the previous.

#### 8. "Catacombs: Sepulchrum Romanum"

In this drawing, the artist himself is seen in the Roman catacombs in Paris, an underground system of tunnels and burial chambers with skulls stacked on the ground nearby. Ominous chords capture the gloom and power of the scene.

#### • "Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua" (Speaking to the Dead in a Dead Language)

Mussorgsky explained this movement as representing his reaction to the drawing of the catacombs. In the drawing, the artist can be seen examining ancient skulls. Mussorgsky envisioned this as a sort of conversation between the living and the dead, and he is prompted to his own thoughts on death. The Promenade theme returns, but altered, as though seen through the murk of the catacombs. The whole piece is colored by shifting chords reflecting thoughts of mortality.

#### 9. "The Hut on Fowls' Legs"

This movement is also known as "Baba Yaga." Baba Yaga was a witch from Russian folklore who lived in a hut that could walk on the legs of a bird. Her hut not only had a bird's legs but also could fly, aided by the blood of victims who were crushed when the house landed. Students should be able to identify what is going on in this piece, based on a description of the hut and what it represents. The pounding, rhythmic opening notes suggest a giant bird, bouncing on its legs. A quieter chase theme follows, in which the hut obviously gains speed and leaps into the air. The quiet, steady theme on the violins represents the house circling, looking for a victim. There is an almost cartoonlike quality to the rhythm. It is followed by a lower and lower tone, as the house circles, until a single chord shows that the hut has thudded to the ground, presumably on top of a victim. Soon enough, the pounding rhythm returns, and the hut begins to bound into the air, building to a frenzy that leads immediately into . . .

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### A Classical Crossword

Match the words and their clues to complete the puzzle.

|      |            |         |             |        |
|------|------------|---------|-------------|--------|
| LUTE | EXHIBITION | DOWLAND | RENAISSANCE | RUSSIA |
| NOTE | SCHERZO    | DREAM   | BEETHOVEN   | CODA   |

**Across**

- German composer Ludwig van \_\_\_\_\_
- period of great advances in the arts
- Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's \_\_\_\_\_
- Mussorgsky's native land
- final part of a musical composition
- Symphony no. 5's first movement: four \_\_\_\_\_ mood

**Down**

- English Renaissance composer John \_\_\_\_\_
- Mussorgsky's Pictures at an \_\_\_\_\_
- nickname of Symphony no. 5's third movement (meaning "joke")
- most popular solo instrument during \_\_\_\_\_

**And Incidentally . . .** Explain in your own words what "incidental music" is. Think of a film or play you've seen that used incidental music, and then describe its effect.

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Use Instructional Master 62.



## II. Listening and Understanding

### 10. "The Great Gate of Kiev"

This movement, the final piece in the set, is a response to an architectural drawing of an enormous gate, imagined in a traditional Russian style. The great, noble theme that Mussorgsky uses to depict the gate also expresses a patriotic sentiment. This same sentiment can be felt in the quiet hymnlike passages that interrupt the main theme. Toward the end of the piece, the set as a whole is wrapped up by the introduction of the Promenade. A grand final statement of the "Gate" theme, suggesting a grand and royal procession through the gate, follows.

## B. Musical Connections

### The Renaissance

Note that Renaissance music is closely connected with the Renaissance topics in the History section (pp. 164–168), as well as with certain topics in the Visual Arts and Language Arts sections. We suggest that you teach about Renaissance music in tandem with your study of other aspects of the Renaissance. Your students' understanding of the works discussed below will be much increased if they are able to connect the composers and music described in this section to the humanists, patrons, and city-states described in the History section.

As in the other arts, the Renaissance was a time of great advances in the sophistication and variety of music. Before the Renaissance and during the Middle Ages, music was written under considerable limitations—some resulting from the limited theoretical understanding of music, and some resulting from the specific religious and ceremonial purpose of most musical composition. As the Renaissance began in the mid-15th century, a rising interest in the rich artistic cultures of ancient Greece and Rome inspired composers to try to write more expressive works. Attention began to be devoted to music theory, and as a result, a much broader, more sophisticated musical language became available to Renaissance composers. This change, of course, took place very gradually over a long period of time.

One of the greatest Renaissance composers was Josquin Desprez [zyos-CAN duh-PRAY] (c.1445–1521). His works are some of the finest of the entire Renaissance, despite the fact that he lived at the very beginning of this period. His music is entirely for voice, which was the norm for his time; before the late 15th century, instrumental music was almost never notated or published. Desprez's major works are masses (large works based on the church liturgy for use in services) and motets (shorter vocal works, usually in four parts, based on Latin texts). His reputation rests in great part on the expressive qualities of his writing for voice; he was a master of capturing the emotion of a text in his music and making sure the text could be understood. His music communicated with its audience in a way no music had before. If you wish to play Desprez's music for students, try the CD *Josquin Desprez: Motets & Chansons*.

John Dowland (1562–1626) was an English Renaissance composer, famed for his lute songs. A lute is a stringed instrument played somewhat like a guitar, but with a different and distinctive timbre. The lute was the most popular solo instrument of the Renaissance. For this reason, many composers, such as Dowland, wrote songs for a solo singer to be accompanied on the lute. Dowland's songs are noted for their subtle and expressive attention to the texts. Such songs also mark the first time that the melody of a work and its accompaniment were written out

### Cross-curricular Teaching Idea

The sounds of Renaissance music may seem new and different to students. The most important thing for them is to become accustomed to the musical world of that era. Play recordings of Renaissance music while studying Renaissance art and history. This will help set the scene; this will also help students to build associations and a sense of the cultural context for those less familiar musical sounds. Ask students if they see connections among the music, the paintings, and the architecture of the Renaissance.

### Teaching Idea

If recordings of Dowland's songs are available, listen to the words and discuss with the class the ways in which the music attempts to capture their emotions. Since the words are really Elizabethan poems, some of which can be hard to understand, you may want to discuss the lyrics before playing a song. If you can't find a recording in your community, check for recordings online.





in full. In the past, the instrumental accompaniment had either been improvised or simply passed from performer to performer. It was typical of the Renaissance spirit, however, to begin devoting artistic attention to the composition of the instrumental accompaniment. You may wish to acquire the boxed set of John Dowland's complete lute collection for classroom use.

You may wish to introduce "Greensleeves," which is also a lute song, when discussing John Dowland's lute songs.

## Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) was one of the leading German composers of the early 19th century. He avoided the Romantic leanings of his time and held to his own style—more classical in spirit and less weighty in tone. He was particularly skilled at writing music that was vibrant and picturesque, a skill that he put to good use in his incidental music to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1842). Mendelssohn had always been fond of this play and had written the Overture much earlier, in 1826, at the age of 17. Mendelssohn captured the spirit of the play so well that his incidental music is still used quite often for productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Overture brings us into the world in which the play takes place, conveying a sense of mystery, magic, and humor. Though it is built on traditional classical principles, it is the mood and color that are most important here. The Scherzo, to be played between Acts One and Two, portrays the fairies, and in particular Puck, flitting through the forest like fireflies. This helps set the scene for what is to come. Mendelssohn creates a sense of mischievous motion that never slows or rests until the piece is done and the scene begins. The famous Wedding March, now heard at weddings all over the world, originally fell between Acts Four and Five, preceding the wedding scene. While this delightful march is a genuinely grand and celebratory piece for a wedding, it also manages to fit right in with the whimsical world of the other movements.

Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* were both composed in response to other kinds of art: a play, and a collection of drawings and paintings, respectively. Sometimes one kind of art will become the inspiration for another. Can the class think of any other examples of this? Encourage students to try writing music or to find examples of music that reflect their responses to works of literature and visual art encountered this year.

## Review

The best time to ask questions about a musical piece is usually immediately after the students have listened to it, or even in the middle of the piece. Below are some ideas for ongoing assessment and review activities. These are not meant to constitute a comprehensive list.

- Provide a time for students to listen to the pieces of music from this section several times. After they are familiar with a number of pieces, have them write a paragraph describing which is their favorite piece of music and why. They should include reasons for their opinions, and they should be encouraged to use vocabulary about specific elements of music.

### Cross-curricular Teaching Idea

**Incidental music is music that is used in a play (or a movie) to help create a mood or enhance the action.**

**Mendelssohn wrote his music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to enhance certain moods and feelings he experienced while watching the play. Can you think of any music that might be suitable incidental music for a dramatic version of any of the literature read this year? Challenge students to bring in recordings of songs or pieces of music that set the mood for specific stories. See if the class can guess the movie or play for which the music was written. (This will be possible for popular movie music, such as *Star Wars*.)**

### Cross-curricular Teaching Idea

**You may wish to teach Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the end of the Language Arts unit when Shakespeare's play is taught. Students may enjoy making a connection between the play and the music.**

## The Big Idea in Review

***Listening to and exploring pieces of music by great composers enhances students' appreciation of the music of different eras, such as the Renaissance.***

## II. Listening and Understanding

- Play selections of Beethoven, Mussorgsky, Desprez, Dowland, and Mendelssohn from this section. Have students write about the music, reflecting on the similarities and differences of the pieces.

- If possible, have a local musician who plays the lute come in and play for the class. If you cannot find a musician, show students several photographs of lutes and play various lute pieces on CD by Dowland and other artists.

- Many pieces of music are based on a story. Select some of the musical pieces studied in Grade 5 that are based on a story, and break the class into groups with each group assigned one of these pieces of music. Students should listen to the piece many times, create a story that they feel goes with the music, practice acting it out, and present it to the class. Once all groups have presented, have students research the piece to find out what the composer's story was. They can present this research to the class as well.

- This section provides an opportunity for students to complete short research reports on any of the composers included in this section or on a type of music they enjoy. Provide the class with topics for short reports to write in formal style. Each day of a week, provide a mini-lesson on different aspects of report writing, such as correct paragraph form or bibliographies. Have students share their reports with the class.

- Arrange students in small groups, and have each group create a biography web about one composer from this section. It is fine to have more than one group research the same composer. Have students put the composer's name in the middle of a piece of chart paper, and then ask each student to find one fact about the composer. Students should write their facts extending from the composer's name. Post these webs around the room for use when writing about each composer. The class will have access to many facts about that person upon which to base paragraphs or other writing about each composer.

- When studying music from the Renaissance, have students think about how music reflects the culture of a people. Have them write paragraphs or reflect in a journal about other civilizations they have studied and how the music from those places sounded. For example, compare and contrast the music of the Renaissance to other world civilizations and their music.

- You may also ask the following questions after completion of this unit of study:

1. Which of the composers we have studied went deaf late in life?

*Beethoven went deaf late in life.*

2. What is something you learned about Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5*?

*Possible answers include: it has four movements; there is a theme that recurs and varies each time; the third movement is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time; etc.*

3. Who wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition*?

*Mussorgsky wrote Pictures at an Exhibition.*

4. What nationality was Mussorgsky? How did it affect his music?

*Mussorgsky was Russian. He wanted to create a new, Russian style of classical music, and so he wrote in a style sometimes inspired by Russian folk music.*

5. Which of the composers we have studied wrote music based on Shakespeare's play?

*Mendelssohn wrote A Midsummer Night's Dream based on Shakespeare's play.*





6. What is incidental music?

*Incidental music is music used in a play or movie to help support the mood or the action.*

7. What was the most commonly played solo instrument during the Renaissance?

*The lute was the most commonly played solo instrument during the Renaissance.*

8. Who were two famous Renaissance composers?

*Desprez and Dowland were two famous Renaissance composers.*

## More Resources

The titles listed below are offered as a representative sample of materials and not a complete list of everything that is available.

### For students —

- *Core Knowledge Music Collection: Grades 3–5* (Core Knowledge Foundation). A multi-CD set that includes works listed in the *Sequence* for Grade 5, such as Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

- *Rats, Bulls, and Flying Machines: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation*, by Deborah Mazzotta Prum (Core Knowledge Foundation, 1999). An interdisciplinary history of the period, touching on history, literature, art, and music.

- *Ludwig van Beethoven (Getting to Know the World's Great Composers)*, by Mike Venezia (Children's Press, 1996). Paperback, 32 pages, ISBN 0516200690.

- *Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition*, performed by Evgeny Kissin (RCA, 2002). Though we often are more familiar with listening to *Pictures* as arranged for a full orchestra, this recording is a performance of Mussorgsky's piano score. CD, ASIN B00005UED7.

- *Pictures at an Exhibition*, by Anna Harwell Celenza (Charlesbridge Publishing, 2003). The accompanying CD includes both piano and orchestral renditions. Hardcover, 32 pages, book & CD, ISBN 1570914923. See also *The Heroic Symphony*, by the same author and publisher.

- *The Story of the Orchestra*, by Robert Levine and illustrations by Meredith Hamilton (Black Dog & Leventhal, 2000). Accompanying CD includes 41 selections written by composers from Vivaldi to Bernstein. Covers the instruments, the music, and the composers who wrote the music. Hardcover, 96 pages, with accompanying CD, ISBN 1579121489.

### For teachers —

- *Rats, Bulls, and Flying Machines: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation*, by Deborah Mazzotta Prum (Core Knowledge Foundation, 1999). An interdisciplinary history of the period, touching on history, literature, art, and music. Comes with a teacher's guide.

- *Beethoven and His World*, edited by Scott Burnham and Michael P. Steinberg (Princeton University Press, 2000). Paperback, 350 pages, ISBN 0691070733.

- *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, by Anton Felix Schindler, edited by Donald W. MacArdle (Dover, 1996). A translation of *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, originally published in 1860. Paperback, 560 pages, ISBN 0486292320.

- *Composer Posters* (available through Music in Motion, [www.musicmotion.com](http://www.musicmotion.com) or 1-800-445-0649). Two sets of 20 posters each—16" x 20" portraits by Flemish artist Jean Keuterick. Short biographies printed on back and in a separate booklet. Includes Beethoven and Mendelssohn. See the website or catalog for biographies of composers, games, software, and much more.