

A Successful Symphonic Transcription

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Main Subject:

The success of a Symphonic Transcriptions for Wind, Fanfare and Brass Band

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Index

Introduction.....	3
1. The Definition of Succes	4
1.1 What are the conditions for a successful symphonic transcription?	5
2. Explanation of the Dutch Orchestra's	7
3. Analyzing Pictures at an exhibition	9
3.1 Analyzing Movements from Pictures at an Exhibition	11
No. 1 "Gnomus"	12
Interlude, Promenade theme 2	12
No. 2 "Il Vecchio Castello"	13
No. 3 "Dispute d'enfants après jeux"	13
No. 4 "Bydlo"	13
Interlude, Promenade theme 4	14
No. 5 "The Ballet of Unhatched Chicks in their Shells"	14
No. 6 "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle"	14
Promenade 5	15
No. 7 "The Market at Limoges (The Great News)"	15
No. 8 "Catacombs"	15
No. 9 "Baba Yaga"	16
No. 10 "The Great Gate of Kiev"	16
4. What composers and musicians, played and-or arranged the Pictures at an Exhibition?.....	17
Orchestral arrangements	19
Arrangements for other ensembles	20
5. Analyzing different Transcriptions for Wind Band	21
5.1 Arrangers	21
5.2 Analysing Pictures at an Exhibition from Dr. Mark Hindsley and Ton van Grevenbroek	22
6. Analyzing different keys for Wind Bands	27
6.1 Recording.....	28
7. Conclusion	30
8. Bibliography.....	31

Introduction

In January 2015 I had to conduct “Pictures at an Exhibition” from Modest Mussorgsky in a transcription for wind band made by “Ton van Grevenbroek”. While I was doing research for this wonderful composition I noticed that there were a lot of transcriptions. During my research I was wondering why there were so many different transcriptions written in different main keys for the piece. I asked myself and my teacher how I could decide what the best transcriptions for wind band are when I would like to program one of these transcriptions in a concert.

After all these questions I decided to do my Master Research about this subject. The main question for me is:

What makes a symphonic transcription (for Concert band, Fanfare and Brass band) of one of the Great Masters from the 19th century successful?

To investigate this question I needed sub questions to try to understand what a good symphonic transcription is.

The sub questions are:

- How important is the choice of the main Key in the transcription?
- Do composers and arrangers make a conscious choice of key when they write for orchestra?
- How important is the knowledge of instruments and articulations?
- Is it possible to make transcriptions of every piece from a Grand Master?
- What are the do and don'ts when writing from a symphonic piece to, for example, concert band?
- Does every transcription sound well, for concert band, fanfare and brass band, in the main Key what has been written by the Great Masters? And is it possible to hear this when an orchestra plays it?

First I decided to make a list of the most well-known composers from the 19th century what could be interesting to play with a wind band.

- Gustav Mahler
- Pjotr Tsjaikovski
- Richard Wagner
- Bedrich Smetana
- Johannes Brahms
- Maurice Ravel
- Sergei Rachmaninov
- Modest Mussorgsky

After making this list I decided to focus on one composer and one of his masterpieces; "Pictures at an Exhibition" From Modest Mussorgsky. The reason for this choice is because there are a lot of written transcriptions and arrangements from "Pictures at an Exhibition" for wind band and other ensembles. Also the diversity of the written movements, in different keys and instrumentations, are interesting for the research question as written above. Another important issue to focus on one composition is because otherwise it would be a too big and comprehensive subject for my research.

In this Master Research Paper I will try to find an answer on my question (by analyzing Pictures at an Exhibition) ; what makes a symphonic transcription a successful piece for Wind, Fanfare and Brass band?

The first step in my Research was to declare what is success? And how can we definite success in Music because of the reason that the most things in the music scene are subjective opinions? Is success in this creative sector generally measurable? For those questions I talked with several of high level professionals in the world of music.

The second step in my research was to analyze different scores of "Pictures at an Exhibition" where I tried to find differences and/or similarities when this composers and/or arrangers wrote their versions of Mussorgsky's masterpiece.

The last step of my research was to certify some conclusions I made when I was studying the different versions of "Pictures at an Exhibition" where I tried to define the subjective opinions about music. Is it possible to hear or feel things that are bad or wrong?

I hope you will enjoy reading this research. For me it was a new contact with an "out of the box" experience while I never did research for a subject like this.

1. The Definition of Success

What is the official definition of "Success"?

1. Achievement of an **action** within a specified **period** of time or within a specified **parameter**. Success can also mean completing an **objective** or reaching a **goal**. Success can be expanded to encompass an entire **project** or be **restricted** to a single **component** of a project or **task**. It can be achieved within the **workplace**, or in an **individual's** personal life. For example, if an individual's personal goal is to be accepted in a new **career**, success would occur after the individual has been officially accepted into his or her new place of **employment**.
2. Colloquial term used to describe a **person** that has achieved his or her personal, **financial** or career goals. It could also be used to describe an individual that has more **objects** (**money** or any other desirable item) relative to another individual. For example, a **professional** athlete can be **called** "a success."

(from: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/success.html>)

Some interesting quotes:

Doing What You Love

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. – Albert Schweitzer

Following Your Own Path

A successful life is one that is lived through understanding and pursuing one's own path, not chasing after the dreams of others. – Chin-Ning Chu

Overcoming Obstacles

Success is not measured by what a man accomplishes, but by the opposition he has encountered and the courage with which he has maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds. –Charles Lindbergh

Doing Your Best

The man who has done his level best, and who is conscious that he has done his best, is a success, even though the world may write him down as a failure. – B.C. Forbes

(From: <http://www.thechangeblog.com/what-is-success/>)

1.1 What are the conditions for a successful symphonic transcription?

To define the success of transcriptions I decided to talk with two of my conducting teachers about this subject. The two, well known and famous, teachers are: Jan Cober and Alex Schillings. In several meetings I talked with them about the sub questions regarding to my research.

First a small introduction of Alex Schillings and Jan Cober:

Alex Schillings

Mr. Schillings was born on the 21st of January in 1957 and is a well-known and successful conductor and teacher. He has several degrees and diplomas in conducting and teaching and studied at the conservatoire of Maastricht. From 1995 till 2001 he was the principal conductor of the professional military band “Johan Willem Friso Kapel” in Assen. From 2001 till 2002 he was the principal conductor of the professional military band “Koninklijke Militaire Kapel”. In 1998 he conducted the National Youth Wind Orchestra in Holland for 5 years. During his carrier as a conductor he conducted a lot of wind bands, fanfare bands and brass bands al operating in the highest sections. At this moment he is the main teacher of conducting at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, the Artez conservatoire in Zwolle, the BDB Musikakademie in Stauffen (Germany) and at the conservatoire in Trento (Italy).

Jan Cober

Mr. Cober was born in 1951 and is a well-known conductor and clarinet player. He has several degrees in orchestral conducting and as a professional clarinet player; he finished all of his studies with “Prix d’Excellances”. From 1972 till 1977 he was solo clarinet player in “Het Nederlands Omroeporkest” (The National Broadcasting Orchestra) and from 1977 he was the solo clarinet player in “Het Residentie Orkest”. Jan Cober conducted a lot of high level professional and amateur orchestras and won many prizes in several competitions. Mr. Cober was also a Guest conductor from symphony orchestras in Berlin, Boston, Ostrava, Sydney and worked as a guest conductor with famous wind bands all over the world. In 2009 and 2013 he became world Champion in the highest section for wind band while he was the principal conductor of “Sainte Cécile Eijsden”. At this moment he is main teacher of conducting at the conservatoire of Maastricht.

I asked both teachers what they think about symphonic transcriptions and what in their eyes is necessary for a successful transcription.

Main Key

Both teachers were immediately talking about the choice of the main key. In their eyes it’s the most important part of the transcription. The main key decides what the color and character of the composition is. Alex Schillings was very clear about the choice of the main key because it determines the color, character and difficulties for the conductor and the players. The difficulties what can appear, by choosing a sharp main key, decides the amount of key signatures and that has a big effect on intonation and the fastness of reading the score for a instrumentalist.

Instrumentation

Alex Schillings said it is very important that, when someone writes a symphonic transcription, the original score has to contain a lot of wind and/or brass parts to make a successful symphonic transcription. While there are only String parts in the original it’s very difficult to convert these parts into the wind band instrumentation. When an arranger want’s to write a symphonic transcription it’s important that the strings have a classical way of playing in the original. He told me that they need to have normal pizzicato and arco notations and manners of playing in order to transpose this successfully to the wind band scene.

Balance

Jan Cober told me almost the same as written above but he also mentioned it is very important to choose your main color when you want to write for wind band. The strings are obviously the main color in the symphonic orchestras but in the wind bands it is normally in the clarinets. He said that another interesting subject, related to the main color of the various orchestras, is the size of the string group in relation to the wind and brass players. When someone wants to make a good orchestration it’s important to know for what size of orchestra you’ll write the transcription. You need to know what the orchestral volume normally is in the original when you’ll write it down for wind band. Logically it’s very important to think about this subject before an arranger creates a symphonic transcription.

Another very interesting thought Mr. Schillings told me is the length of the piece. He told me that it is very important that the original piece isn't too long in length because of the endurance of the brass and wind players. It's also not in the culture of the Wind band scene to play pieces what are longer in length than, approximately, 30 minutes. The listening position of the audience in this scene isn't that long.

After the advice and tips I think I have a clearer view on what parts I need to analyze in order to understand what's really necessary for a successful symphonic transcription.

Before I can go on to define the success of symphonic transcriptions I need to have a look into the Dutch world of orchestras who are playing the transcriptions. In my opinion it's important to know what could be successful because I see many transcriptions in my daily practice as a professional conductor in the Fanfare Brass and Wind band scene. Unfortunately there is not much information what is wrong or wright while almost every Dutch amateur orchestra have symphonic transcriptions in their program. For me as a professional conductor and arranger it could be very valuable information to know what are the dos and don'ts.

So let me try to explain some basic things about the Dutch orchestras.

2. Explanation of the Dutch Orchestra's

Most of the Dutch Wind bands, Fanfare bands and Brass bands are amateur orchestras where amateur, semi-professional and professional players play in. Almost every orchestra has a professional conductor and they have weekly rehearsals for their concerts. In these music communities we see, in the most of the time, different orchestras. Most of the time this communities have an adult orchestra, a youth orchestra, a percussion ensemble and in some of these communities we see a dance department (with a twirl group etc.).

The Dutch orchestras are mostly originated from business, workers unions, church and military related communities. Every village has one or more sacred orientated orchestras. That's why we have a lot of Christian and protestant orchestras, for example you'll see a lot of the name "St. Cecilia" on the banners of Dutch orchestras. We also have a lot of business related orchestras; for example we have the "Philips Harmonie", "Heineken Fanfare", "PTT postharmonie" and the "Shell Harmonie". Of course the first wind band orchestras were founded by the Dutch Military Forces. Every military department has their own orchestra; for example we have the "Royal Navy Marine Band", the "Airforce Band" and the "Mounted Forces band". This orchestra's exist for over 150 year and were the founders of the Dutch community music.

In the Netherlands we have a lot of different orchestra's. Every orchestra has to play at a contest once in every 5 years to prove that they can maintain their status in this division. When an orchestra plays very good (above the score of 85 points) in this contest the orchestra can promote to a higher division. All of the orchestras have the opportunity to compete at the World Music Contest (every 4 year) to become "World Champion" in their own division. At these competitions a lot of orchestra's play symphonic transcriptions.

In the Netherlands all of these types of orchestras play in different sections of levels. We have 6 divisions for every orchestra category.

1. Championship section
2. 1st division
3. 2nd division
4. 3rd division
5. 4th division
6. 5th division

Generally these orchestras have +/- 6 concerts in a year in different concert halls and different kind of venues.

Their musical programs exist of different kind of music:

- Original music for Wind-Fanfare and Brass Bands
- Symphonic Transcriptions
- Music from Movies and Musicals
- Pop – Rock arrangements
- "Light Music" arrangements

In my experience a lot of Dutch orchestras are playing symphonic transcriptions, especially the orchestras in the higher divisions. When we have a look into the musical programs of all the winners of the WMC (World Music Contest) since 1951 every winner, in the championship section, had a transcription programmed on their winning performance. I think that shows the fact that symphonic transcriptions are very important in the Wind band scene.

In the list below I will give some examples of orchestra's in different categories:

1. Symphonic Orchestra's (professional orchestras)
 - Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra – Amsterdam
 - Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra
 - Residentie Orkest – The Hague
 - Philharmonie Zuid Nederland
2. Wind Bands (Professional Military Orchestra's)
 - Marinierskapel der Koninklijke Marine
 - Koninklijke Militaire Kapel
 - Orkest van de Koninklijke Luchtmacht

3. Wind Bands (Amateur Orchestra's)
 - Koninklijke Harmonie Sainte Cecilé – Eijsden
 - Koninklijke Harmonie – Thorn
 - Harmonie St. Michaël – Thorn
 - Koninklijke Harmonie Sophia's Vereeniging – Loon op Zand
 - Harmonie St. Petrus en Paulus – Maastricht
 - Orkest Zuid – Eindhoven

4. Fanfare Bands (Amateur Orchestra's)
 - Fanfare Sint Cecilia – Schimmert
 - Gelders Fanfare Orkest
 - Nationaal Jeugd Fanfare Orkest
 - Brabants Fanfare Orkest

5. Brass Bands (Amateur Orchestra's)
 - Brassband Schoonhoven – Zuid Holland
 - Brassband Rijnmond – Rotterdam
 - Soli Brass – Leeuwarden

After this short and brief explanation of the Dutch Wind, Fanfare and Brass band scene I need to go back to my main question and search for the answer what makes a symphonic transcription a success. Before I can find an answer I need to analyze a composition what is well known in the symphonic scene and in the wind band scene. It has to be a composition what gives opportunities to find an answer so it has to be large enough, preferably with multiple movements. Another important part of this choice is that there have to be enough material to make a good analyze for this research. After thinking about a lot of composers and compositions I realized my question came from working at "Pictures at an Exhibition"... This composition has everything I need for a good analyze. Everybody knows this wonderful composition, It has multiple movements, is long enough in length, many (!) arrangements have been created, for different ensembles by a lot of arrangers, and it contains strings and a lot of wind and brass parts.

So I started to analyze.

3. Analyzing Pictures at an exhibition

Pictures at an Exhibition (Russian: Картинки с выставки – Воспоминание о Викторе Гартмане, *Kartínki s výstavki – Vospominániye o Víktore Gártmane*, Pictures from an Exhibition – A Remembrance of Viktor Hartmann)

The "Pictures at an Exhibition" is a suite of ten movements originally composed for piano by the Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky in 1874. The suite is Mussorgsky's most famous piano composition and has become a showpiece for virtuoso pianists.



Some say Mussorgsky, who didn't have the opportunities to study for a music degree, is the best "amateur" composer in musical history. His "Pictures at an Exhibition" has become further known through various orchestrations and arrangements produced by other musicians and composers, with Maurice Ravel's arrangement being the most recorded and performed.

Around 1870 Mussorgsky met artist and architect Viktor Hartmann. Both men were devoted to the cause of an intrinsically Russian art and quickly became friends. Their meeting was likely arranged by the influential critic Vladimir Stasov who followed both of their careers with interest. At that time Stasov could make or either breaks upcoming talented musicians and architects with his critics in newspapers and academic writings.

Viktor Hartmann died from an aneurysm in 1873. The sudden loss of the artist, aged only 39, shook Mussorgsky along with others in Russia's art world. Stasov helped organize an exhibition of over 400 of Hartmann's works in the "Academy of Fine Arts" during the period of February and March 1874 in Saint Petersburg Russia.

Mussorgsky lent works from his personal collection to the exhibition and viewed the show in person. Excited by the experience he composed "Pictures at an Exhibition" in June 1874. The music depicts an imaginary tour of an art collection.

He described the experience in a letter to Stasov in June 1874:

My dear généralissime, Hartmann is seething as [the opera] Boris [Godunov] seethed,— sounds and ideas hang in the air, I am gulping and overeating, and can barely manage to scribble them on paper. I am writing the 4th number and the transitions are good (on the 'promenade'). I want to work more quickly and reliably. My physiognomy can be seen in the interludes. So far I think it's well turned.

Viktor Hartmann (1834–1873)

Mussorgsky based his musical material on drawings and water colors by Hartmann produced mostly during the artist's travels abroad. Locales include Poland, France and Italy; the final movement depicts an architectural design for the capital city of Ukraine. Today most of the pictures from the Hartmann exhibition are lost, making it impossible to be sure in many cases which Hartmann works Mussorgsky had in mind.

Mussorgsky links the suite's movements in a way that depicts the viewer's own progress through the exhibition. Two "Promenade" movements stand as portals to the suite's main sections. Their regular pace and irregular meter depicts the act of walking. Three untitled interludes present shorter statements of this theme, varying the mood, color and key in each to suggest reflection on a work just seen or anticipation of a new work glimpsed.



A turn is taken in the work at the "Catacombae" when the Promenade theme stops functioning as merely a linking device and becomes, in "Cum mortuis", an integral element of the movement itself. The theme reaches its apotheosis in the suite's finale, The Bogatyr Gates.

As with most of Mussorgsky's works, "Pictures at an Exhibition" has a complicated publication history. Although composed very rapidly, during June 1874, the work did not appear in print until 1886 (five years after the composer's death), when an edition by the composer's great friend Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was published. This publication, however, was not a completely accurate representation of Mussorgsky's score, but presented an edited and revised text that nevertheless contained a number of errors and miss readings.

Only in 1931, almost 60 years later, "Pictures at an Exhibition" published in a scholarly edition in agreement with the composer's manuscript. In 1940, the Italian composer Luigi Dallapiccola published an important critical edition of Mussorgsky's work with extensive commentary. Mussorgsky's hand-written manuscript was published in facsimile in 1975.

(from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictures_at_an_Exhibition)

(from: Book; Frankenstein, Alfred, "Victor Hartmann and Modeste Musorgsky." *The Musical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 1939): 268–91.)

(from: Book; Russ, Michael. *Musorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition*. Cambridge Music Handbooks. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.)

3.1 Analyzing Movements from Pictures at an Exhibition

Vladimir Stasov's program, identified below and the six known extant pictures suggest that the ten pieces comprising the suite correspond to eleven pictures by Hartmann, with Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle accounting for two. The five Promenade movements, consisting of an introduction and four links, are not numbered among the ten pictures. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Promenade movements are untitled in the composer's manuscript.

The first two movements of the suite find mirrored counterparts, and apotheosis, at the end. The suite traces a journey that begins at an art exhibition, but the line between observers and observed vanishes at the Catacombs when the journey takes on a different character. For all the variety individual movements' display in musical invention, each springs from a kernel in the opening melody. The Promenade theme provides distinctive "cells" of two and three notes that generate themes and accompaniment figures throughout the piece.

In the next pages I will make a short and brief analyze of all different movements to know what's written in the original version of Mussorgsky and later orchestrated by Ravel. I mainly focused on the main Key, the tempi and the background story of the movements.

First Promenade

Key: [B-flat major](#)

Tempo: Allegro giusto, nel modo russo; senza allegrezza, ma poco sostenuto

Stasov comment: In this piece Mussorgsky depicts himself "roving through the exhibition, now leisurely, now briskly in order to come close to a picture that had attracted his attention, and at times sadly, thinking of his departed friend."

The melody and rhythm resemble Russian folk songs. The piece has simple, strong rhythms in asymmetrical meter.



The 3rd and 4th bars of the opening movement, "Promenade".

No. 1 "Gnomus"

Key: [E-flat minor](#)

Tempo: alternating "Vivo" and "Meno mosso, pesante"

Stasov comment: "A sketch depicting a little gnome, clumsily running with crooked legs."

Hartmann's sketch, now lost, is thought to represent a design for a nutcracker displaying large teeth.

The lurching music, in contrasting tempos with frequent stops and starts, suggests the movements of the gnome.

Interlude, Promenade theme 2

Key: [A-flat major](#)

Tempo: "Moderato comodo assai e con delicatezza"

A placid statement of the promenade melody depicts the viewer walking from one display to the next.

No. 2 "Il Vecchio Castello"

Key: [G-sharp minor](#)

Tempo: "Andante molto cantabile e con dolore"

Stasov comment: "A medieval castle before which a troubadour sings a song."

This movement is thought to be based on a watercolor depiction of an Italian castle, and is portrayed in Ravel's orchestration by an alto saxophone solo. Hartmann often placed appropriate human figures in his architectural renderings to suggest scale.

Interlude, Promenade theme 3

Key: [B major](#)

Tempo: "Moderato non tanto, pesante"

Another brief statement of the promenade melody (8 measures) gives it more extroversion and weight than before.

No. 3 "Dispute d'enfants après jeux"

Key: [B major](#)

Tempo: "Allegretto non troppo, capriccioso"

Stasov comment: "An avenue in the garden of the Tuileries, with a swarm of children and nurses."

Hartmann's picture of the Jardin des Tuileries near the Louvre in Paris (France) is now lost. Figures of children quarrelling and playing in the garden were likely added by the artist for scale (see note on No. 2 above).

The movement is cast in through-composed ternary form (ABA).

No. 4 "Bydlo"

Key: [G-sharp minor](#)

Tempo: Sempre moderato, pesante.

Stasov comment: "A Polish cart on enormous wheels, drawn by oxen."

The movement is cast in through-composed ternary form (ABA) with coda. Mussorgsky's original piano version of this movement begins *ff*, suggesting that the lumbering oxcart's journey begins in the listener's foreground. After reaching a climax (*con tutta forza*) the dynamic marking is abruptly *piano* (bar 47), followed by a diminuendo to a final pianissimo, suggesting the oxcart receding into the distance. Arrangements based on Rimsky-Korsakov's edition, such as Ravel's, begin quietly, build gradually (*crescendo*) to fortissimo and then undergo a diminuendo suggesting the oxcart approaching, passing the listener, and then receding.

Interlude, Promenade theme 4

Key: [D minor](#)

Tempo: "Tranquillo"

A reflective 10-measure presentation of the promenade theme.

No. 5 "The Ballet of Unhatched Chicks in their Shells"

Key: [F major](#)

Tempo: "Scherzino (vivo, leggiero)"

Stasov comment: "Hartmann's design for the décor of a picturesque scene in the ballet *Trilby*."

Gerald Abraham provides the following details: "*Trilby* or *The Demon of the Heath*, a ballet with choreography by Petipa, music by Julius Gerber, and décor by Hartmann, based on Charles Nodier's *Trilby*, or *The Elf of Argyle*, was produced at the Bolshoi Theatre, [Saint] Petersburg, in 1871. The fledglings were canary chicks. The movement is cast in ternary form (ABA) with a literal repeat and terse extension (coda).

No. 6 "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle"

Key: [B-flat minor](#)

Tempo: "Andante. Grave energico" and "Andantino"

Stasov comment: "Two Jews: Rich and Poor"

Stasov's explanatory title elucidates the personal names used in Mussorgsky's original manuscript. Published versions display various combinations, such as "Two Polish Jews, Rich and Poor (Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle)". The movement is thought to be based on two separate extant portraits.

The movement is in ternary form (A|B|A+B):

1. Andante, grave energico (Theme 1 "Samuel Goldenberg")
2. Andantino (Theme 2 "Schmuyle")
3. Andante, grave energico (Themes 1 and 2 in counterpoint)
4. Coda

Promenade 5

Key: [B-flat major](#)

Tempo: *Allegro giusto, nel modo russo; poco sostenuto*.

A nearly bar for bar restatement of the opening promenade. Differences are slight: condensed second half, block chords voiced more fully. Structurally the movement acts as a reprise, giving listeners another hearing of the opening material before these are developed in the second half of the suite. Many arrangements, including Ravel's orchestral version, omit this movement.

No. 7 "The Market at Limoges (The Great News)"

Key: [E-flat major](#)

Tempo: *Allegretto vivo, sempre scherzando*

Stasov comment: "French women quarrelling violently in the market."

Limoges is a city in central France. Mussorgsky originally provided two paragraphs in French that described a marketplace discussion (the 'great news'), but soon removed them.

The movement is a scherzo in through-composed ternary form (ABA). A scurrying coda leads without a break into the next movement.

No. 8 "Catacombs"

Key: [B minor](#)

Tempo: "Largo" (Sepulcrum) "Andante non troppo con lamento" (Con mortuis)

Stasov comment: "Hartmann represented himself examining the Paris catacombs by the light of a lantern."

The movement is in two distinct parts. Its two sections consist of a nearly static *Largo* consisting of a sequence of block chords, with elegiac lines adding a touch of melancholy, and a more flowing, gloomy "Andante" that introduces the "Promenade" theme into the scene.

The first section's alternating loud and soft chords evoke the grandeur, stillness, and echo of the catacombs. The second section suggests a merging of observer and scene as the observer descends into the catacombs. Mussorgsky's manuscript of The Catacombs displays two pencilled notes, in Russian: "NB – Latin text: With the dead in a dead language" and, along the right margin, "Well may it be in Latin! The creative spirit of the dead Hartmann leads me towards the skulls, invokes them; the skulls begin to glow softly from within."

No. 9 "Baba Yaga"

Key: [C minor](#)

Tempo: "Allegro con brio, feroce" and "Andante mosso"

Stasov comment: "Hartmann's drawing depicted a clock in the form of Baba Yaga's hut on fowl's legs. Mussorgsky added the witch's flight in a mortar."

This movement is a scherzo feroce with a slower middle section. Motives in this movement evoke the bells of a large clock and the whirlwind sounds of a chase. Structurally the movement mirrors the grotesque qualities of "Gnomus" on a grand scale.

The movement is cast in ternary form (ABA):

1. Allegro con brio, feroce
2. Andante mosso
3. Allegro molto (a nearly literal repeat)
4. Coda

The coda leads without a break to the final movement of the suite.

No. 10 "The Great Gate of Kiev"

Key: [E-flat major](#)

Tempo: "Maestoso, con grandezza" and broadening to the end.

Stasov comment: "Hartmann's sketch was his design for city gates at Kiev in the ancient Russian massive style with a cupola shaped like a Slavonic helmet."

Bogatyr are heroes that appear in Russian epics called bylinas. The title of this movement is commonly translated as "The Great Gate of Kiev" and sometimes as "The Heroes' Gate at Kiev."

Hartmann designed a monumental gate for Tsar Alexander II to commemorate the monarch's narrow escape from an assassination attempt on April 4, 1866. Hartmann regarded his design as the best work he had done. His design won the national competition but plans to build the structure were later cancelled.

The movement features a grand main theme that exalts the opening promenade much as "Baba Yaga" amplified "Gnomus"; also like that movement it evens out the meter of its earlier counterpart. The solemn secondary theme is based on a baptismal hymn from the repertory of Russian Orthodox chant.

The movement is cast as a broad rondo in two main sections: ABAB-CADA. The first half of the movement sets up the expectation of an ABABA pattern. The interruption of this pattern with new music just before its expected conclusion gives the rest of the movement the feeling of a vast extension. This extended leave-taking acts as a coda for the suite as a whole.

4. What composers and musicians, played and-or arranged the Pictures at an Exhibition?

The first musician to arrange Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition for orchestra was the Russian composer and conductor Mikhail Tushmalov. However, his version (first performed in 1891 and possibly produced as early as 1886 when he was a student of Rimsky-Korsakov) does not include the entire suite: Only seven of the ten "pictures" are present, leaving out Gnomus, Tuileries, and Bydło, and all the Promenades are omitted except for the last one, which is used in place of the first.

The next orchestration was undertaken by the British conductor Henry Wood in 1915. He recorded a few sections of his arrangement on a pair of acoustic Columbia discs in 1920. However, he withdrew his version when Maurice Ravel's orchestration was published and banned every public performance in the 1930s in deference to Ravel's work. Wood's arrangement has also been recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Nicholas Braithwaite. It omits all but the first of the Promenade-based movements and features extensive re-composition elsewhere. Wood's orchestration was once described by Gordon Jacob as "superior in picturesqueness to the Ravel", with its off-stage camel-bells in "Bydlo" and grand organ in "The Great Gate of Kiev".

The first person to orchestrate the piece in its entirety was the Slovenian-born conductor and violinist Leo Funtek, who finished his version in 1922 while living and working in Finland.

The version by Maurice Ravel, produced in 1922 on a commission by Serge Koussevitzky, represents a virtuoso effort by a master colourist. The orchestration has proved the most popular in the concert hall and on record. Ravel omitted the Promenade between "Samuel" Goldenberg und "Schmuyle" and Limoges and applied artistic license to some particulars of dynamics and notation. His instrumental colors—a trumpet solo for the opening Promenade, dark woodwind tones for passages suggesting Orthodox chant, the piccolo and high strings for the children's "chicks in shells"—are widely admired. The influence of Ravel's version may often be discerned in subsequent versions of the suite.

Koussevitzky's commission, worked out with the publishers of the piano suite, gave him sole conducting rights for several years. He published Ravel's score himself and in 1930 made the first recording of it with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The exclusive nature of his commission prompted the release of a number of contemporary versions by other arrangers until Ravel's became generally available.

Another arrangement appeared when Eugene Ormandy took over the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1936 following Leopold Stokowski's decision to resign the conductorship. Ormandy wanted a version of Pictures of his own and commissioned Lucien Cailliet, the Philadelphia Orchestra's 'house arranger' and player in the woodwind section, to produce one. This version was premiered and recorded by Ormandy in 1937.

The conductor Leopold Stokowski had introduced Ravel's version to Philadelphia audiences in November 1929. Stokowski revised his version over the years and made three gramophone recordings of it (1939, 1941 and 1965).

Many other orchestrations and arrangements of Pictures have been made. Most show debts to Ravel; the original piano composition is, of course, frequently performed and recorded. A version for chamber orchestra exists, made by Taiwanese composer Chao Ching-Wen. Elgar Howarth arranged it for the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble in 1977, subsequently recasting it for Grimethorpe Colliery Band.

The suite has inspired homages in a broad range of musical styles. A version featured in two albums by the British trio Emerson, Lake & Palmer incorporates elements of progressive rock, jazz and folk music (1971/2008). A heavy metal arrangement of the entire suite was released by German band Mekong Delta; another metal band, Armored Saint, utilized the "Great Gate of Kiev" theme as an introduction for the track "March of the Saint".

The Michael Jackson song "HIStory" samples a short section of the Great Gate of Kiev, longer version was played during HIStory World Tour finale in 1997. Re-issues of the HIStory album further changed the sample on the track.

4.1 Orchestral arrangements

A partial listing of orchestral arrangements of *Pictures at an Exhibition*:

- [Mikhail Tushmalov](#) (ca. 1886; three "pictures" and four *Promenades* omitted: recorded by Marc Andrae and the Munich Philharmonic for BASF)
- [Henry Wood](#) (1915; four *Promenades* omitted: recorded by Nicholas Braithwaite and the London Philharmonic for Lyrita)
- [Leo Funtek](#) (1922; all *Promenades* included: recorded by Leif Segerstam and the Finnish Radio Symphony for BIS; Also on Teldec Laser-disc with [Vladimir Ashkenazy](#) conducting the [Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra](#))
- [Maurice Ravel](#) (1922; the fifth *Promenade* omitted)
- [Giuseppe Becce](#) (1922; for "salon-orchestra". No *Promenades* are included at all, and only some of the *Pictures*.)
- Leonidas Leonardi (1924; published by [Breitkopf & Härtel](#); [Leonard Slatkin](#) has "revived" a part of the Leonardi version by using *Promenade III & Tuileries* in his 1st "compendium" suite of "Pictures at an Exhibition")
- [Lucien Cailliet](#) (1937: recorded by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra for RCA and reissued on Biddulph)
- [Leopold Stokowski](#) (1939; third *Promenade*, *Tuileries*, fifth *Promenade* and *Limoges* omitted. Three recordings conducted by Stokowski himself: with the Philadelphia Orchestra, All-American Youth Orchestra, and New Philharmonia. His arrangement has also been recorded by Matthias Bamert, Jose Serebrier, Oliver Knussen, Gennadi Rozhdestvensky, James Sedares and Kazuki Yamada)
- [Walter Goehr](#) (1942; *Gnomus* omitted; includes a subsidiary part for piano)
- [Sergei Gorchakov](#) (1954: recorded by [Kurt Masur](#) and the London Philharmonic for Teldec; Also recorded with [Karl Anton Rickenbacher](#), conducting the Cracow Radio Symphony, for the [RCA Records](#). A live 1980 performance by the Leningrad Academic Symphony Orchestra under Konstantin Simeonov was recorded by Melodya.)
- [Nikolai Golovanov](#) (A heavily edited version of Ravel's orchestration in which Golovanov omits all but the first of the *Promenades* was recorded for Melodya)
- [Lawrence Leonard](#) (1977; for piano and orchestra; recorded by Tamas Ungar, piano, with Geoffrey Simon and the Philharmonia Orchestra for Cala)
- [Vladimir Ashkenazy](#) (1982: recorded by Ashkenazy and the Philharmonia Orchestra for Decca/London)
- [Emile Naoumoff](#) (ca. 1994, in concerto style with some added music, for piano and orchestra ; recorded with Igor Blaschkow, conducting the Deutsches Symphony Orchestra Berlin, for [Wergo](#))
- [Mekong Delta](#) (1997; for group and orchestra)
- Carl Simpson (1997; *Promenade IV* included in [Leonard Slatkin](#)'s 2nd "compendium" suite for Warner Classics and Naxos)
- Chao Ching-Wen (2002; for chamber orchestra)
- [Jason Wright Wingate](#) (2003; orchestra, organ and chorus)
- [Hidemaro Konoye](#) (date unknown)
- [Leonard Slatkin](#) Two 'compendium' versions, the 2nd of which he recorded with the [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#) for Warner Classics live at the [BBC Proms](#) on 1 September 2004; The other recording was with the [Nashville Symphony](#) for [Naxos Records](#).
- Clarice Assad (2008, for the New Century Chamber Orchestra)
- [Václav Smetáček](#) (date unknown; a performance with [Gennady Rozhdestvensky](#) conducting the [Prague Symphony Orchestra](#) on 28 October 2004 has been issued on the Don Industriale label)

(From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictures_at_an_Exhibition)

4.2 Arrangements for other ensembles

A list of arrangements of *Pictures at an Exhibition* for performing ensembles other than orchestra:

- [Ralph Burns](#) (1957; for jazz orchestra)
- [Allyn Ferguson](#) (ca. 1963; for jazz orchestra)
- [Elgar Howarth](#) (ca. 1977; for brass ensemble. Recorded in 1977 by the [Philip Jones Brass Ensemble](#) for Argo)
- [Ray Barretto](#) (1979; *The Old Castle* for Latin-jazz band)
- [Henk de Vlieger](#) (1981; for [percussion](#) ensemble)
- [James Curnow](#) (1985; for large wind ensemble; abridged version)
- [Jean Guillou](#) (ca. 1988; for organ)
- [Tangerine Dream](#) (1994; *Promenade* for trumpet, saxophone, horns and synthesizer; on their [Turn of the Tides](#) album)
- Carlo Ballarini (1995; Wind Quintet)
- Michael Allen (2000; for brass ensemble, recorded by the Burning River Brass)^[15]
- [Christian Lindberg](#) (ca. 2000; for trombone and piano)
- [Simon Proctor](#) (ca. 2000; for euphonium & tuba quartet, retitled *Miniatures at an Exhibition*)
- [Larry Clark](#) (2001; for beginning band, *Promenade* and *Great Gate of Kiev*)
- [Hiroshi Hoshina](#) (2001; for wind orchestra)
- [Carl Simpson](#) (2004; for wind orchestra)
- [Wayne Lytle](#), for the DVD [Animusic 2](#) under the title *Cathedral Pictures* (2005; for synthesizer; *Promenade*, *Baba Yaga* and *The Bogatyr Gates*)
- Sergei V. Korschmin (2006; for Brass Sextet – 2 Trumpets, Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba)
- [Cameron Carpenter](#) (2006, for organ)
- [Walter Hilgers](#) (2006; for large brass ensemble, percussion, and two harps)
- [Glass Duo](#) (2007; for glass harp)
- [Clarice Assad](#) (2009; for string orchestra, piano and percussion)
- Merlin Patterson (2011; for wind ensemble)
- Vladimir Agopov (2011; for large wind ensemble)
- [Neil Cicierega](#) (2014; for [Smash Mouth](#) based mashup album "Mouth Sounds"; "Promenade", made up of samples taken from "[All Star](#)" by Smash Mouth)
- [José Schyns](#) (2008; for windband – [Baton Music](#))
- [Ton van Grevenbroek](#) (2011; for windband - [Molenaar](#))
- [Duke Ellington](#) (date unknown; for jazz big band)
- [William Schmidt](#) (date unknown; for saxophone choir);
- [Michael Sweeney](#) (date unknown; for large wind ensemble; *Promenade*, *The Hut of Baba Yaga*, *The Great Gate of Kiev*)
- [Ward Swingle](#) (date unknown; for vocal ensemble, double bass and percussion; *Limoges* only)
- [Robert W. Smith](#) (2012; Madison Scouts Drum And Bugle Corps)
- Gaetano Troccoli (2014 - for guitar trio - [Lantro Music Edition](#))
- [Dr. Mark Hindsley](#) (2001 – [Wind Band](#))

5. Analyzing different Transcriptions for Wind Band

In order to research the success of symphonic transcriptions I have chosen to analyze two different arrangements of Pictures at an Exhibition. The reason for the choice of these two transcriptions is the fact that they are totally different in design and instrumentation but both versions are the most common versions that are played in the wind band scene. I have read and studied both scores of Ton van Grevenbroek and Mark Hindsley. Before I can analyze the similarities and, probably, the different key choices and instrumentations I have to know who these two arrangers are and what their background is in order to qualify the quality of the transcriptions.

5.1 Arrangers

Dr. Mark Hindsley

Dr. Mark Hindsley is a Professor of Music and Emeritus of the Illinois University. He graduated at the Indiana University “with high distinction” and in 1925 Mark Hindsley served as a band director and music instructor at Indiana until 1929. From 1929 to 1934 he was a Director of Instrumental Music in the schools of Cleveland Heights Ohio where he conducted high school bands and orchestras. From 1934 to 1948 he was Assistant Director of Bands at the University of Illinois. This period was interrupted by military service from 1942 to 1946 as a music staff-officer of the Army Air Forces Training Command and for the last six months band and orchestra conductor and teacher of conducting at the Biarritz American University in France attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel and earning the Army Commendation Medal. From 1948 he was active as Director of Bands at Illinois and as Professor of Music until his retirement in 1970.

After the war Dr. Mark Hindsley has appeared throughout the nation and in other countries as a guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator and on the summer staffs of many other colleges and universities. His recordings of the University of Illinois Concert Band and his transcriptions of historical masterpieces are highly acclaimed at home and abroad. He is the author of seven books and more than 40 magazine articles on instrumental music. He was awarded the honorary degree Doctor of Music by his alma mater, Indiana University.

After a forty-five year formal career and several years of “retirement”, Dr. Hindsley continued to serve as a guest conductor, adjudicator, clinician, writer and publisher of many of his manuscript transcriptions and his books; “HINDSLEY ON BANDS” and “MY BANDS AND I”. In 1993 he transferred the publications and distribution responsibilities of his transcriptions to his son, Robert Hindsley.

He wrote like over 100 transcriptions from all of the great masters. His favorite Great Masters were; Johan Sebastian Bach, Ludwig von Beethoven, Pyotr Illich Tchaikovsky, Rimsky Korsakov, Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss.

In 1999, on the first of October, Dr. Mark Hindsley died.

(From: <http://hindsleytranscriptions.com/about-dr-hindsley/>)

(From: <http://hindsleytranscriptions.com/catalog/transcriptions/>)

Ton van Grevenbroek

The Dutch composer and arranger Ton van Grevenbroek was born in 1959 in Rotterdam. He studied trumpet at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and had his trumpet lessons of John Taber and Peter Masseurs. After his trumpet study he studied Windband conducting at the Conservatoire of Rotterdam where he had his conducting lessons of Arie van Beek and Jaap Koops. From 1982 he was a professional 1st cornet player serving the “Koninklijke Militaire Kapel Johan Willem Friso” (The Royal Military Orchestra “Johan Willem Friso”) in The Hague. In the early 90’s this orchestra had to reorganize to a smaller professional orchestra and Ton van Grevenbroek started as a professional trumpet-player in Vught serving the “Fanfare Orkest Koninklijke Landmacht “Bereden Wapens” (The Royal Fanfare of the Mounted Forces “Bereden Wapens”). At this moment he is still trumpet-player in this professional Military Orchestra. As a composer and arranger he wrote a lot of music for the professional orchestras in Holland. He made a lot of transcriptions from the Great Masters but he is also very good in writing “Light Music” (Pop Music, Songs from Musicals, Ballads and music from Operas). Ton van Grevenbroek wrote like 150 different kind of arrangements and he wrote 3 compositions.

He also works as a principal conductor of different kind of amateur orchestras.

(From: <http://www.grevenbroekmusic.nl/page/biografie>)

5.2 Analyzing Pictures at an Exhibition from Dr. Mark Hindsley and Ton van Grevenbroek

First I need to know what the ideas are of the composition written by Ravel. Off course it’s doubtful what the original composition is. Is it the piano-score of Mussorgsky or is the original “Pictures at an Exhibition” written by Maurice Ravel? Bernard van Beurden was a very famous and well known composer, pedagogue, teacher and writer in the Netherlands and he made a notable quote about this subject. He said “When Maurice Ravel wrote the instrumentation of Pictures at an Exhibition he created a complete new piece and composition”. I think he was right about this subject because of the fact that the Ravel version made the Pictures at an Exhibition famous by all orchestras all over the world and he created a complete new world of sound when he wrote the Mussorgsky version to symphonic orchestra. So when I have to decide what the main ideas of the composition are I would like to go out of the Ravel version.

Interesting questions for comparing the two versions:

- Which of the two transcriptions (from Mark Hindsley and Ton van Grevenbroek), compared to the Ravel version, comes closest to the original version?
- Which of the two transcriptions (from Mark Hindsley and Ton van Grevenbroek), compared to the Ravel version, approaches the solo passages as closest as possible?
- Which of the two transcriptions (from Mark Hindsley and Ton van Grevenbroek), come, compared to the Ravel version, as close as possible when we talk about dynamic balance choices?
- Which of the two transcriptions (from Mark Hindsley and Ton van Grevenbroek) come, compared to the Ravel version, as close as possible when we talk about color choices?

In my experience some parts are crucial to write a good transcription.

Main colors:

It's very hard to write the string-parts to wind band because of the fact that the strings are the main color in a symphonic orchestra and in a wind band the main color is, most of the time, written in the clarinets. So it's almost impossible to "copy & past" the string parts directly to the clarinets because of the different tuning and the different limits in those two instrumental groups.

Main key choices:

In a symphonic orchestra the most common tuning of instruments are; C-A-F

In a wind band the most common tuning of instruments are; Bb-C-F-Eb

As we can see that's a big difference in tuning. The main groups of instruments will have other key signatures when a transcription is written in the original key. For example; when the original main key is A major the C notated instruments have to deal with 3 sharps. When we look at the Bb instruments we see 5 sharps, the Eb instruments have to deal with 6 (!) sharps. In my experience it's hard for musicians, especially for amateur players, when they have to play music what's written in more than over 3 sharps. It's more difficult to read and there will be more problems to achieve a clear tuning for every note and chord.

Soloists:

When Ravel wrote the solo passages he created a particular ambiance and atmosphere in different successive colors. So when you make a transcription it's important to keep in mind that these colors are respected. It would be very interesting to see and hear what happens with the composition when an arranger creates another world/atmosphere by choosing other soloists and accompanies.

Instrumentation:

The main functions of different kind of instrumental groups are totally different in a symphonic orchestra when we compare it to a wind band. For example a big difference is the main function of the low woodwinds. The bassoons and bass clarinet parts have, in most of the time, in symphonic orchestrations more melodic and color functions compared to a wind band where these parts are more based on bass functions.

So let's have a look into the two different versions of "Pictures at an Exhibition".

1 Promenade 1 (Picture 1a + 1b)

Both of the versions start with a trumpet soloist accompanied by the total brass section in the same main key as the Ravel version. Immediately we can see a difference in instrumentation because of the fact that Hindsley uses cornets while van Grevenbroek only uses a complete trumpet section. In the Hindsley version we see a big difference in the way he writes the brass accompany because of the positions written in the staves. Both of the versions have written the start of the strings in the woodwind sections. Difference in using woodwinds is notably to see in the version of van Grevenbroek. He uses the clarinets as a main register and tries to write the string parts in the clarinets in accompany of the saxophones.

Conclusion of the 1st promenade:

Mr. van Grevenbroek comes closest in sounds, color and instrumentation compared to the Ravel version. The Hindsley version is really different comparing to the Ravel version.

2 Gnomus (Picture 2a + 2b)

Again the main key is the same as what's written in the original version of Ravel with a slightly difference of notation. The Hindsley version is written as a "keyless" notation while the van Grevenbroek version is notated in key (6 flats). Another difference in this movement is the function of the euphonia and the bass tuba parts. Hindsley created a part what does not exist in the Ravel version in compare to the van Grevenbroek version who wrote these two parts in the function of the celli and contrabasses. In the Hindsley version we can see other balance choices what has a big influence on the instrumentation and on to the colors of the music.

3 Promenade 2 (Picture 3a + 3b)

Nice to see in the second promenade is the usage of the instruments. Both versions are totally the same in compare to the original Ravel version! This could be because of the very simply reason they didn't had to choose another kind of instrument while all the instruments Ravel used are also available in a standard wind band instrumentation.

4 Il Vecchio Castello (Picture 4a + 4b)

Il Vecchio Castello is a very interesting movement to analyze for my research. The Hindsley version is written in a different key compared to the original Ravel version (and the van Grevenbroek version that uses the original main key). The Hindsley version is written in G minor while the original version is written in G sharp minor. Apart from the fact that Hindsley ignores the key circle what's written by Mussorgsky it has a totally different sound and color. When we look at the key signatures we see two flats written for the C notated instruments, the Eb notated instruments have 1 sharp notated and the Bb instruments have no key signatures what makes the individual part a lot easier to read. All the versions use the saxophone as a solo instrument so there we can't find any difference. So that raises the question why would Hindsley choose for a different main key?? When I look at the accompanied instrumentation I can't find big differences in choices (note; Van Grevenbroek uses a Contrabass player to mimic the Ravel version while Hindsley only use low woodwinds for accompanying the saxophone soloist). When I take a look to the rest of the score finding other choices I see Hindsley choose for a trumpet solo instead of an English horn solo. Van Grevenbroek uses the English horn as was written in the original version. The ending of Vecchio is seriously different in the color approach; Hindsley writes flutes, sharp woodwinds and cornet while van Grevenbroek only uses soft color instruments.

5 Promenade 3 (Picture 5a + 5b)

Interesting to see is the different main key choice of Hindsley comparing the original version and the van Grevenbroek version. Hindsley writes G Minor instead of B minor what's written in the original scores. Both of them start with the original trumpet solo and build the instrumentation up to a massive score and sound.

6 Tuileries (Picture 6a + 6b)

Again Hindsley wrote this movement a half tone lower comparing to the original version. Both of the versions are notated in the start with the same instrumentation Ravel used for his version. Interesting to see in the Hindsely version is the usage of cornets and brass while the van Grevenbroek version tried to create the same sounds and atmospheres that Ravel created with "soft sounding instruments". In the Hindsley version we can see a lot of different approach of dynamic aspects compared to the original version.

7 Bydlo (Picture 7a + 7b)

It looks like Hindsley tries to make his own key change circle when he started to write Il Vecchio Castello in a different key. All the movements what came after Vecchio Castello were notated an half tone lower comparing to the original version. The van Grevenbroek version is again notated in the original key. Both versions use the euphonium as soloist for the Bydlo. According to the original both versions use the same dynamic spectra to achieve the original sound of the Bydlo.

8 Promenade 4 (Picture 8a + 8b)

In this promenade we can see the same choices made in Promenade 2 because of the fact that Ravel choose instruments for his instrumentation that are normally available in the wind bands. A different instrumentation is used for grand tutti's. Van Grevenbroek used the dynamic spectrum of the Ravel score. Hindsley wrote less big tutti's.

9 Ballet des poussins dans leurs coques (Picture 9a + 9b)

Interesting to see is that Hindsley in this movement decided to return to the original key as written by Ravel. Here fore he denied the total key circle what has been created by Mussorgsky. Hindsley wrote a different kind of instrumentation where he denied instrumental choices what have been created by Ravel. Van Grevenbroek used the same notation style what has been written by Ravel. It's possible to hear these different approaches because of the way the both versions use soft woodwinds in a different function.

10 Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle (Picture 10a + 10b)

In this movement the Hindsley version is, again, written in a different main key (again a half tone lower). Interesting to see is the keyless notation in the individual parts. I think he did this because the individual players can read their parts faster and in an easier way. In this movement Hindsley instrumented cornets in a color what is originally written for low and soft woodwinds in accompanied with sharp woodwinds (like the hobo part). Van Grevenbroek only uses soft woodwinds and soft saxhorns to stay as close as possible with the Ravel version.

11 Limoges: Le Marché (Picture 11a + 11b)

After another key change from Hindsley he decided to go back to the original main key when he wrote Limoges. I can only find some different instrumentation choices. What I've seen before is the different approach of sounds and colors. Hindsley has another spectrum of sounds and colors comparing to the original version and the Grevenbroek version. A big difference in both versions is the usage of instrumental groups. In some movements Ravel and van Grevenbroek are locking out complete instrumental groups while Hindsley, in almost every movement, used all the instrumental groups that are available in the wind band setting.

12 Catacombae (Picture 12a + 12b)

Both versions are using the original main key for this movement. Again a big difference is the instrumentation choice of both arrangers. In this movement we can see a clear approach of van Grevenbroek who always tries to imitate the string group with the usage of low woodwinds and soft saxhorns so he can make an implementation for the wind band setting.

13 Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua (Picture 13a + 13b)

Again both arrangers tried to follow Ravel's choices in instrumentation and used the original key written by Mussorgsky. Van Grevenbroek used more low woodwind and brass instruments to create a dark world for this movement. Hindsley uses totally different colors for the sound of this movement. He is purely writing it for windband.

14 Baba Yaga (Picture 14a + 14b)

It's special to see that Hindsley uses completely other instruments for the Baba Yaga. Van Grevenbroek tried to imitate the strings by using clarinets and soft woodwinds while Hindsley uses sharp brass instruments. Also the notation of the articulations is totally different in both versions. Hindsley used a lot of bows while van Grevenbroek avoids the bowing articulations for the instruments. In the Andante movement both versions try to use the Ravel instrumentation.

15 La Grande Porte de Kiev (Picture 15a + 15b)

Both versions are written in the original key and are almost written in the same instrumentation as Ravel wrote in his version. Hindsley used more instruments for the soft passages; he doubled the clarinets with the saxophones etc. Another aspect of the different instrumentation choices are the notated triples. In the Hindsley version are triplets and in the van Grevenbroek version the triplets are notated as sextiles. Both versions wrote a very big finale but the instrumentation of van Grevenbroek is extremely wider instrumentated comparing to the Hindsley version. Therefore it has a much bigger but also a more transparent sound.

Conclusion:

I saw a lot of different approaches in the both versions written by Mark Hindsley and Ton van Grevenbroek. Ton van Grevenbroek wrote his version in the original thought of Modest Mussorgsky and Maurice Ravel by using the original keys and instrumentation. Of course he couldn't write the exact same instrumentation as written by Ravel but he wrote the same wind and brass instruments where it was possible to use them. Almost every solo line had the same solo instrument as written in the Ravel version. For the accompanies of this solo lines he tried to create the same sound as the symphonic version. In the instrumentation I saw a lot of similarities in the orchestral sound, when the original version had a smaller and softer sound van Grevenbroek tried to mimic this sound using other instruments that were available in the wind band. For example; when there was a cello line in the original version van Grevenbroek used a combination of a euphonium, a baritone saxophone and a bassoon to recreate the sound of the cello. In this instrumentation it is very clear that van Grevenbroek studied the instrumentation of Ravel, in sounds and orchestral-instrumentation size to understand how he had to write this for wind band. In my opinion this transcription is very successful and usable for good wind bands.

In the Hindsley version I saw a lot of "strange" things. Hindsley clearly chose another way of approach when he was writing his version for wind band. For me it looks like he created a completely new piece for wind band ignoring the version of Maurice Ravel and the original thoughts of Modest Mussorgsky. In this version he ignored the original key thought what's written by Mussorgsky in a key circle (by starting in the main key of Bb and ending in the dominant of Bb). Therefore it sounds a little bit strange when I listened from movement to movement. I could feel and hear there was something wrong or different when I listened to the recordings. The instrumentation of Hindsley was also totally different regarding to the other versions. He created new colors instead of the colors used by Ravel. That meant that there are places in the movement where you hear other kind of characters because he used sharp colors instead of warm colors. He also wrote some different solo lines according to the original version. Another thing what is clearly different than the original version is the fact of orchestral size in his instrumentation. In some movements Ravel wrote a way smaller ensemble for a smaller orchestral size and sound while Hindsley wrote a really big instrumentation. When I listened to the recordings it's a really big difference in the way the Pictures at an Exhibition originally sounds. In my opinion this transcription isn't a big success because of the different key approach and the totally different approach of instrumentation. But that's purely thought from the philosophy that when I want to play a symphonic piece with my wind band I want to play a transcription what sounds as close as possible to the original.

6. Analyzing different keys for Wind Bands

After analyzing the two versions for wind band I saw the different main key choices and I was thinking what consequences the choice for a particular main key causes. For the instrumentalists it has big consequences when an original composition is written in another main key. The instrumentalists will have to read other key signatures. Generally spoken, I know from my own experience as a professional euphonium player, the more key signatures a musician has to read the harder and more difficult the first contact with this piece is. Normally it takes longer to manage your individual part and it takes more time to make every section clean and clear.

So I was thinking on what way I could research this subject. On YouTube and on CD recordings there are lots of recordings of the different versions from Pictures at an Exhibition but the problem with these recordings is that it are always different orchestras in varying concert halls at different times with different musicians. To define the consequences of the choice for different main keys in a transcription I needed to tackle all subjects as written above.

When I analyzed Pictures at an Exhibition the most various and strange choices of main keys surfaced during the analyzation of “Il Vecchio Castello”. I have decided to take this particular movement for this chapter because it contains a lot of wind band parts in the original and it’s a very recognizable movement.

What do I need for a good analyze of the choice of a main key?

1. A instrumentation of Il Vecchio Castello in three different Main Keys (Original key – notated a Half tone lower and notated a Half tone higher)
2. A ensemble of good amateur wind players for the recordings with the exact same musicians
3. A hall for the recordings to take place
4. Recording materials (video and audio)

My first step was to write an instrumentation of “Il Vecchio Castello” and to make a choice for how many players I would arrange this movement. I chose for 8 amateur players:

- 1st, 2nd, 3rd Bb Clarinet (4 musicians in total)
- Eb Clarinet (1 musician)
- Bb Bass Clarinet (1 musician)
- Baritone Saxophone (2 musicians)

*Note: I didn’t have a bassoon player during the recordings so I had to resolve this problem using the Baritone Saxophone instead of the bassoon.

My second step was to arrange a date and a hall for the recordings to take place.

The third step was to make a list of questions they had to fill in after the recordings. I had three questions where I would like to find have an answer for.

Question 1: Can you feel and-or hear differences between the 3 versions?

Question 2: What version (1, 2 or 3) is the easiest version to play?

Sub Question: Why?

Question 3: What version (1, 2 or 3) feels the most comfortable?

Sub Question: Why?

The fourth step was to record the instrumentation. Important issue was to not talk with the musicians about my research or what their assignment was during the evening recordings.

When I would say what the questions were I could imagine they will play and listen in a different way what could have bad influence for this research question.

6.1 Recording

As written above I didn't tell the musicians what was the meaning of this recording evening. I started to hand out the individual parts and told the musicians we are going to play these 3 different versions 2 times. They were not allowed to study their part. It was very important that they would have an "a vu" (first acquaintance) of their own part. After this brief information we started recording version 1.

Version -1- (Original main Key = G sharp minor) first session (Video 1)

We started to play version 1 in the original main key as written by Mussorgsky. Immediately there were several problems in the first reading of their part. The Baritone Saxophone player, who was replacing the bassoon player, had a lot of difficulties reading his part because of the 4 Bb signatures at the start of this movement. He played some wrong notes and didn't get the solo line in tune. The solo alto saxophone player did OK with his key signatures but you could feel that it wasn't comfortable. The Bb clarinet players had to play 5 Bb key signatures and I could feel they made some slippery wrong notes but it was not too bad.

Version -2- (Half tone lower key = G minor) first session (Video 2)

We started to play version 2 what's been written a half tone lower in relation to the original version of Mussorgsky. This is the version Mark Hindsley wrote in his transcription of Pictures at an Exhibition as written in the chapter where I have been analyzing both versions for wind band. When we played this version immediately something happened with the sound of the ensemble. The Baritone saxophone player had 1 sharp in his main key signature and I could feel that it was much easier for him to read and play his solo part. The alto saxophone player played more open and clear when he had to play his solo. I felt all the musicians felt more comfortable in relation to version 1. I could hear a very big difference in sound but I wasn't sure if I liked the sound. It sounded more open and clear but it didn't had the darkness you'll would like to feel when listening to Il Vecchio Castello.

Version -3- (Half tone higher = A minor) first session (Video 3)

We started to play version 3 what's been written a half tone higher in relation to the original version of Mussorgsky. All instruments have 2 or 3 sharps in their key signature and this is normally a very good key for clarinets and saxophones to play in. But something strange happened. Something what's for me wasn't scientific to certify, it was a really strange sound what I heard from the ensemble and I couldn't explain what happened....! It was like you were listening to a composition what wrings and or sands from note to note. It wasn't pleasant to listen to.

After the first recording and reading session I gave the questions to the musicians and asked them, during the second recording session, to listen and feel what the differences were between the three versions and why they could feel and-or hear differences.

All versions were played a little bit better during this second recording session. Off course the musicians knew what's been written and how the structure of the transcription was but strangely nothing changed in the way the versions sounded. Version 1 sounded the most beautiful, warm and dark of color while version 2 sounded to open, to clear for a mysterious dark castle (Il Vecchio Castello). Version 3 had the strangest sound, I don't know why but it didn't sound pleasant and-or beautiful. It was if there was something wrong with this version in the height of the tones or the way the darkness disappeared regarding to version 1.

After this second recording session I asked the musicians to write their experiences down on the question form what I handed out to them.

Did you feel differences between the three versions?

All 8 musicians answered that they could feel (big) differences between the three versions. Five musicians couldn't explain why but three musicians gave it a try to explain what they felt playing these three different versions. They answered that they felt a difference in color and character between the 3 versions and they heard / felt that version 1 had the most dark and mysterious color. Funny thing was that when we spoke about this subject the other five musicians agreed and some said: "that's what I felt but I didn't know how to explain it". All musicians then agreed that the second version was too bright in the color they heard and didn't corresponded with the character of the dark old castle. No one of the musicians liked the third version. Something was wrong in the color of the chords but no one of them could explain what was wrong.

What was the easiest version to play?

Seven musicians answered the second version was easier to play (the version Hindsley wrote in his transcription) because of the easy key signature. Only 1 musician answered that he thought the third version was easier to play because of the tuning.

What version feels the most comfortable?

All eight (!) musicians said the second version was the most comfortable version to play because of the key signatures and the easier way to read and tune their instrument in the ensemble. When we were discussing about this subject all eight musicians said that despite version 2 was more comfortable to play they would always chose version 1 to play on a concert because of the fact that this version (original key) is the most beautiful to play. Interesting thing one musician said was that when we should play version 1 on a concert we need more rehearsal time to solve all the problems regarding reading, intonation and balance.

Conclusion after the recordings

For me this test was very interesting and fun to do. It was interesting to discuss and talk with the musicians and I was in some ways flabbergasted to hear the big differences in sound, color and intonation during the same movement in different main keys. I don't think there is a scientific explanation for the fact that everybody had the best feeling with the original key. What happens in the human brain when we hear and feel different kind of pitches? Somehow a main key is a very important DNA for a composition to create an atmosphere, character and colors because we could hear and feel it in these three small sections of Il Vecchio Castello.

7. Conclusion

Before I try to explain my conclusions let's have a look to the original research question

Research Question:

What makes a symphonic transcription (for wind, Fanfare and Brass band) of one of the Great Masters from the 19th century successful?

Summary of Results:

The hard part in my research was the question: "What is success"? And how is it possible to define "success"? When a different key is written than the original key some people will say the "color" of the composition has also changed. Some people say they can feel and hear it but as we all know a lot of thoughts in music are subjective. So how can we define the success when a lot of things are subjective? What's good, better or wrong?

My main conclusion is that, when you would like to create or perform a symphonic transcription, the rate of success is based on several elements.

The chosen key in a symphonic transcription is one of the most important elements. It's possible to choose any kind of key for a symphonic transcription but the choice has always consequences. For example, the chosen key determines the amount of sharps and flats in the scores for the different instruments. The amount of key signatures determines the difficulty level and therefore the rehearsal time what's necessary for a good performance. Other very important consequences, when a different key is chosen, are the choices the arranger has to make regarding the instrumentation in a symphonic transcription. Every (solo) instrument has its limitations within a chosen key because of the "limited" register and playable possibilities (articulation, intonation, balance, sound, volume, etc.). Therefore In my opinion it's not every kind of symphonic composition is suitable for wind, fanfare or brass band. I think a symphonic transcription could be successful if it fits the next conditions:

- The symphonic transcription needs to be written that it sounds as close as possible to the original composition
- The symphonic transcription must be performable and playable in the best way for the medium that it specifies
- The symphonic transcription has to be written in a logical and natural way (so chose the most logical instruments to play natural melodically phrases)
- The symphonic transcription needs to satisfy the musicians who play the transcription
- The symphonic transcription needs to satisfy the audience who will listen to the transcription
- The symphonic transcription requires the best notes for the instrumentalists who will play the composition (so chose the best keys, rhythms, notes and structure for the symphonic transcription)

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