

s|s|o

St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director

We are the squeak
of the clarinet,
Hidden by the
drums loud thud

express

the music

2023

inspire *creativity*

A place around silence
Exploded with noise
In a moment,
The only hope
The only safety
The only life
Was destroyed



An educational program for
grades 6-12 presented by the
St. Louis Symphony
Volunteer Association

Sponsored by
Employees Community
Fund of Boeing St. Louis

SLSO education programs
are presented by



Let my heart
be like a drum
All my heart was beating
for you

A special invitation for teachers and student writers

Showcase your students' imagination and creativity with *Express the Music*, now in its 26th year of celebrating poetry and prose from public, private, parochial, and homeschool students throughout the region. This year, this FREE cross-curricular writing competition invites students in grades 6-12 to discover "The Great Gate of Kiev" from **Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*** and respond with poetry or prose that expresses creative thought and emotion inspired by the music.

How it Works

Students listen, write, edit, and share. Teachers encourage creativity, guide the writing and editing process, and select the prose and poetry to submit.

Guided by you, the teacher, students listen to this year's musical selection—"The Great Gate of Kiev" from Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*—and respond to its impact on them through creative writing—prose or poetry. Then, you choose and submit up to seven (7) students' compositions per class, which can include both prose and poetry in a mix you decide. If you have more than one class, seven entries may be submitted from each of your classes

Where to Find the Music

1. YouTube:
[Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, conductor](#)
2. [Spotify](#)
3. Your school's music teacher
4. Your school or local library

Entry Requirements

Each entry must fulfill the following requirements:

- Entries must be original works of prose or poetry composed by student authors. Submitted works must not have been previously published or entered into other competitions.
- Entries must be word-processed, double-spaced in an 8.5" x 11" document. Please choose a 12-point font that is black and easy to read. There should be 1" page margins on all sides.

- File type must be PDF.
- Entries are limited to the following lengths:
 - » Junior Division (Grades 6-8): 400 words
 - » Senior Division (Grades 9-12): 600 words
- Entries should contain no illustrations or embellishments.
- Student's identifying information (name, student ID number, phone number, email, etc.) must not appear in the submitted composition or in its file name.

Failure to adhere to any of the above requirements could result in a student's work being eliminated from the competition.

How to Prepare & Submit Entries

Prepare and submit entries **online**.

- [Visit slso.org/express](#) to access the Submission Form beginning in late October.
- Complete one Submission Form for each class. On this form, you will be able to submit up to seven (7) student entries per class. If you have more than one class, submit a separate Submission Form (with up to seven entries) for each class.
- The Submission Form requires you to provide your contact information, your school's information, and to upload PDF files of each student entry.
- Please check the spelling of each student's name on the Submission Form. Student names will be reproduced exactly as entered.

The SLSO and *Express the Music* retain the right to use and republish submitted works at will.

All entries must be submitted online by Friday, January 20, 2023.

Questions? Call 314-286-4190 or email svaexpressthemusic@slso.org.

Judging

Judges will not be given the name, grade level, or school of the writer. Poetry and prose entries will be judged by separate panels. Each entry goes through preliminary judging, where it will be read and scored by multiple readers. Finalists selected by the preliminary panel will then be evaluated by a separate judging panel of expert writers and editors.

Judges are looking for submissions that:

- Are original and creative
- Have been influenced by the themes, structure, mood, or rhythm of the musical selection
- Show a clear central theme or idea with well-developed details and descriptions
- Are compelling in structure
- Contain powerful, vivid, and varied words and expressions
- Contain no grammar or spelling mistakes

[Rubrics for Poetry](#)

[Rubrics for Prose](#)

Finalists will be announced in late February.

Awards Ceremony and Prizes

All finalists will receive certificates of merit in a public ceremony during a Youth Orchestra Concert at Powell Hall on **Sunday, March 19, 2023** at 3:00pm. Their entries will be compiled in a book that will be distributed at the ceremony and published on the SLSSO website.

Cash prizes for the top three entries in each category will be awarded:

Junior Division (Grades 6-8):

- 1st place for Prose: \$200 / for Poetry: \$200
- 2nd place for Prose: \$100 / for Poetry: \$100
- 3rd place for Prose: \$75 / for Poetry: \$75

Senior Division (Grades 9-12):

- 1st place for Prose: \$400 / for Poetry: \$400
- 2nd place for Prose: \$200 / for Poetry: \$200
- 3rd place for Prose: \$100 / for Poetry: \$100

Tips for Teachers

- Dedicate specific class time to this project for the most thorough experience. For authentic cross-curricular collaboration, have students listen to the piece and start their writing in music class, then revise and edit in English class.

- Set your usual high expectations. Encourage students to write expressively and refine their writing through input and editing.
- Allow enough time for students to listen to the music more than once to fully explore the emotions and thoughts that form in their minds.
- Entries will be reproduced “as is.” Help students edit carefully for mechanics such as spelling, grammar, and spacing on the page.
- Encourage students to write from the heart. The music is a way to spark their creativity, rather than something to be analyzed.
- Use good quality audio equipment when listening to the musical selection.

Tips for Student Writers

- Listen to the music several times to get a sense of its emotion. Write from your own experience about the images or feelings that the music inspires in you.
- If a story has human characters, create a brief biographical description of each one as you draft your story.
- Edit for clarity by removing or altering any text that might distract or confuse the reader.
- Your writing could focus on one mood, feeling, or image that the music inspires, or it could follow the emotional journey of the piece. Create a feelings map (see below) then make an outline or storyboard before you start writing.

A Sample “Feelings Map”

Most music triggers a variety of emotional responses. Keeping track of feelings as they change in the music might help listeners grasp the emotional structure of the music. Use adjectives or adverbs to create a feelings map of the music before you start writing.

Here is a sample feelings map from an imaginary musical work, not from this year’s selection:

Opening – calm, peaceful
Then – getting agitated, aggressive
Peaceful for a while
Becoming agitated, confusing
Majestic
Suddenly – calm, maybe sad
Picking up speed – optimistic, bright, cheerful
Calming down – the peaceful feeling returns
Ends softly, maybe hopeful

About the Piece and the Composer

Note: Discuss the composer's life, culture, and historical context ONLY AFTER students have completed their compositions to ensure that the students' work reflects their own emotions and thoughts about the musical selection.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) was born into a wealthy noble family in Russia. His mother was a classically trained pianist, and she began giving her son music lessons when he was six. When he was a young man, Mussorgsky's whole family moved from their small town to the large city of St. Petersburg so that he and his brothers could attend a prestigious military school. However, Mussorgsky never stopped studying piano and would frequently entertain his classmates with his music.

Mussorgsky became one of a group of Russian composers called "The Mighty Five" or "The Mighty Handful." These composers worked to make people see the importance of Russian classical music. They believed that music composed in Russia should sound Russian. Mussorgsky composed many pieces that were based on Russian history or Russian folk tales, including *Pictures at an Exhibition* and his other famous work, *Night on Bald Mountain*.

Mussorgsky had a friend named Viktor Hartmann who was an artist and architect. When Hartmann died at age 39, Mussorgsky wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition* in his honor. In the piece, Mussorgsky imagines himself wandering through a museum, viewing ten of Hartmann's artworks. He pauses at each of the ten works, which are each represented by a movement of music. Between the movements, Mussorgsky wrote a "promenade" (literally, a leisurely walk) to signify walking from one work to the next.

The movement titled "The Great Gate of Kiev" was inspired by a monumental gate designed by Hartmann to commemorate a failed attempt to assassinate the Russian Tzar Alexander II. Hartmann won a competition to design the commemorative gate in the capital city of Ukraine (then a part of Russia) but died before the gate was built. After Hartmann's death, the Tzar never followed through with the construction of the gate. All that survives is the sketch that Hartmann made, and this movement of music inspired by it.

Mussorgsky originally wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition* for solo piano. The French composer Maurice Ravel orchestrated Mussorgsky's piano composition: he re-wrote it so that an orchestra could perform it.

State Standards for English Language Arts and Music

Express the Music fulfills components of the Missouri grade-level expectations in English Language Arts and Music, as well as the Illinois Learning Standards.

[Missouri English Language Arts Learning Standards](#)

W2A, W3A

[Missouri Music Learning Standards](#)

MU:Cn11A.E.5a-IIIa, MU:Cr1A.C.I-II,
MU:Cn11A.H.5a-III

[Illinois English Language Arts Learning Standards](#)

Text Types and Purposes

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.3

Production and Distribution of Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.5

Range of Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.10

[Illinois Fine Arts Learning Standards](#)

MU.Re7.1, MU.Re8.1, MU.Cn11.1