

# Music in the Making



## MOZAIKA

### Listening and Reflection Activity

#### Introduction

The Pittsburgh Symphony hired five local composers in 1997 to write a piece of music for its new music director at the time, conductor Mariss Jansons. The piece was called *Mozaika* and is like a musical mosaic. It is made of multiple smaller parts that come together to form a whole.

The five composers each wrote one movement, or part, of the music. They worked together to make sure each movement was different but still fit together like pieces of a puzzle. You will hear one of those movements, “A Festive Violet Pulse,” in Schooltime: Music in the Making at Heinz Hall.

This activity explores the different movements of *Mozaika* by inviting students to focus on one part of the piece and share their reactions with the class.

#### Activity

##### 1. Listening and Individual Reflection

Assign each student an individual movement from *Mozaika*. Have students complete the individual reflection worksheet as they listen to their movement.

##### 2. Small Group Discussion

Group students assigned to the same movement together into one or more small groups. Have students share their individual answers to the reflection prompts. Ask students to compare how their individual responses to the music were similar or different from one another.

Next, have students read the composer’s program notes for their movement. Listen to the music again as a small group, then answer the small group reflection questions together.

##### 3. Classroom Discussion

Invite each group to present their impressions of their movement and how they perceive it compared to the composer’s program notes. Write key words or reactions on the board to show diversity in opinions and responses.

## Individual Reflection

Movement: \_\_\_\_\_

Composer: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you hear? What instruments or sounds can you hear most clearly? Is the music fast or slow? Loud or soft? Can you follow the melody easily throughout?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How would you describe the mood of this piece? How do you feel when listening to it – excited, calm, bored, happy? Remember, there is no right answer!
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What did you like or dislike about the piece?

## Group Reflection

Movement: \_\_\_\_\_

Composer: \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss your individual impressions of the music. Write your group's answers below.

1. What sounds or instruments stood out to everyone in this movement? What did the group notice about the music's tempo (fast/slow) and dynamics (loud/soft)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How did the members of your group describe the mood of this piece? How did the music make you feel? Why do you think it made you feel this way?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What did the group like or dislike about this piece?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Were there any aspects of the music where the group had very different reactions?

**Next, read the program notes for your movement.** Listen to the music again after reading the program notes and consider the following questions. Write your group's responses below.

1. What do you think the composer was trying to express with their music?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you think the composer's message or feeling comes through in the music? Why or why not? Give at least one example from the music to support your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Did the music make you think or feel something different than what the composer described in their program note?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How did knowing the composer's ideas change the way you listened to the piece?

## YouTube Recordings:

- I. [No Time Like the Present](#) by Eric Moe (4:55)
- II. [A Festive Violet Pulse](#) by Nancy Galbraith (3:14)
- III. Hymn of Welcome by Michael Moricz (no recording exists)
- IV. [Like the Wind](#) by David Stock (2:22)
- V. [Line and Thunder](#) by Leonardo Balada (6:12)

## Program Notes:

*Mozaika*, premiered by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, February 20, 1998

“*Mozaika*, which receives its world premiere at these performances, is the result of a commission by the Pittsburgh Symphony Society in honor of Music Director Mariss Jansons. Gideon Toeplitz, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra’s Executive Vice President and Managing Director, conceived the idea of commissioning several of Pittsburgh’s most distinguished composers to collaborate on a multi-movement work.

Subsequently, the Pittsburgh Symphony requested composers Eric Moe, Nancy Galbraith, Michael Moricz, David Stock and Leonardo Balada to participate in the project. Each agreed to contribute a single movement. The composers also quickly reached a consensus as to the type of movement each would provide in order to create an appropriately varied concert work.

All that remained in the planning stages of the composition was to select an appropriate title. At first, the composers attempted to find a name that would relate to the city of Pittsburgh, but that effort proved unsuccessful. Finally, everyone agreed upon the title *Mozaika*, the Russian word for “Mosaic.” It is an apt description of a collaborative work of art designed to welcome Maestro Mariss Jansons, the Latvian-born conductor who has made such a profound contribution to music in Russia, and who now shares his gifts with the city of Pittsburgh.”

– Kenneth H. Meltzer

## **I. "No Time Like the Present"**

"As the title implies, No Time Like the Present celebrates a new beginning for the Pittsburgh Symphony and Maestro Jansons. It also celebrates the ability of music to take us on an exhilarating joyride even while we are wedged securely into our plush auditorium seats; to let us surf on the wave of time, supported only by sound. The piece was certainly exciting to compose: not only has it been a long-standing dream of mine to write for the superb musicians of the PSO, but I've always been curious to see how much of the emotional ebb and flow of a Mahler symphony could be packed into a piece less than a tenth as long. And what if Igor Stravinsky had moved to Motown instead of Hollywood?

"No Time Like the Present" was written in July and August 1996 at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. I am extremely grateful to the Colony for its support. My thanks also to composers Marc-Antonio Consoli, Richard Danielpour, and Tamar Diesendruck for their generous feedback and advice in the composition of the work." – Eric Moe

## **II. "A Festive Violet Pulse"**

"A Festive Violet Pulse" opens with lively textures in the woodwinds which are used as accompaniment for a melodic statement in the violins. This melody is answered contrapuntally by the celli and develops into a web of repeated melodic phrases. The middle section is very rhythmic, highlighting the percussion section and making use of many polyrhythms. A soft tremolo begins to emerge in the strings and gradually evolves into the foreground material. A repeated note theme enters the celli and is answered sequentially by each string section. A strong statement of the original theme in the trumpet and violins climaxes the movement." – Nancy Galbraith

## **III. "Hymn of Welcome"**

"For me, composing is a philosophical, even metaphysical exercise and music a spiritual pursuit. The arrival of Mariss Jansons brings to Pittsburgh a new era of transcendent, impassioned collective music-making with our orchestra, an intense composite of fiercely talented individual artists. "Hymn of Welcome" attempts in its small duration to celebrate this new spirit by contrasting brief solo passages for principal players with a large central climax for the entire orchestra. This middle movement of Mozaika is meant to be an oasis of expressive potential both for individual players and for the orchestra as a whole, with a grateful acknowledgement of the almost mystical presence of Maestro Jansons.

Straightforwardly tonal, the movement begins in a Lydian-tinged G Major and journeys through the optimism of B Major to its central tutti in A Major before modulating again to E for a gentle conclusion. Though dynamically and structurally a simple arch form, the movement aims for a feeling of perpetual ascension and arrival that continues with insistent momentum through to its final measures. Most of all, “Hymn of Welcome’ is unabashedly an appreciative tribute to a magnificent orchestra and inspiring conductor as they begin and unparalleled artistic, spiritual, and musical journey together.”

– Michael Moricz

#### **IV. “Like the Wind”**

“When I was asked to write a movement of *Mozaika* to welcome Maestro Jansons, I volunteered to write the fastest movement. It was written in Pittsburgh and completed in January, 1997. It will have a double life, also serving as the Scherzo of my Second Symphony to be premiered by the Seattle Symphony under Gerard Schwarz in March 1998. The music rushes as fast as possible, moving...like the wind.” – David Stock

#### **V. “Line and Thunder”**

“The dichotomy of the title suggests a similar dichotomy between the two principal ideas in the composition. From the beginning a folk Latvian melody is heard with several layers of voices. This melody- “line”-is played with some transformations throughout the work. Gradually and on top of it a fast propelled, heavy structure of sound – “thunder” – occurs almost until the end when the original melody reappears practically undisturbed. While the ‘line” is basically traditional and diatonic, the “thunder” on the other hand makes use of abrasive clustered harmonies. The melody is introduced by the strings, but soon is performed by the orchestra’s pitched percussion, harp, and piano, suggesting the nasal, metal-like sound of the “kokles,” a Latvian folk instrument.” – Leonardo Balada