



BBC TEN PIECES

Modest Mussorgsky Night on a Bare Mountain

Primary classroom lesson plan

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Background – the composer



Modest Mussorgsky (1839 - 1881)

- Russian composer.
- Part of a group called 'The Five' who wrote Russian sounding music using folk tunes and traditional stories
- Had difficulty finishing pieces, many (including this one) were finished by other composers after his death so he never knew how popular and beloved his music was.



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Night on a Bare Mountain Introduction

Follow [this link](#) and click on the video to see Dan Starkey introduce you to this powerful piece of music.

The cultural context of the music

Night on a Bare Mountain

- Written in 1867 and finished on the night of St John's Eve when legend says the witches' Sabbath takes place!
- One of the first Russian 'tone poems' (i.e. a piece of music describing a story)
- Describes witches casting spells, dancing and partying until the sun comes up



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Watch the orchestral performance



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02b5dmy>

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TASK 1: Draw a storyboard based on the music.

Open the Music Tasks document and look at Task 1:

TASK 1 WILF: I can describe different parts of a piece of music using appropriate vocabulary.

Up to 0:30 Witches gather on St John's Eve	0:30 - 1:26 Witches dance together	1:26 - 2:15 Witches cast a spell
2:15 Church Bell Rings	2:20 - End It is morning, witches fade away and the sun comes up	<u>Vocabulary Bank</u> dynamics volume loud quiet crescendo tempo fast slow increasing decreasing

Listen to the sections using the time guidance given – draw a picture to show what you imagine is happening. Use the vocabulary bank to describe the music at this point in the piece.

Task 2: Identify instruments in the orchestra

Now look at Task 2:

Task 2 WILF: I can identify instruments in an orchestra and their families.

Look at the instruments of the orchestra poster. Which instruments can you identify playing in this piece? Sort them into the correct box in this grid. Write a description for what the instruments in each family have in common.

WOODWIND All woodwind instruments ...	BRASS All brass instruments ...
PERCUSSION All percussion instruments ...	STRINGS All string instruments ...

