Directions for teacher:
Cut the sections apart ahead of time.

Tell the children that The Moldau is a river, and this piece of music is called a symphonic poem – music that tells the story of the river on its journey.

As they are listening to the music, listen for clues about where the river is, and sequence the strips. Talk about when the music transitions (changes sounds or instruments in a major way), the scenery changes.

Note that this is the composer’s interpretation of the river’s journey. Children may come up with a different sequence; that’s OK. Talk about the differences. Write the composer’s river trip on a big chart in the correct sequence (according to the composer) and listen to the piece again. Add drama, movement, reflective writing, or drawing to the second listening.

This activity will take 30-45 minutes. The piece is 12 minutes long. Plan for playing twice and some discussion.

Adaptations are included to use as you want. You can also hand out fewer cards to sequence or have them draw pictures or write words themselves as the music changes.

For a musical annotation, see:
http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/listeninglab/shared/listening_guides/smetana_the_moldau.pdf
Directions (for strips with descriptions):

This musical poem was written between 1875 and 1880 by a composer Smetana who loved walking along a river, the Moldau. It contains scenes he would have encountered as he was walking, but instead of using words to paint the scenes, he used music.

1. Read each card to yourself or take turns reading them with your partner. Think what type of music would describe that scene.
2. Using only the sounds of the music, put the strips in order in which the composer encountered them. Use the words on the strip and the transitions in the music as clues.

Directions (for strips with pictures and descriptions):

1. Read the cards and look at the pictures.
2. Think about the music that might go along with each one.
3. As you listen to the music, put them in order based on which pictures and descriptions best match the pictures and words.
Directions (for cards with emotion):

1. Look at the picture and the matching word.
2. Think about what music would sound like if it matched the picture and the word.
3. As you listen to the music, hold up the card with the emotion that matches the music you hear.

Directions (for colored cards):

For each section of the music, choose the color card that matches the section of music you are listening to.

Do you notice any repeated colors or patterns?

Directions (for blank cards and drawing tool):

For each section of the music, draw something or write words to go with the music. It can be anything: a scene, an emotion, or something free form.

Do you notice any patterns?
Two bubbling brooks ripple over the rocks.  
Big hint: Most rivers start out as little brooks that come together to form a river.

The brooks grow into a mighty flowing river, the Moldau.

The river flows past majestic forests where we can hear hunters blowing their horns.

We pass a wedding celebration with lively, happy dancing music.

Night falls and we pass over the still, calm countryside by moonlight.

Daybreak comes and the river flows through a valley.  
Big hint: Daybreak comes after night!

The river passes through a rough, rocky area.

We pass the rocky area and flow in majestic peace toward Prague.
Streams start small and then turn into a big river.

Happy people are dancing.

Peaceful night comes followed by daybreak.

The river gets rough and rocky.
Listening Activity: Smetana, “The Moldau”

- Peaceful
- Happy
- Excited

Andrea Antepenko