

How To

Teach Using Imagery and Exploring Sound

BY JOANNE SMITH

Here's a perfect example of a piece with a title that matches the sound!

• Begin with the Title

Discuss the picture. Ask how it represents weather on a planet in the solar system with wind, swirling particles, and lightning bolts.

• Listen to the Sounds

With eyes closed, have the student listen (while you play) for wind, swirling debris, lightning, and thunder. Have the student use arm gestures to represent the direction of the sounds. (Upward movements for wind, swirling circles, fists punctuating lightning and thunder.)

• See and Hear

While listening, have the student watch the page to track the direction, dynamics, and descriptive words with his fingers. Ask what the student saw and heard. Did he notice how the pedal produced a blurred effect?

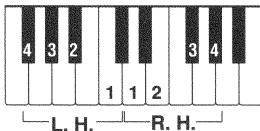
• Review Whole Steps (Lesson Book, p. 22)

From *Piano Adventures* Lesson Book Level 2A, pp. 24, 25

fermata

Hold the note longer than its value.

Use this *whole step* hand position.



Storms on Saturn

Hold the right foot pedal down throughout the entire piece.

Freely, with expression

2 eighth notes divided between the hands

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• Keyboard Picture

Have the student find the keys pictured in the diagram with the correct fingers.

Play the keys from the lowest to the highest.

Are they half or whole steps?

Did you skip a key in between each finger?

How would you spell the letter names of these keys?

How did the composer spell them in measures 1 and 2?

Check the eighth-note stems. How can you tell which is for the LH? The RH?

Have you ever had your hands in this position before?

7 *p* (prepare R.H.)

9 *f* (brilliant lightning) (prepare L.H.)

12 *p* (becoming calm)

15 (peaceful) as soft as possible

CREATIVE Using your hand position from the beginning of the piece, create your own storm. Hold the pedal down and have fun!

• A B A C A B'

If measures 1–4 are A, what would you call measures 5, 6? (Mark B)

What happens here?

What did the composer use to create this swirling effect?

Student plays the B part with crescendo and diminuendo, noticing the upward direction of the third.

Does the B part ever return? (Mark it B')

Star the change in measure 16.

Let's look at the brilliant lightning in measures 9–12.

Have the student find the RH third and play boldly, noting the accents.

Prepare, then play the LH notes. (Perhaps thunder?)

(Remember that the low G_b is new to the student!)

What letter would you use for this section?

• Finish the Piece

Demonstrate measures 15, 16, beautifully emphasizing the dynamics, "peaceful," and "as soft as possible."

Have the student play the ending. Point out the need for *very firm joints* to play "as soft as possible."

Through listening, questioning, and experiencing, the student should be ready for fairly error-free practice. III

• Play "Teach Me"

Have the student place your hands on the correct keys. Ask the student to point to the notes and count *powerfully* as you play measures 1, 2.

Ask the student to look at measures 3, 4. Are these the same or different?

Mark both with a letter A and circle the dynamics.

• Student Plays

Play the A parts, counting, with dynamics and pedal. *Listen to the wind!*

(Make sure the student is positioned on the front of the bench with the heel grounded on the floor in front of the damper pedal.)

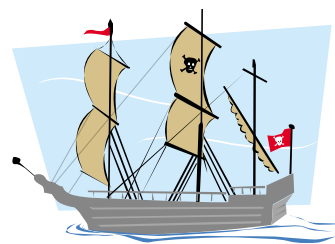
Are there any other A parts in the piece? Mark them.

You already know how to play them!

From *Piano Adventures*
Technique & Artistry Book
Level 2A, pp. 28, 29

How To Add to the Tale

By MARIENNE USZLER



This “musical story” of a pirate ship reviews the **technique secrets** you have learned.

Demonstrate each secret for your teacher before playing the music.

Tale of a Pirate Ship

The Captain's Footsteps

(D minor Position)

secret: **firm fingertips**

Andante

f Cap - tain's com - ing! (foot - steps march - ing) Cap - tain's com - ing!

(foot - steps march - ing) Stand in line while Cap - tain Hook in - spects!

L.H. 8^{va} LOWER –

(8^{va})

Stowaway in a Barrel

(G minor Position)

Allegro

secret: **light thumb**

Hid - ing in the ap - ple bar - rel; hope they do not find me sleep - ing here.

p

Which exercise above is in **parallel motion**? Which is in **contrary motion**?

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The Captain's Footsteps

- Play the right hand an octave lower
- Change the dynamics, as if he were “sneaking up”
- Change the direction of his footsteps

L.H. 8^{va}

Stowaway in a Barrel

Play the piece in the G minor Position, then the D minor Position, then go back to the G minor Position.

- Would you change the dynamics?
- Would you change the tempo?
- Could you add new words?

Counting the Jewels

(A minor Position)

Moderato

secret: **hands-together coordination**

Count - ing all my gold and sil - ver;

I'm the rich - est pi - rate on the sea!

Play the lowest
A on the piano!

Storm at Sea

(C minor Position)

Let the "winds" lift your hand from chord to chord!

secret: **wrist float-off**

Float - off, high winds, float - off, soaring,

float - off, storm at sea!

Play the lowest
C on the piano!

Changing, or adding to, what a composer has written is not something you do with every piece. Certain pieces, like Tale of a Pirate Ship, lend themselves to creative exploration because each section has a distinct character, and because there is a story involved. This is like a launching pad for the imagination. The images are concrete, and the music gives them form and feeling.

Also, this is not a piece in which a new concept or technique is approached for the first time, but a piece in which a student is asked to apply "technique secrets" already learned. It goes without saying that a student has already played the piece correctly and musically before beginning to improvise and explore.

Experimenting with an existing piece is one way in which a student learns how music is put together. The elements that a composer chooses—key, dynamics, tempo, articulations, and rhythmic patterns, for instance—are not casual or haphazard choices. They make a piece what it is ... and changing any one of them can make it a different piece!

Counting the Jewels

Add a few "jewels" in each measure, perhaps

Storm at Sea

Play the piece as is, then change the music to show the calm after the storm.

- Which dynamics would you use?
- Which tempo would you use?
- Could you have the RH play the single Cs in measures 3 and 4? Which direction might they go?
- What if you changed the music to major? III