



Prospero's Library

Prospero is fascinated by magic and uses a spell to save himself and Miranda as they sail across the seas.

French composer **Hector Berlioz** wrote music describing witches casting spells in his 'Symphonie Fantastique' of 1830. We can use his music to help Prospero cast his spell and fix his boat.

1. Listen to the opening of Movement 5, Symphonie Fantastique -

CLIP: Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique Mvt 5 **opening for 45 secs.**

<https://youtu.be/IOYhYpfiY8k>

Things to listen for the first time...

There are a series of short musical sound effects (known as **motifs**). Each one represents the different elements of casting a spell. Imagine Prospero standing in his boat with water rising at his feet desperately trying to summon up a spell. What does he do? Can you match his actions to the sounds?

For example, the opening climbing sound (heard 3 times) might be Prospero reaching his hands out summoning up his magic; the scratchy sounds that follow could be the water rushing around in the bottom of his boat. The short plucked chords (pizzicato) could be the holes of his boat mending themselves.

Listen and Respond Activities

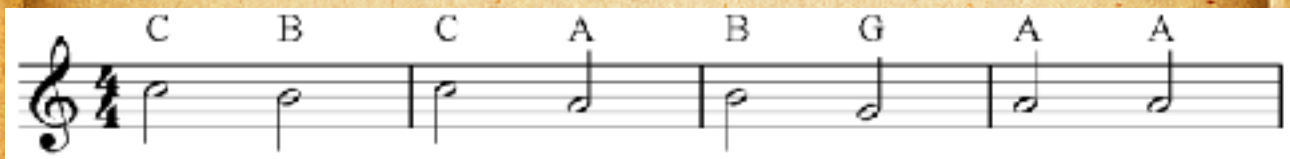
Listen again

- make a list of the sounds you hear and what they might represent in the story
- draw a picture of Prospero in his boat trying to summon up his magic
- imagine you are Prospero and act out the scene along with the music

Later in Berlioz' piece we hear a musical spell (around 3min 30). It is loud and solemn. It begins on lower brass instruments before moving to higher brass (and speeding up) and then for a third time we hear it on woodwind and strings, fast and spiky. Click on the link below to find this specific part:

CLIP: Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique Mvt 5 Dies Irae (at 3'42 – 4'20)

Berlioz uses an ancient tune here called the **Dies Irae**. It is quite easy to play and looks like this:



Play and Compose

- If you can play an instrument try playing this tune
- Add words to this tune for Prospero to sing or chant: These could be a list of spell ingredients, a prayer to the gods of magic or even just nonsense, made-up magical words!
- Film/Record your tune and lyrics and sent it to your class teacher and/or us at PSC

