

Magic Island

Teacher Resources

Activities in this pack:



Information



Activity 3 Perform



Activity 1 **Listen**



Activity 4 Create



Activity 2 **Learn**

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Introduction

The Magic Island by Paul Stanhope.

The Magic Island imagines an Island of hope, playfulness and optimism. The composer calls the piece a love song to Tasmania itself which he really does think is a magic island!

When composing the piece, I drew some inspiration from the music of various children's movies including 'Robots with music' by John Powell. I liked specific colours of the orchestra: the extensive use of metal percussion and harp to create a glittering surface. It is written mainly in a gentle, lilting 6/8 beginning with the sounds of the cor anglais, gradually moving to more expansive, energised sections for the full orchestra before returning to the more delicate, otherworldly sounds of string harmonics and harp.

Paul Stanhope





Listen and Discuss

1. Without revealing the title, listen to the piece, students sitting or lying down silently: [CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

After listening through ask

- What the music could be about.
- What images does the music suggest to them?
- Students to record their thoughts in words and/ or images
- Share ideas with the class

2. Prompt students in pairs to think about the emotions in the music and what feelings it evoked. Note any similarities and differences in the children's thoughts.

3. Listen again. What did you hear that inspires those ideas?
Discuss how the music sounds and changes during the piece using musical language.

4. Reveal the title of the piece. How has the composer suggested the place is magical?

Tip: Guide discussion of musical elements such as high/low, soft/loud, rough/smooth, fast/slow, instrumental colour and variation.



5. How is 'twinkle' or 'sparkle' added to the piece?

Tip: Focus on instruments harp, the crotales, glockenspiel and vibraphone.



Investigate new instruments

Three sparkly instruments feature in *The Magic Island*; the harp, glockenspiel and vibraphone. The harp is a string instrument while vibraphone and glockenspiel are in the percussion section.

1. Use the internet to research these instruments and report on
 - How they look
 - How they are played
 - How they sound
2. Another magical instrument used are the crotales or antique cymbals.

Tip: Think finger cymbals size and volume

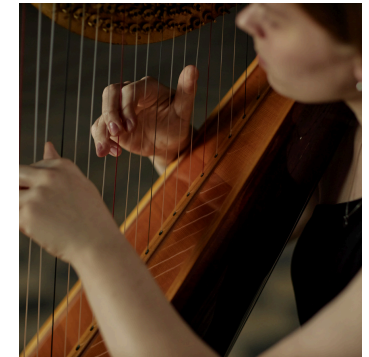
[Listen to the sound of crotales here.](#)

When are crotales instruments featured in the *Magic Island*? Always or in times of quiet and space?

3. Listen again asking students to perform an action when they hear the
 - Harp – a strumming/plucking action
 - Glockenspiel – a striking action
 - Crotales – a hand bell ringing action

Tip: Crotales are used in the quiet spaces of the piece. Harp is throughout, but has times when it is the feature, typically quiet times!

4. What are the metallic instruments/objects in the classroom? Make a list! Which ones create a 'sparkle' or 'magical' sound? Which ones don't? Experiment with these instruments for how to get the best magical sound.





Sing Magic Island

Younger students

The Magic Island has a theme that appears frequently throughout the piece either whole or in smaller fragments, tying the whole piece together.

1. Learn the words to the tune Magic Island.

On an adventure-sailing away to the Magic Island. How do we get there? Do we sail east to the Magic Island?

2. Now learn to sing:

Ma - gic Is-land On an ad-ven-ture Sail-ing a-way to the Ma - gic Is-land

6
How do we get there? Do we sail East to the Ma - gic Is-land?

Upper Primary Extension

Add the accompaniment using classroom instruments or keyboards and perform while singing.

Tip: The accompaniment notes are C+G and D+A for chords 6 and 12.

Voice
Ma - gic Is-Land On an ad-van-ture Sail-ing a-way to a Ma - gic Is-land

Xylophone

Xyl.
How do we get there? Do we sail east to the Ma - gic Is-land?



Magic Island
Main Theme

Secondary extension

Learn to play the Magic island theme on available instruments learning both clef parts.

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system has a voice line and a keyboard (KB) accompaniment. The voice line lyrics are: "Ma - gic Is-Land On an ad-van-ture Sail-ing a-way to a Ma - gic Is-land". The keyboard part has a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes and a bass clef staff with a simple harmonic accompaniment. The second system also has a voice line and a keyboard accompaniment. The voice line lyrics are: "How do we get there? Do we sail east to the Ma - gic Is-land?". The keyboard part continues with the same melodic and harmonic patterns as the first system.



Compose an accompaniment

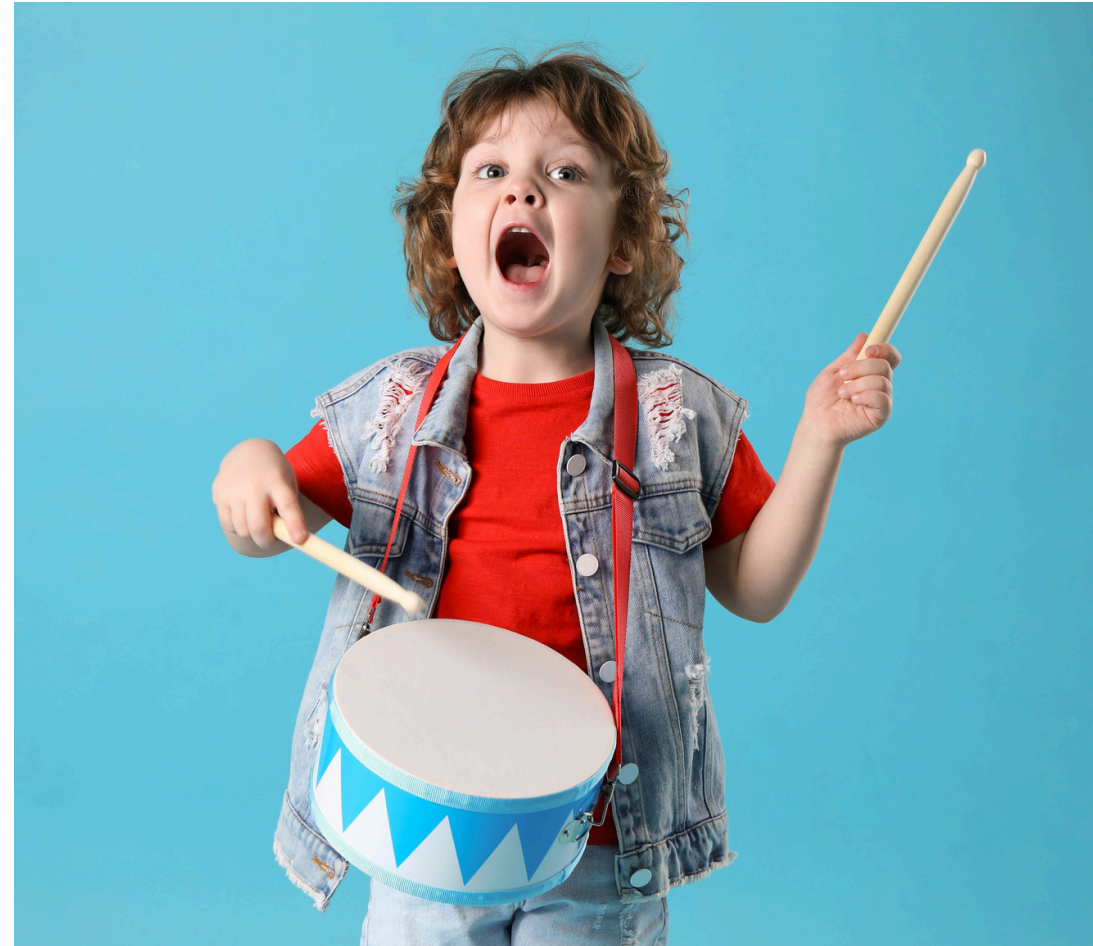
Younger students

1. Use the magical instrument sounds discovered in Activity 1 to improvise an accompaniment for the Magic Island song.

2. Imagine you are sailing in different directions which make you feel:

- a. East – excited
- b. North – sad and homesick
- c. South – scared of the fierce storms
- d. West – happy to see the Magic Island approaching

In groups, create different accompaniments for the song using body percussion, voices and available instruments. Practice singing the song with the accompaniment and using your faces and voices to show the emotion you are feeling. Perform for the class and evaluate each performance.





Compose an accompaniment

Primary students

- a. In groups, write a story about the voyage to the Magic Island and two sea adventures that happened on the trip, e.g: seeing a whale, sailing through a storm, strange birds fly overhead, someone falling overboard, an onboard celebration when spotting the Magic Island.
- b. Create a soundtrack that can accompany this story, making a series of sounds that reflect the mood and activity of your story.
- c. Rehearse the soundtrack while one student reads the story.
- d. Perform the soundtrack, starting with the song followed by your story and soundtrack





Compose an accompaniment

Secondary students

The Magic Island is composed in 6/8 time and uses the mixolydian mode—think of a C major scale with the seventh note lowered (B flat).



The Pirates of the Caribbean theme has a 6/8 rhythm, and the sea shanty the Drunken Sailor also has the lowered 7th note.

The image shows two musical examples in 6/8 time. The first example is a melody in C major with a lowered seventh note (Bb) circled in pink. The second example is a melody in C major with two circled Bb notes in pink. Both examples include a bass line with open 5th chords.

Task:

Write a “magical theme” for a TV show about a magical island.

- In 6/8 time using the scale above, compose an 8-12 bar melody using your instrument.
- Add an accompaniment part using open 5th chords like the pieces above.
- Add percussion sounds to capture the sparkle and mystery of the Island