

#CONCERTSFORKIDS

Activity Guide



Photo by Dave Tavani

Piano Tales

James and Jerome present an online version of their music and storytelling project, Piano Tales. Learn about improvisation and explore how music and words interact in storytelling.

Improvisation Warm Up



This game is called “Gift Giving”.

It requires at least two people, and can be done with as many people as you want.

Person A starts by going up to Person B and pretending to hold out a box.

Think about if the box is big or small, light or heavy. Is it square, tall or round? Does it have something moving inside it? What does it smell like?



Use your body to show these things. For example, if it's heavy, maybe you stoop over and have to pretend to push the box instead of carrying it.



Person A says, "I have a gift for you!"



Person B says, "Thank you, I've always wanted a _____."

The gift in the box can be anything Person B wants it to be. There are no wrong answers!



Person B pretends to take the gift out of the box.

Think about how you would show what was in the box with your body. If it's a puppy, you could cuddle it. If it's a bowling ball, you could roll it on the floor. If it's a toothbrush, you could use it to brush your teeth.

Then, Person B gets to give a gift to someone else. They pretend to have a box and give it to someone, saying, "I have a gift for you!"

Take turns so each person has gotten to give and receive a gift at least once.

Musical Improvisation



James and Jerome use improvisation in their performance. **Improvisation** is making something up as you perform with no preparation.

Watch the video, "Jazz Fundamentals: What Is Improvisation?" by Jazz at Lincoln Center to learn more about musical improvisation: https://youtu.be/_fHDoJdtWwE.



Imagining a Story

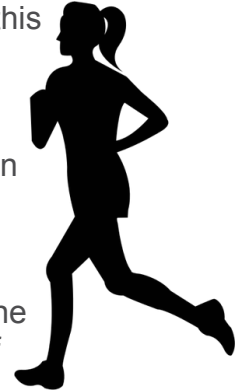


Read this excerpt of one of the Piano Tales stories out loud.

“Artemis was a young woman. Artemis lived on an island in the woods. Artemis was also a goddess. And Artemis loved one thing more than anything in the whole universe, and that was to run through the forest on this island.

This sound is the feeling Artemis had when she would run and move through this forest. She ran through this forest technically in order to hunt. Artemis was, among other things, the Greek goddess of the hunt.”

Imagine you are running through the forest. Close your eyes and imagine the smell of the forest, the wind rushing through the trees, the feeling of being in motion.



Read the story out loud again, while imagining the feeling of running through the forest.

If you are reading the story, notice how it changes how you speak. If you are listening to the story, notice how it changes how you hear the story.

Storytelling Workshop

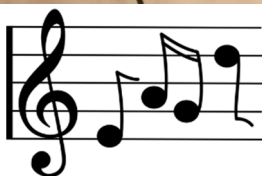
Learn how to craft and tell a story with Myxy in the Lincoln Center Pop-Up Classroom! Myxy shows a series of video shorts that you will narrate along with her.

You'll also learn about narrative voice. **Narrative voice** is the point-of-view of the person telling the story.

<https://youtu.be/LdZqMjU0jV0>



Soundtrack Selection



Notice that Myxy puts her story to music. Music often changes the **mood** or the way the story makes the listener feel.

Think about the kind of music you would play in the background of your story or the excerpt you read about Artemis.

If you want to use your own music, pick a song you think would be a good soundtrack and play it quietly while telling your story.

Here is a resource for classical instrumental music that might make a good soundtrack. <https://www.classicsforkids.com/music/hearthemusic.php>



Try different songs to see if they fit.

Now read or tell your story while you play the music quietly in the background.

Notice how it changes the way you feel about the story!

Family Discussion Questions

How did music change the way you read or told a story?

How did your story feel different with one kind of music or another?

In *Piano Tales*, how did music and words work together?

How would these stories sound from another narrative voice?

Which story stood out to you? Why?