

Act 1



Background

Many composers have written music to portray storms. One of the very best portrayals was written by English composer **Benjamin Britten** in 1945. It describes a storm at sea and as you listen you can almost see the crashing waves and imagine a small ship lost amongst the swirling water.

You will need:

- Pencils/Paints/Oil Pastels/Felt tips (any thing that makes a mark)
- Paper (the bigger the better- if you don't have any big pieces of paper you could always stick several pieces together)
- Place your paper landscape on a table or on the floor (longest side bottom and top)
- Be prepared to make a mess if you are using paint!

Listening

Listen to the opening of Britten's Storm

CLIP: Britten Sea Interlude no 4: Storm (opening 45 secs)
<https://youtu.be/flTApCfkj6Q>

Each arching tune represents a wave.

Stand up and try to follow the music by drawing these waves in the air with your finger.

Think about the different sizes and shapes of waves you can hear.



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Listen again

This time:

- Sketch out the shapes on your page
- Each musical wave has a slightly different length and shape, just like real waves. Allow them to overlap as you make a stormy seascape on your page.

Use whatever art materials you have and make your artwork as colourful as possible. You may have to listen several times.

When this is done, add a small boat to your picture, bobbing around

Listening in greater depth

Benjamin Britten doesn't just describe the waves. There are sections within his music that sound like a

- sea monster under the water

Listen to these sections of Britten's piece (below) and try to work out what is being described. Maybe you will hear one of the things listed above, or maybe you will hear something completely different?

Can you add images of these things onto your stormy seascape?

CLIP: Britten Sea Interlude no 4: Storm
(0'54 – 1'20 'monster')

<https://youtu.be/fITApCfkj6Q?t=54>

(1'41 – 2'08 'pirates')

<https://youtu.be/fITApCfkj6Q?t=101>

(2'30 – 3'00 'calm/ desert island')

<https://youtu.be/fITApCfkj6Q?t=151>

(4'12 – end 'shipwreck')

<https://youtu.be/fITApCfkj6Q?t=252>