

## Exploring a Theme

### Theme: A Magical World

A theme can be an excellent starting point for a composition, with its potential to invoke the imagination and to utilise the piano as a musical paint pallet. Here are some ideas which will hopefully give your pupils the confidence to 'have a go!'

Structure: Ternary Form

- Stage 1      Explore together a storyline. Give your pupils as much help as they need in plotting out its development in the boxes.
- Stage 2      Play a variety of scales to your pupils, and ask them which ones they think best describe the story. The following are particularly good for creating magical, ominous and mysterious effects!
- a. The whole tone scale.
  - b. The harmonic minor scale.
  - c. The chromatic scale.
- When they have made their choices, demonstrate to the pupils how to create a short pattern/motif. Encourage them to experiment with the scales, and produce four motifs of their own. These will be the material for the beginning A section.
- Stage 3      Ask the pupils to try combining the motifs in ways that they think best fit the narrative. Encourage them to explore using the range of the keyboard, rhythmical variety and varying the lengths of the motifs. This will be the middle B section of the piece.
- Stage 4      For the return to the final A section, suggest to your pupils that they repeat the original motifs, but perhaps change their order for a little variety.
- Stage 5      Now encourage your pupils to add performance details to the piece in a way which reflects the storyline. Dynamics, articulation, tempo changes and use of the pedals will help to bring the Magical World to life!
- Stage 6      If your pupils are interested in harmony you could demonstrate the Primary Triads in a variety of keys. They could then experiment with adding the chords to the piece.

At the end of each stage, you or your pupils can write down the music they have composed in the most convenient format. If preferred, a parent or guardian could record the pupil's hands playing it, and send you a recording for you to notate. Then the pupils will be able to practise and remember it.