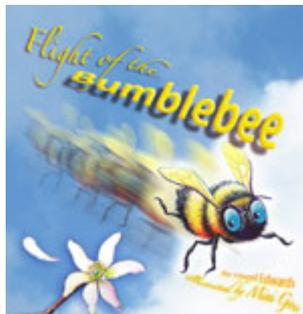




How To Write Stories to Music Hazel Edward's Ten Hints

How to Bumble Around, Writing a Children's Story to Classical Music, When You're Not Very Musical...



- What's your favourite kind of music?
- Does it have words?
- Does it have actions?
- Or can you create a new combo?

Do you have an all-time, favourite piece of music?

Mine is 'The Flight of the Bumblebee' because it's fast paced and I can picture a story to the music.

Music can be a great way of exercising your imagination, AND your body, as you dance or exercise. Lots of kids have created their own dance-fit movements to pop songs.

But...

ever thought about writing your own story to go with the shape and sound of that music? Or maybe your own song lyrics?

Obviously, the music belongs to the person who originally created it, as well as to the listener.

But, some out-of-copyright traditional music, like opera which is a kind of story in song, folktales, or even ballet, can be up-dated or adapted with YOUR new story. Lots of schools put on their own rock musicals or end of year performances. Maybe you can write, and record on web-cam, mobile phone or video, your original story to go with the music.

Inbetween, try drawing or sketching to classical music.

Some authors also use music for inspiration while they are writing, to get in the mood. Try it.

1. Only work with music you genuinely like. Luckily 'The Flight of the Bumblebee' is classical music with Oomph! I've always like that fast, short piece, which moves at my pace.
2. When Sophia Whitfield, the New Frontier publisher invited me to write the first 'new' story in the Music Box series, as a picture book, I was honest with her. 'I'm not a classical music fan, but writing a new story to fit the 'bee flying' music sounds a challenge.'
3. The actual music runs about three minutes. The story had to fit the musical sequence. I listened constantly, even in my car.
4. I found out about the Russian composer Rimsky Korsakov and the original story behind the music. I liked the idea of a bee prince, but he needed a problem. The basis of any story is a character who must solve a problem by their own efforts. Maybe the bee prince has a flying problem?
5. I checked the facts on Queen Bees, Drones, workers and honey. I've worked with illustrator Mini Goss previously. Her unusual perspectives are especially well drawn, so a bee's eye view was a perfect challenge.
6. About seven drafts were written. My husband loves 4 hour long Wagnerian opera. I don't. But my husband did share the 'Fright of the Fumblebee' joke about the radio announcer who practised so much; he got it wrong on the crucial occasion.
7. I did try out movement to music. I did pretend to fly like a bee . So I knew wing flapping and ZZZing would work for those who like to exercise to music.
8. Getting the viewpoint right was the next challenge. Should it be an 'I' first person story from the perspective of the young bee, or a more distanced third person as he or she? A narrator was easier. Later I was delighted Antonia Kidman was to read it for the CD within the book.
9. How could the bee's flight problem be solved? It had to work as a story. If I thought of him as a trainee pilot, he'd need a flight plan. Maybe flying to music, or movement to music was the answer. Then children could do their own 'cool' actions for whirring flaps at the hive opening ...or they could zoom and buzz with arms outstretched.
10. I've really enjoyed this musical-literary challenge. And even after I'd listened for weeks, on a musical loop in my office, I still like 'Flight of the Bumblebee' music and have even written a classroom playscript too.

What a buzz!

Sample Activities:

- Experiment with your own music, using any instruments. Compose your own 'Flying' music.
- You are the personal trainer or coach. What kind of exercises will you suggest for a bee who needs better wing flapping? Show us.
- Work out a pollen dance which lasts 1 minute. You may dress up.

Your Turn:

- Choose a favourite piece of music (It doesn't have to be classical)
- Keep playing it, until you can think of a new story to fit that music. The shape of the story must fit the movement of the music.
- Draw pictures to go with the music.
- Design a cover for your story. Picture book? DVD. CD?
- Make sure you have acknowledged the original creator or sought copyright permission. (Check link from www.hazeledwards.com to the Copyright Agency.
- Maybe you can adapt your musical story for a school performance

Contact Hazel at www.hazeledwards.com

Flight of the Bumblebee

Written by Hazel Edwards and illustrated by Mini Goss

Audio CD-read by Antonia Kidman, Foxtel TV presenter

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Included at the end of a book is a short biography on the composer Rimsky-Korsakov and the opera the music (Flight of the Bumblebee) is taken from- The Tale of Tsar Saltan.

Conductor Sir Charles Mackerras has written a testimonial for the Music Box series. And others will follow in the innovative introduction to classical Music for children.

For interviews and further information contact hazel@hazeledwards.com

Teachers' notes with activities and reviews at www.hazeledwards.com and links to publisher website