

FREE MUSICAL

Story PACK

TIPS, TRICKS AND TECHNIQUES FOR BEGINNER STRING PLAYERS



FREE IN THE MIX MUSIC ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS: MUSICAL STORY PACK

Welcome to the free bonus 'IN THE MIX ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS' story package.

From my 20 plus years experience of teaching the Cello and Musical Groups and Orchestras, i have always started everyone off by story telling with a musical instrument. It is a great way to start using the instrument in fun ways, and anyone can do it, as these techniques, (although some are more advanced), can be tried by anyone. Who can't tap something? Or just pluck a string?

So with this guide are three very different atmospheric backing tracks, created to help inspire your musical story telling. Track 1 is a Jungle background, 2 is Space sounds and 3 is my personal favourite, Spookyness!!!

These are only meant as inspiration to help you create musical tales and they can be used to perform your story also.

Below you will find the beginning of an infinite list of musical possibilities that you can create on an instrument of your choice, as well as a demo story to see how they can be used.

The great thing about writing a musical story, is you can do it using your instrument at the same time. There are many ways to start. Here are a couple of options:

1. Get comfortable. Then start thinking about what you want to happen in your story. Start telling a story and when you get to a moment when something happens, start playing around with some sounds.

2. Grab a piece of paper. Write down all the things you want to use in your story. Then think about the way you can make some of the noises and effects. Then once you have it in writing, put the paper on your music stand and give it a go with your instrument.

Here is a starter list of sound effects that you could use in your stories:

Tapping:

You can tap on your instrument anywhere. You will notice different sounds can be produced by tapping different parts. For a knock at the door, you could tap the back of the instrument, whereas for rain, gently tapping all of your fingers on the front of the instrument creates a great effect, (imagine doing a spider like motion with your fingers).

Wind:

Running your hand up and down the strings, or using a bow very lightly on the strings, can create some great sound fx.

Walking:

You can achieve a nice effect by picking two strings, (maybe the bottom two for more resonance), and play them one after another. If you play them slowly it can be plodding, whereas getting faster could mean your character or animal is starting to get faster, even run.

Harmonics:

Harmonics are a much more advanced technique in string playing, but you can start to use them right from the beginning, (but it will take some practice and coordination!). A harmonic is achieved by lightly resting a finger on your left hand on a string, somewhere between the middle of the finger board (the start of the neck), right up to the place where you use the bow near the bridge. As you lightly touch, you need to with the bow, play the string that your left hand is on. A very high and very cool effect will sound! (for extra amazingness, try running your finger of your left hand super lightly up and down the string and hear the effect. This special effect has been used in many many films and classical pieces of music!)

Scares:

Any loud sound just out of the blue can be scary. You could have a very calm part of the story and then play one really super loud note, that scares the listener. Also, very high soft sounds and squeaks are good for creating weird and spooky atmospheres.

Animal Sounds:

This is where you can be really creative. Using the bow the other side of the bridge, near the tuning adjusters can make some brilliant little mouse squeaks when played really quietly. Playing two really loud short notes one after another can make an awesome barking sound. Whale noises can be made by using the technique described in the Harmonics section. Anything is possible, just think about the animal sound, then try it out!

The Siren:

This is a classic sound at the harder end of the spectrum. Using the 1st finger of the left hand, and using the highest string, push your 1st finger (about an inch or so from where the strings come out on the fingerboard), on and off the string whilst bowing that string each time. For instance, on the violin, the highest string is the E string, so written out in simple lettername notation, it would be: E E1 E E1 E E1 etc.

The motorbike/ race car:

Again this is tricky and requires coordination with the bow and left hand. Starting on a low string, play a long slow bowed note. As you start this note, slide your 1st finger a little way up the fingerboard, making a gliding sound going up in pitch. Then move your finger an inch or so back, and do the same again, going higher and higher in pitch.

This list could go on and on because it is only as short as your imagination lets it be!

AND NOW... TIME FOR A STORY:

Here is a story that i made up using my Cello.

(How to make the sound fx are in bold)

THE SPOOKY HOUSE

Once upon a time, in a small town, on a very gloomy monday afternoon, it was raining.

(Rain sound effect, tapping fingers on the body of the cello)

The rain got harder.

(Harder and faster tapping with fingers)

The wind was howling.

(Slow scraping up and down the strings with the hair of the bow)

A group of friends slowly walked up to the end of the road, to the spooky house.

(Play two notes, maybe c and g on the Cello, slowly and steadily to indicate walking)

They made their way up the path, reached the front door and knocked on it.

(Knock back of the cello)

There was no answer, and then the door creaked open all by itself.

(Door creak sound effect, pulling the bow hard across the strings, whilst stopping the strings with a clenched hand, so as not to play specific notes)

The friends crept in as they were pretty nervous. They started climbing the stairs.

(Slow detached notes, getting slightly higher in pitch)

They walked higher and higher **(Notes getting higher and higher)** until they reached a small door at the opening of the Attic.

Suddenly, the door flew open and a horrible sound screeched out!
(Four very loud high pitched notes)

The friends ran as fast as they could down the stairs, turning back.
(Very fast descending notes from high to low)

They ran out of the house, down the street and never returned to the spooky house again!

The End

Add any sound effect that you can do on your instrument, to tailor it to your story. Police siren sounds? Animal sounds? Anything can be used to make a really fun story that you can then perform to your family, your friends or even your pets!

So what are you waiting for, start creating and then, if your story has a jungle, space or spooky theme, use the free backing tracks to add extra atmosphere to your story.

GOOD LUCK!

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