



Two Lessons:

Imagining the “Wild Sea!” and “Still, Starry Night” Preparing Sections A and K in *Letter from Sado*

OVERVIEW

In the opening section A of *Letter from Sado* and again at letter K, band members are directed to create a soundscape by performing melodic fragments contained in the parts to aurally depict a stormy sea and a starry sky. These two lessons will prepare students and guide them as they develop original interpretations of these sections of *Letter from Sado*.

Lesson 1: Responding to Evocative Images:

To prepare these sections of the music, the students will view different landscapes depicting a “stormy sea” and “a still starry night.” They will describe the images/video they viewed in words, brainstorm and create their own interpretations on their instruments, and finally perform their interpretations for others.

Lesson 2: Shaping a Soundscape:

Students will work with their color teams to decide how they would like to play the two soundscape sections. They will draw an outline of their idea and decide how they would like the entire band to sound. They will then reconvene to share ideas and try them out as a full band.

Please note that the percussionists are not limited to selecting instruments to use that are indicated on their individual parts. They may use other percussive sounds that they believe best represent how the images inspire them.

Lesson 1: Responding to Evocative Images

LEARNING GOALS

The students will:

- Express impressions, emotions, and ideas invoked by images.
- Use their instruments to communicate the identified impressions, emotions, and ideas using the passages provided by the composer in Sections A and K in *Letter from Sado*.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Projector and screen
- Teacher Resource: [Rehearsal Notes from the Composer](#)
- Student copies of: [Soundscape Observation](#) worksheet and [Soundscape Vocabulary](#) sheet
- Images/video that depict “Stormy Sea” such as:

Stills:

- <http://fineartamerica.com/featured/rough-seas-joanedge.html>
- <http://www.pinterest.com/asianart/making-waves/>

Video:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPBaqh3dcVM>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QH6OOfh7sFs>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG6FhK96dBg>

- Images that depict “Heaven’s River” such as:
http://www.nasa-usa.de/mission_pages/hubble/science/milky-way-collide.html
<http://www.spacetelescope.org/news/heic0602/>

Starry nights on Sado Island:

http://www.visitsado.com/en/01outline/08pt_04/tnail.shtml

PROCESS

1. Distribute the Soundscape Observation worksheet. Tell students that they will view still images and videos and describe what they notice about each using the worksheet.
 - They can use words from the [Soundscape Vocabulary](#) sheet, words of their own, and/or draw shapes that they see or hear. The use of color is encouraged.
2. After viewing the images/videos, elicit responses and list on a white board/chalk board.
3. Demonstrate how responses can be translated into sounds on a band instrument or on a melodic percussion instrument. Demonstrate alternate approaches to sound using the [Soundscape Vocabulary](#) sheet as your guide.
4. Working individually, invite students to find a space in the room where they can work without distraction. Use any of the following notes: Concert G, A Bb, C, D, Eb to translate their words/images into sounds. They can use any combination of notes (percussion can use any combination of color.)
5. After 10 minutes, invite students to form groups of 2 or 3 and play for each other. Those not playing should look at their peers’ observation worksheet and try to figure out which word/image their performer is demonstrating.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

1. As students describe and respond to the questions on the Soundscape Observation worksheet, observe their use of musical terms and ideas in discussion and in their written responses. Retain the worksheets as evidence of student use of appropriate vocabulary as well as musical thinking.
2. Ask students, in their small groups of 2 or 3, to pick one word/shape/image they like the most and have them perform it for the class.

Lesson 2: Shaping a Soundscape

LEARNING GOALS

The students will:

- Work in a team to decide how they would like to perform sections A and K of *Letter from Sado*.
- Listen to interpretive ideas and make decisions about which best fit their ideas of the music.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Projector and screen
- Teacher Resource: [Rehearsal Notes from the Composer](#)
- Student copies of: [Shaping Your Soundscape](#) and [Soundscapes: Trace the Shape](#) worksheets

PROCESS

Note: Refer to the [Rehearsal Notes from the Composer](#) to guide your teaching.

1. Ask students to remember their experiences in Lesson One when interpreting images of the “Wild Sea” and the “Still Starry Night” to focus on the next step in the process.
2. Group students into their color teams with their instruments and hand out one copy of the [Shaping Your Soundscape](#) worksheet. (You could also use the worksheet as an individual homework assignment, grouping them once they’ve already generated ideas on their own.)
3. Students will use the worksheet to walk through the process of creating a plan for how they would like to perform sections A and K. Remind them to recall and utilize the ideas generated in Lesson One.
 - As they work, move from group to group and listen to students perform their version of the soundscapes.
4. Reconvene. Hand out the [Soundscapes: Trace the Shape](#) worksheet to each student.
5. Invite each team to perform one interpretation: A or K. Invite ‘audience’ students to listen to their performance and draw their own interpretation of what the performers played. After each performance, have students share their thoughts regarding the shape and then invite one of the performers to draw their shape on the white board/chalk board.
6. After everyone has had a chance to perform, ask the whole band to discuss what they liked best about the performances. As a group, formulate 2-3 interpretations of each A and K and have the students draw them on the back of the [Soundscapes: Trace the Shape](#) worksheet.
7. Play these interpretations and, if possible, record them and listen back. Invite student discussion. Consider playing the soundscapes back while viewing some of the original imagery to elicit more discussion.
8. Once students have performed a few different interpretations of each section, ask them to decide which they would like to do in their performance. Take a vote.
9. Congratulate them for shaping their own version of *Letter from Sado*. Draw the chosen interpretation on the board or chart in order to refer to it during rehearsal.
10. Continue to explore color and share in these soundscapes until the day of the performance.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Observe use of musical terms and ideas in worksheets and verbal responses to questions. Informally assess student ability to play the plans as they are laid out, using their own instruments.

TEACHER RESOURCE:

Rehearsal Notes from the Composer:

By Jodie Blackshaw

How you approach these cells of sound with regard to dynamics, expressive techniques, articulation and tempo will change the overall sound of the band. Teams are to decide HOW they will interpret their cells of sound and working with the conductor, the band will decide WHO plays when (not everyone has to play at every figure) and how the piece starts and how the piece ends.

Questions for performers to consider:

- How will you use the images provided in the poem to inspire you? Decide as a team where you will slur, change dynamic, add articulation, etc. and what you will do with tempo.
- When you've decided HOW you will play the music, now decide WHO plays first? Does every player need to play every figure all the time? What will the shape of your 'wild sea' be? Remember to stay thinking about 'a wild sea!' or 'a still, starry night'.
- Allow for space. The idea isn't to repeat the notes over and over but listen around you and change the texture and color of the ensemble. How will you do this? How will you use the notes marked with a pause?
- PERCUSSION: Team White and Black are invited to improvise on an instrument of their choice that is deemed appropriate to the color the band is aiming to achieve. For example, is a bass drum relevant to "a still, starry night?"

Teaching Tip: If you are feeling nervous about giving your percussionists so much freedom, you could restrict them a little by suggesting that items of skin and wood be used at A, and items made of metal be used at K.

- Make decisions as a team about their interpretation of the music and write it down.
- Bring all teams together as a full band and share interpretations.
- Make decisions about which team plays and when, based on your own interpretation of "a wild sea!" Repeat for "a still, starry night."

There is no wrong way to perform these sections! Students should feel free to use their creativity! Trust them!

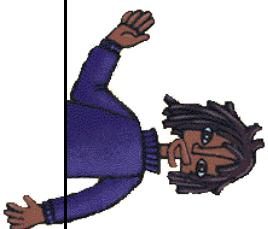
SOUNDSCAPE OBSERVATION

Name _____

	What do you notice in this image? What impressions, ideas, and/or emotions does it bring to mind?	How can you express or communicate these ideas with your instrument? (dynamics, articulations, etc)
Image/Video 1		
Image/Video 2		
Image/Video 3		
Image/Video 4		



Image/Video 5		
Image/Video 6		
Image/Video 7		
Image/Video 8		



SOUNDSCAPE VOCABULARY

short

cool

up & down

bell-like

attacking

long

hard

spikey

smooth

jagged

soft

passionate

frustrated

lingering

loud

pointed

intense

calm

warm

aggressive

sharp



SHAPING YOUR SOUNDSCAPE

Name(s) _____

Color Team _____

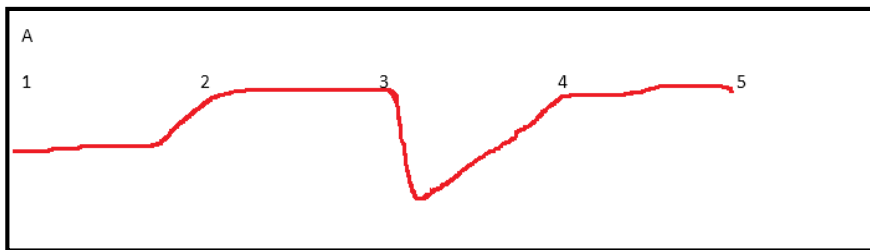
The composer of *Letter from Sado*, Jodie Blackshaw, left many decisions about how the piece will sound up to you, the performers! After viewing images and/or videos depicting a “Stormy sea” and a “Still, starry night,” take time as a team to think about how you will make Sections A and K express the images.

Here are some notes from the composer:

“Decide as a team where you will slur, change dynamic, add articulation, etc. and what you will do with tempo.” Do you want to start loud or quiet? Will the volume grow or decrease? Will you play your notes sharply or smoothly?

Decide as a team how you’d like to perform each numbered section of A and draw it in the space provided below.

Here’s an example:



In this example, the team decided to start of *mf* at #1, grow to *f* at #2, play *p* at #3, grow back to *f* at #4, and stop playing at #5.

Now create your own:

A: A wild, stormy sea

1 2 3 4 5

Describe your drawing above. How will you articulate your playing, what dynamics will you use? Will you all play the same way? Will you play all of the time? Should there be solo players? Will there ever be silence?



Now do the same exercise for section K:

K: A still, starry night

1

2

3

4

5

Describe your drawing above. How will you articulate your playing, what dynamics will you use? Will you all play the same way? Will you play all of the time? Should there be solo players? Will there ever be silence?

Now that you've created a plan for how you will perform your soundscape, try it out. Select one person from your team to be the conductor and guide your group through sections A and K. When you're done, think about your performance and decide if you'd like to make any changes to your drawings.

Did you make any changes? Why or why not?

Do you think the whole band should follow your plan? Should everyone play the same way, or should some groups play differently or at different times? In the space below, write down how you would choose to perform the piece if it was up to your team.



SOUNDSCAPES: TRACE THE SHAPE

PG 1: COLOR TEAM SOUNDSCAPE IDEAS

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1	2	3	4	5
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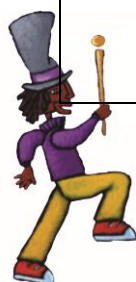
1	2	3	4	5
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1	2	3	4	5
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1	2	3	4	5
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1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1	2	3	4	5
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PG 2: FULL-BAND SOUNDSCAPE IDEAS

1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5

