

Explore: Voices Without Words – Piano Storytellers

Encourage students to become “Musical Storytellers,” exploring how composers turn feelings into melodies without lyrics. Each student or group steps into the role of listener, creator, and interpreter, discovering how sound alone can tell a story.

Draw What You Hear

- Invite students on a “sound-to-color” journey. Play short excerpts from *Songs Without Words* by [Gabriel Fauré](#) (*Romance sans paroles No. 3 in A-flat major*, Op. 17 No. 3) and *Songs Without Words* by [Florence Price](#). Go to the “[More Songs Without Words](#)” activity for more information about these composers and their works.
- Ask them to close their eyes and imagine that each phrase paints a picture or scene. Then, using paper and colored pencils, students draw or paint what they hear—waves, storms, sunrise, whispers, or even a conversation between two melodies.
- After drawing, have them share their artwork and discuss:
 - “What part of the music shaped your colors and drawings?”
 - “What would happen next in your story?”
- You may also search for additional composers who composed *Songs Without Words*, such as American composer **Amy Beach**.

Compose Your Own Songs Without Words Story

- Challenge students to become modern composers of their own *Miniature Without Words*.
- Individually or in pairs, they create a short piano piece inspired by a single image, feeling, or moment in time.
- Encourage them to:
 - Choose a title that hints at the story they want to tell.
 - Craft a melody that could be “sung” without lyrics.
 - Use dynamics, tempo, and touch to make the piano whisper, speak, or shout.
 - After composing, students perform their pieces for the class.
 - Classmates listen like storytellers and respond:
 - “What scene or mood did you hear?”
 - “How did the performer’s choices bring the story to life?”

Watch & Listen

- Invite each student or group to research and select a composer not featured in the Winter issue of *Piano Inspires Kids*.
- Have them introduce a piece by that composer and share what drew them to it.
- **Think–Pair–Share**
 - What story or emotion do you hear in this music?
 - How does the pianist make the instrument “speak” or “sing”?

For further exploration of lyrical expression and pianistic storytelling, watch “[Mendelssohn: Song Without Words in A Major, Op. 38 No. 4](#)” with Peter Takács in the *From the Artist Bench* webinar series (aired June 9, 2020).