

WIGMORE
HALL



Wigmore Hall Learning present

Sounds of the Skies



8th December 2022, Wigmore Hall
Key Stage 2 Resource Pack



Learning &
Participation

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About the Concert

This is a one-hour Concert for Key Stage 2 pupils and their teachers at Wigmore Hall

Join Sam Glazer and the Sacconi Quartet to experience the musical world of birds and birdsong. Featuring pieces inspired by our feathered friends, this concert will explore the topics of migration, habitats and our own connection to the natural world.

Suitable for KS2 pupils and their teachers.

About the Resource Pack

This resource contains information and activities recommended for Key Stage 2. It contains listening activities, activities to encourage reflection and activities to inspire music-making. The activities and information can be shared as an introduction to the concert ahead of your visit, or afterwards to ignite musical conversations. Explore each activity or pick and mix as time allows.

We hope that you enjoy the concert at Wigmore Hall and making music with your pupils!



Sacconi Quartet



For twenty one years, the Sacconi Quartet have been captivating audiences with their unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. Formed in 2001, the four founder members continue to demonstrate a shared passion for string quartet repertoire, infectiously reaching out to audiences with their energy and enthusiasm. The Sacconis enjoy a busy international career, and are Quartet in Association at the Royal College of Music and Quartet in Residence in Folkestone.

The Sacconis' prolific recording career covers a broad swathe of repertoire from Haydn to present day. Their latest album features world premiere recordings of works by Roxanna Panufnik; other releases of recent years include premiere recordings of works by Jonathan Dove, Graham Fitkin and John McCabe. In Damascus, their CD of music by Jonathan Dove, hit the Classical Top Ten, and was chosen as one of Gramophone Magazine's Recordings of the Year.

In November 2021 the Sacconis celebrated twenty years of playing together, with a celebration birthday concert at Wigmore Hall. Firm advocates

of new music, the programme featured the world premiere of their latest piece from Jonathan Dove, *On the Streets and In the Sky*. They also continue to tour with Beethoven in the Dark, their immersive performance of Beethoven's op.131 quartet entirely from memory, in almost complete darkness.

The Sacconi Quartet is Quartet in Residence for the town of Folkestone and its surrounding areas, enabling creative collaborations with local artists and projects, and an embedded outreach programme. The Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone is firmly established among the UK's major chamber music festivals and attracts audiences from far and near for its vibrant atmosphere and dynamic programming.

In 2021, the quartet released an exclusive film of Jonathan Dove's *Out of Time* on Amazon with all proceeds going to Hands Up Foundation, a young and innovative charity that delivers aid directly and effectively to Syrians in need. The Quartet is indebted to the Royal Society of Musicians and Ellen Solomon for the use of their instruments.



Questions and Answers with Sacconi Quartet

How long have you been playing as an ensemble?
21 years with the same line-up!

How did the Sacconi Quartet form?
3 of us met as teenagers in the Kent Youth Orchestra and we then met Cara at the Royal College of Music.

How long have you been playing your instruments?
We all started on the violin between the ages of 4 & 6. Cara moved from violin to cello when she was 12.

What's been your favourite gig to perform?
Beethoven from memory in the dark! We do that from time to time and it's pretty exhilarating!

Who is your biggest inspiration?
As a quartet, I'd say we're endlessly inspired by Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert and Mendelssohn....
And one teacher in particular who really helped us become a quartet and who lives and breathes music
- Gàbor Tákacs-Nagy.



Programme

Below is the music that the Sacconi Quartet will be playing during the concert

Joaquín Turina: La oración del torero Op. 34 (Prayer of the Bullfighter)

Joseph Haydn: I. Allegro moderato from String Quartet in D Op. 64 No. 5 'The Lark'

Antonín Dvořák: III. Molto vivace from String Quartet in F Op. 96 'American'

Benjamin Britten: Cuckoo from *Friday Afternoons* Op. 7 arranged by Sam Glazer

Benjamin Britten: IV. Burlesque. Fast, con fuoco from String Quartet No. 3 Op. 94

Jonathan Dove: On The Streets and In The Sky

Sam Glazer: Two for Joy

Eleanor Alberga: String Quartet No. 2

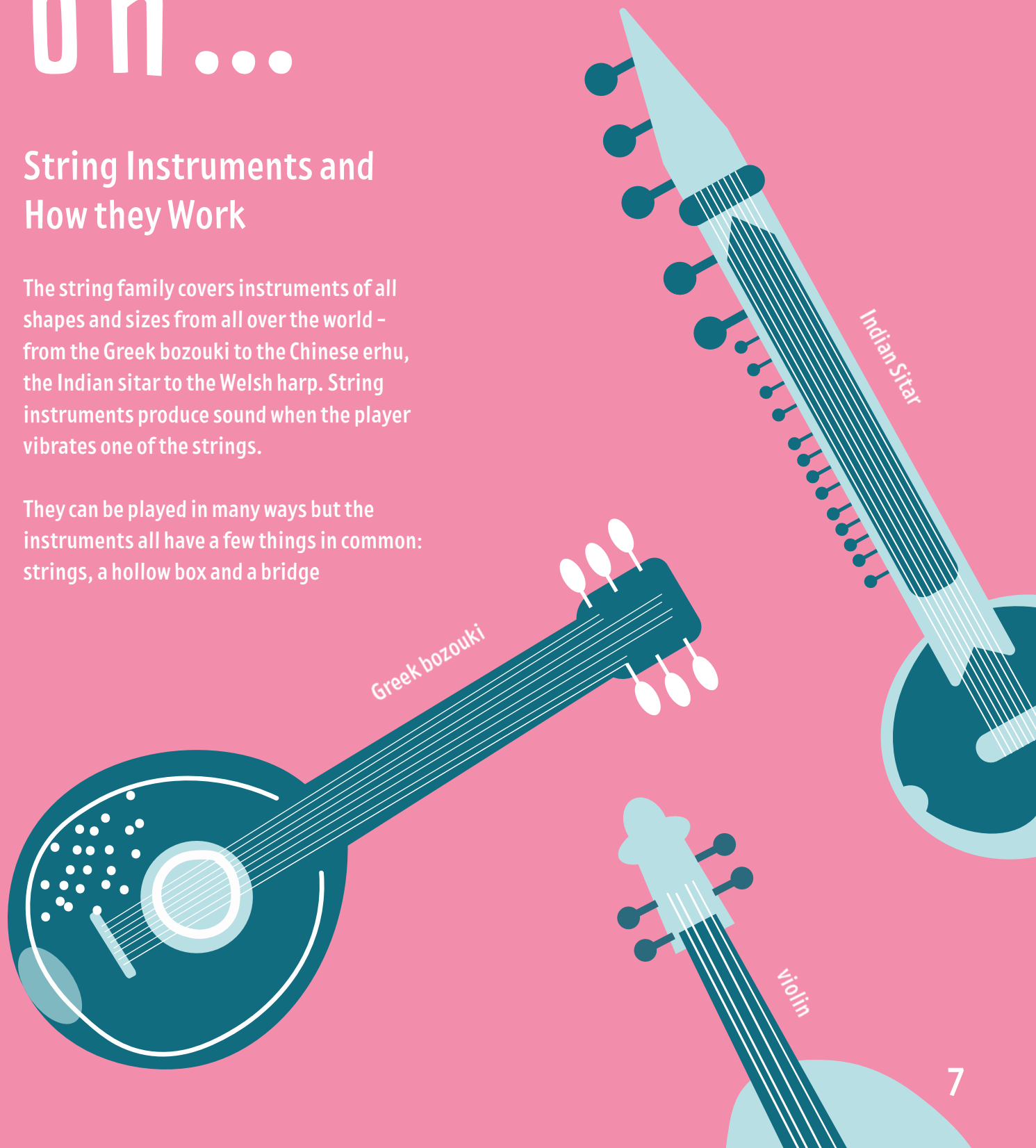


Spotlight on...

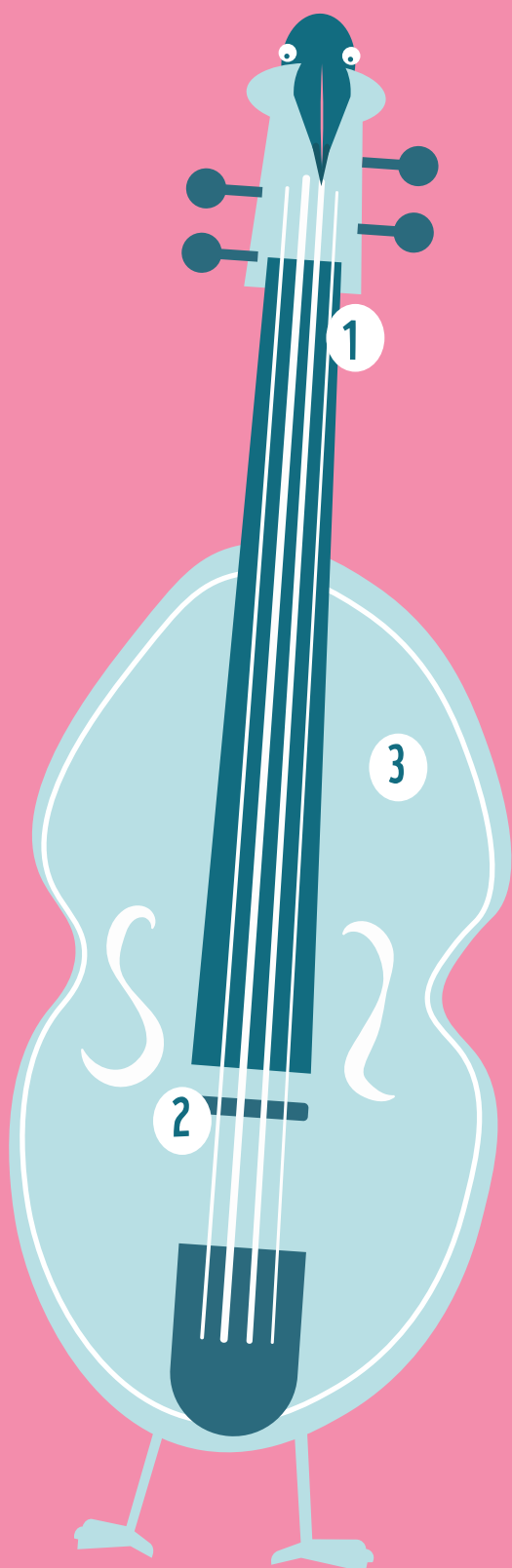
String Instruments and How they Work

The string family covers instruments of all shapes and sizes from all over the world - from the Greek bozouki to the Chinese erhu, the Indian sitar to the Welsh harp. String instruments produce sound when the player vibrates one of the strings.

They can be played in many ways but the instruments all have a few things in common: strings, a hollow box and a bridge



Cello



1

STRINGS, which are stretched tight across a frame. Nowadays, violin strings are often made of metal but originally they were made from dried sheep intestines (which are surprisingly strong!) The strings need to be stretched tight in order to vibrate. The vibration of the strings is what creates the sound – but on its own, the string noise is very quiet, so some extra bits and pieces are needed in order for the instrument to be heard properly.

2

A BRIDGE – usually made of wood. The strings are stretched across the bridge, and when they are played, the vibrations travel through the bridge and down into...

3

A HOLLOW BOX – the main body of the instrument, usually wooden – which amplifies the vibrations so that they are loud enough to hear. These boxes often come in fancy or intricate shapes – for example, the violin, with its scoops and scrolls

Did You Know?

Violins, violas and cellos each have four strings. They have changed in shape and size over the centuries as human technologies and musical tastes evolved, but arrived at their current form in 16th century Italy. Today, they are mostly built in exact same way, although some modern instruments can be plugged in and amplified electrically, similar to an electric guitar.

Experiment: String Sounds

You can conduct your own research into stringy sonics by stretching an elastic band tightly, and asking a friend to pluck it. Listen carefully and you should hear a quiet boingy, buzzy twang. Now stretch the elastic tighter, and try again. Do you notice a difference? That's right! The tighter the string is stretched, the higher the pitch of the note!

NOW – can you find a clean empty plastic food box? Take the lid off and stretch the elastic band over the box, so it passes over the open top. Now pluck again. Do you notice another difference? Well done! The vibrations of the elastic band have passed into the box, which acts as an amplifier – like the wooden body of a violin, viola or cello – and makes the sound louder. You have created your own junk violin!

Two Hands– Different Jobs

One of the tricky challenges of playing a violin, viola or cello is that your hands have to work together – but doing very different jobs :

- **LEFT HAND** – these fingers control which **notes** are played, by **pressing down on the string** to shorten the vibrating length, which makes the note higher. But watch out – if the finger presses down in the wrong place, the note will be out of tune!
- **RIGHT HAND** – these fingers are the ones that actually make the sound. Sometimes by simply plucking or strumming the strings, as with a guitar. Sometimes by **stroking** them with a '**bow**' – which is made from a bundle of horse hair stretched along a sprung wooden stick. Using a bow, the player has the ability to create long smooth notes or short spiky ones, changes in volume and a whole bunch of other cool sound effects.

What is a String Quartet?

A string quartet is a piece of music written for four instruments from the string family: two violins, one viola and one cello. Usually, the music will be split into three or four different sections (or 'movements'), which are contrasting in tempo (speed) and atmosphere.

The first string quartets were written in around 1750 and there have been many written by different composers, right up to the present day. Composers often love writing string quartets because the sounds of the instruments blend so well together, and there are enough different voices to create a composition that is both complex and simple at the same time. Josef Haydn (whose music forms part of this concert) is sometimes known by string players as 'Papa Haydn', the father of the string quartet. He wrote 68 of them in total, and has inspired composers ever since to follow in his footsteps and write music for this special instrumental combo.

'String quartet' is also the name of the group of musicians who play this music. Musicians often love playing quartets – the music can be exciting, intense, peaceful or poignant – it can be like four voices all in agreement, asking and answering questions, or torn apart in furious argument!



The Activities

These activities are written with the classroom setting in mind.
Please feel free to adapt them for smaller groups or individual learners.

1. SONGWRITING – BIRD RIDDLES

This collaborative songwriting activity is inspired by Benjamin Britten's song 'Cuckoo'. Have a read of these lyrics (which were written by Jane Taylor)

In April I open my bill
In May I sing night and day
In June I change my tune
In July far, far I fly
In August away I must



See how much information is contained in so few words. And the identity of the bird is not revealed – just its habits, which give clues to the listener. It's a riddle!

1 Now, split the class into groups of 5 or 6. In groups, have a chat about which bird you would like to make a song about. Do some research and find out some facts to inspire you – you could choose a bird...

- ... with incredible feathers (eg. a peacock or parakeet)
- ... with a beautiful song (eg. a nightingale or blackbird)
- ... that you see every day (eg. a pigeon or seagull)
- ... with unusual behaviour (eg. a woodpecker or owl)
- ... with amazing abilities (eg. a hummingbird or Peregrine falcon)

2 When you've selected a bird, start thinking of some words and phrases you could include in your song. Write down ALL your ideas on a big piece of paper. Think about the narrative voice you are using; are you singing about the bird (third person voice) or to the bird (second person)? Or perhaps you are singing as the bird itself (first person, like in the example on the previous page?)

Talking about Music

When talking about music we can use the following terms to describe the different elements. These are referred to as the *interrelated dimensions of music* on the National Curriculum, and are a way to think about why a piece sounds the way it does

Pitch – how high or low the sounds are

Duration – How short or long the notes are

Dynamics – How loud or quiet the music is, and how this changes throughout a piece

Tempo – How fast or slow the music is

Timbre – The type or quality of the sounds in the music, what instruments are playing

Texture – How many sounds are playing at once

Structure – How the piece is organised, for example, is there a chorus? Are certain sections repeated?



3

Once you've written your ideas down, it's time to edit them. That means picking your favourite words or phrases and fitting them together into a lyric. The lyric should not be too long; 6-8 short lines maximum. See if you can include some examples of descriptive language, rhyme, rhythm, metaphor/simile or alliteration. Use as few words as possible – but make sure the words you choose are powerful ones.

- **Practise** chanting your lyric as a group until you can all recite it clearly together.
- Make up some **actions** to go with the words – this will help you remember them more easily. Maybe you'll even be able to remember them by heart
- Now **find 2 or 3 chime bars** (or notes on a xylophone, or keys on a piano or keyboard) that sound good when played at the same time.
- Using the chime bars, **make a pulse** (steady beat) or **simple rhythm** (repeated pattern of beats) to accompany your chant. Can you chant and play at the same time?
- As you practise it over and over again, see if you can **find a melody** (tune) for the song, using the notes of your chime bars.
- When you've settled on a melody, think about anything else that could improve your singing. For example:
 - **Dynamics** (loud/quiet)
 - **Pauses** or gaps in the middle
 - Some **body percussion** (clapping, clicking fingers etc.)

4

Now you are ready to share your songs. Each group should have a go at performing their song to the rest of the class. Have a competition to see which group can give the most convincing performance. Maybe don't tell them which bird you've chosen, and see if your classmates can guess!

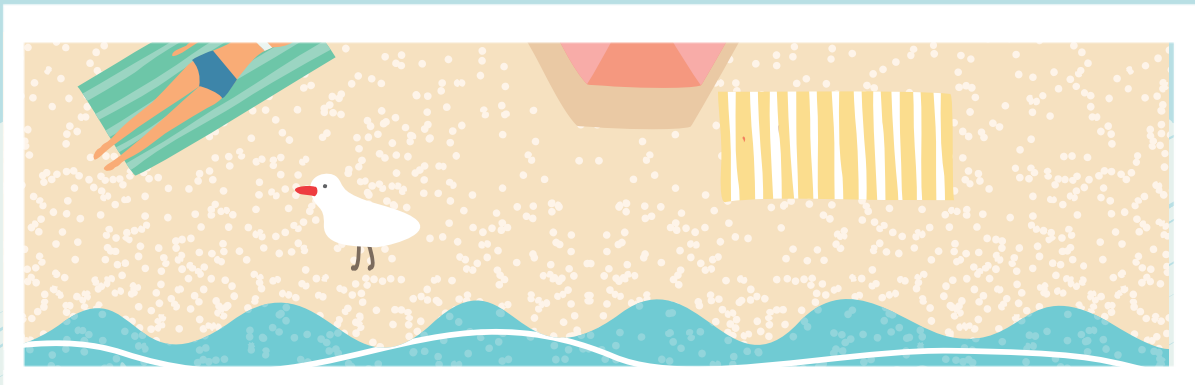
LANDSCAPE SOUNDSCAPE

1 This is a composition activity using classroom percussion instruments or objects you can find at home. You will need some flipchart paper and pens, and a selection of percussion instruments, ideally enough for every child to play one – for example:

- Shakers and Maracas
- Guiros and Scrapers
- Drums and Tambourines
- Chime Bars and Xylophones
- Woodblocks and Claves
- Cowbells and Sleighbells
- Plenty of Beaters, ideally some with soft and some with hard heads



- 2 Split the class into groups of 5–6 children and ask each group to choose a particular landscape habitat where you might find birds living. You can choose from the following list or ask the class to think of some others: Woodland, Seashore, City, Desert, Open ocean
- 3 Before giving out any instruments, ask each group to come up with a plan for a piece of music that creates the atmosphere of their landscape. They might want to write the plan down in words, or present it as a graphic score (more on this below). The piece could be very finely planned out, or leave plenty of room for improvisation, but this should be actively decided by the group.
- 4 They should think about which instruments they want to use, and remember that it's also possible to use voice sounds (eg. speech, singing, whispering, whistling) and body percussion (eg. clapping, stamping) to great effect.
- 5 The groups will probably instinctively think along the lines of using special effects to directly describe the sounds of nature (rushing water, creaking glacier, wind in the leaves). It's really important to encourage them also to think about the mood of their piece, and how they might use rhythms and melodies to create an atmosphere.
- 6 Give the groups 10–15 minutes to make their plans, and then another 15 minutes to practise putting their pieces together. When it comes to performing the new landscape soundscapes, ask the audience to close their eyes during the music, and see if they can guess which landscape is being depicted.



NOTE: if you don't have access to percussion instruments, think about how you can create DIY instruments out of everyday household objects. For example:

- A wooden spoon performs well as a beater
- Upend a selection of different-sized pots and pans to create a kitchen drumkit
- Empty cereal boxes make great bass drums
- Put a handful of dry pasta shapes or rice grains into a clean, dry takeaway food box. Tape the lid on and you have yourself a shaker!

Graphic Scores

A 'score' is the word musicians use to describe what a piece of music looks like when it's written down. In the classical tradition, scores are usually written on manuscript paper and are full of quavers and crotchets, sharps and flats, and instructions in Italian. They are very useful to trained musicians but not much help to anyone else.

A Graphic Score is a special kind of score that can be created and performed by anyone. The idea is to create a visual representation of a piece of music, using images, lines, squiggles, dots and words. In fact, anything can be a graphic score – there are no rules at all about what they should look like – but here are some guidelines and questions to help you get started:



Use a big piece of sugar paper or **flipchart paper**, so you've got plenty of space to make bold, **confident symbols**. When you come to perform, the whole group will be reading off the graphic score, so it needs to be easy to read. Coloured marker pens make nice clear marks.



Think about **what kind of marks** you'll make to represent different sounds and different instruments. How will you **show pitch** (high/low sounds) and **dynamics** (soft/loud sounds)?



How will you **read your score**? Where's the beginning and where's the end? It can be helpful to agree to read them left to right, like written English. It might be that one of the group needs to 'conduct', pointing to different sections of the score when it's time for those musicians to play.



Remember to try and make a piece with **contrasting textures**. Not everyone has to play all the time, and silences can be very effective.



Making graphic scores is lots of fun and it can be easy to get carried away. You might need to remind the groups to keep their piece focused on the **mood of the landscape** they are describing.

Amazing Birds: Fact File

1 Check out these incredible birds and their extraordinary skills and then create your own on page 21





BEE HUMMINGBIRD

The smallest bird of any kind, the Bee Hummingbird weighs just under 2 grams - that's less than the weight of a 5p coin!

Their eggs are the size of a pea. In order to hover in the same spot to drink nectar from flowers, they can beat their wings up to 200 times per second, and their hearts beat up to 1,260 times per minute - that's around 10-15 times as fast as a human heartbeat.

Special Feature:
Smallest bird of any kind

Sound:
Clicking

Weight
2 grams



PEREGRINE FALCON

These spectacular fliers are among the world's most common birds of prey. Soaring high above the land, their extraordinary eyesight allows them to spot prey such as smaller birds on the wing far below. Diving towards their prey at unbelievable speeds of up to 200 miles per hour (this makes them not just the fastest bird but the fastest animal on the planet) they strike with outstretched talons and kill on impact.

Special Feature:

Extraordinary eyesight

Sound:

Rasping kack-kack-kack-kack

Weight

1 kg



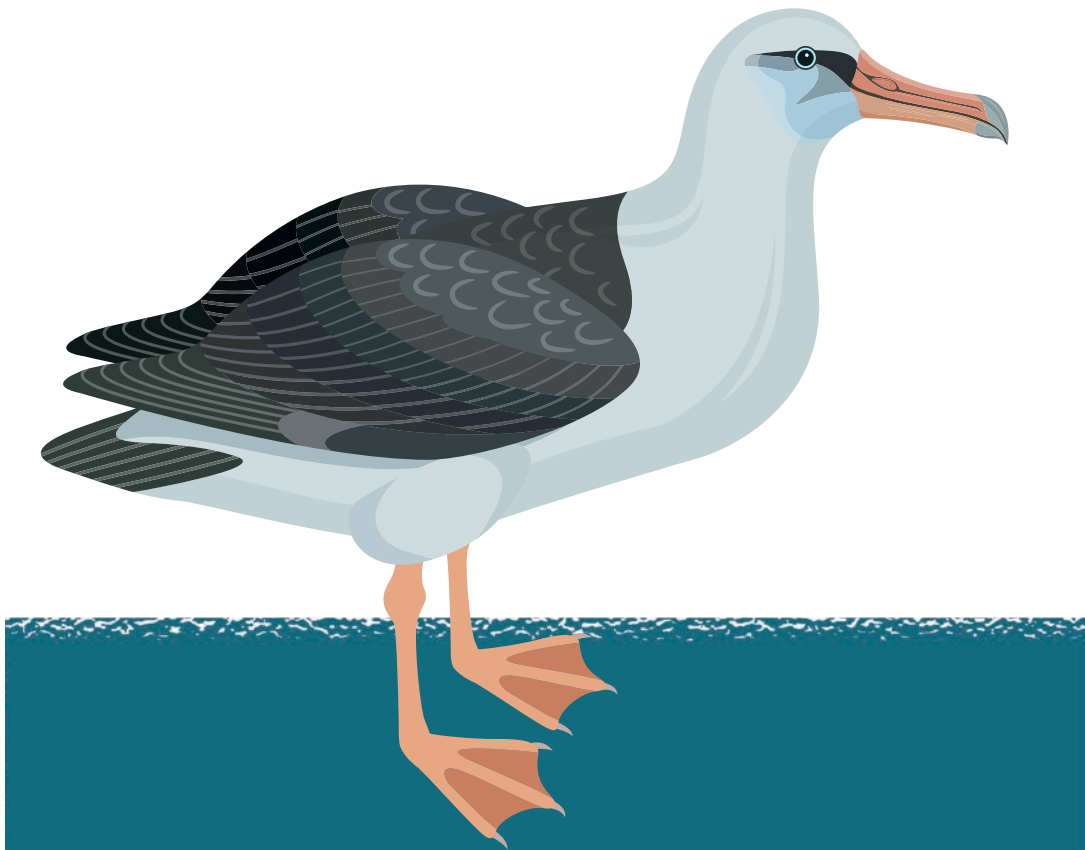
SWIFT

These beautiful acrobats are incredible to watch in flight, shrieking as they swoop and switchback across our summer skies. Every autumn, they migrate to central Africa to spend the winter in a warmer habitat with plenty of insect food, before returning Northwards in the Spring. In fact, swifts spend almost their entire lives on the wing, eating, mating and even sleeping in flight. They only ever land in order to build a nest and rear their young.

Special Feature:
Skilled flier

Sound:
Chirping

Weight
5.4 g



ALBATROSS

These majestic birds use their vast wingspan - at up to 12 feet wide, that's more than twice the height of an average human adult - to glide effortlessly above the stormy waves of the Antarctic ocean. Feeding on fish and other sealife, they are among the few birds that can survive on salty water.

Special Feature:

Longest wingspan of any bird

Sound:

Low, nasal, braying eh-eh

Weight

7 kg

Fantasy Bird Challenge

Using the blank template below, can you create your own imaginary bird?
Think about its size, feather colour and habitat, and draw a picture in the box.
What incredible skills or powers does it have? And what will you call it?

Name:

Description:

Special Feature:

Sound:

Weight

BIRD CONSERVATION - WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Many species of birds across the world are at risk due to human activity. Plastic pollution can prove fatal for seabirds, as it can for turtles, whales and other marine life. Climate change and disrupted seasonal weather patterns mean that migrating birds can no longer always rely on familiar food sources to keep them fuelled up for their long journeys. The growth of towns and cities means that some special wildlife habitats, such as wetlands or forests, are bulldozed in order to build homes, offices, shops or factories. 70 of the UK's bird species are now on a conservation red list, meaning that population numbers are declining sharply - that's twice as many species as 25 years ago. Globally, at least 187 bird species are thought to have gone extinct since 1500.

The picture is worrying, but it is not all bad news. Some bird species, such as the magnificent sea eagle, have been successfully reintroduced after becoming extinct in the UK. There is lots that we can do to help birds in our communities to survive and thrive. Here are a few ideas to get you started...



You may need an adult to help with this!

1 Make a bird-food kebab

Cut up some apple, bread, and cheese into chunks the size of a marble. Thread them onto a kebab skewer or a piece of gardening wire. If you used wire, bend it to form a circle and twist the ends together. Hang it up with some string in your garden or balcony – and wait to see who arrives for a snack!



2 Create a bird-bath

Birds need water too, to drink and to keep themselves clean. This can simply be a shallow bowl or wide saucer of water, resting on the ground or on a wall or table. Make sure to keep the bowl clean and add fresh water every day.

3 Join the Big Garden Birdwatch each January!

Every year in January, the bird conservation charity, the RSPB, invites the public to join the world's largest garden wildlife survey and gather data on the UK's bird populations. All you need is a pen and paper, and a coat to keep you warm. All details – and a useful bird ID guide – can be found at www.rspb.org.uk



4 Learn more...

The [RSPB website](http://www.rspb.org.uk) is a great place to start with loads more ideas for how to protect our natural environment and learn about the wildlife on your doorstep, whether you live surrounded by fields or forests or in the centre of the city.



Further Listening

More music inspired by birds

This concert features string quartet music that has been inspired by birds and birdsong. But there are many other songs and pieces for different instruments and ensembles that we haven't been able to share. Here is a short playlist to get you started:

1

Olivier Messiaen: *Abîme des oiseaux*
from *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tPqTqpLG5M

This incredible solo clarinet piece was written when the composer was interned in a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp in 1940. What must it be like to be a captive, hearing the songs of birds who are free to fly away? At the time, Messiaen said, "The abyss is Time with its sadness, its weariness. The birds are the opposite to Time; they are our desire for light, for stars, for rainbows, and for jubilant songs."

2

John Lennon & Paul McCartney: Blackbird
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Man4Xw8Xypo

A classic 1968 song by pop band the Beatles, simply scored for voice and guitar, with a beautiful recording of a blackbird joining in the middle

3

Ralph Vaughan Williams: – The Lark Ascending
www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLhpkvQLDto

One of the best-known and best loved pieces of classical music from the British isles. The solo violin line dances and swoops high above the gentle dreamy string orchestra, like a lark soaring over the peaceful woods and meadows of the English countryside.

4

Einojuhani Rautavaara – Cantus Arcticus Op. 61
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8X2FU1KU4_U

This 1972 piece is written for a full orchestra, accompanied by tape recordings of birdsong recorded near the arctic circle, in the frozen North of Finland.

5

Check out the Sarah Vaughan recording!
George Shearing: – Lullaby of Birdland
www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8cFdZyW00s

A jazz standard recorded by dozens of artists.

6

Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris:
Wren (arr. Kerry Andrew)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYKgtDXJ4mM

This is an ingenious song, setting text from “The Lost Words” by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris. As well as singing the main lyric, Andrew’s accompaniment, conjuring whirring wings and sharp beaks, is entirely created from vocal sounds: lip trills, whispers, clicks and pops. It’s magical.

7

Amy Beach: Hermit Thrush Op. 92
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV4H41jDGaQ

A pair of evocative solo piano pieces by American composer Amy Beach, who loved the natural world so much that she preferred to write her music outdoors. Even as a child, she was fascinated by the songs of birds, and started to write them down to include in her compositions.

Artsmark & Arts Award

**Does your school have Artsmark status or run Arts Award?
Did you know that taking part in projects, concerts and
workshops can contribute towards both?**

Artsmark is Arts Council England's flagship programme to enable schools and other organisations to evaluate, strengthen and celebrate their arts and cultural provision.

For more information including how to apply for Artsmark status visit: www.artsmark.org.uk.

Wigmore Hall Learning is a proud supporter of Artsmark and Arts Award. If taking part in a project, workshop or concert with us has contributed to your Artsmark status or your pupils' Arts Award please tell us!

You can contact us on
020 7258 8240
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Wigmore Hall Learning

Connecting people through music

Since 1994, Wigmore Hall's renowned Learning programme has been giving people of all ages and backgrounds opportunities to take part in creative music making, engaging a broad and diverse audience through innovative creative projects, concerts, workshops and digital content.

We are passionate about the impact music can have on our lives and on our society, and three core values lie at the heart of our programme: **creativity**, **collaboration** and **equality**. These values reflect the spirit of chamber music, and we embody them through **quality**, **co-created music making**, through which every voice is heard and equally valued.

We collaborate with a range of community, education, arts, health and social care organisations, working in partnership to engage people who have experienced adversity, trauma, isolation and marginalisation, and who face barriers, or do not have other opportunities, to participate in creative arts activity.

Our **Schools Programme** includes concerts; teacher training; and our innovative Partner Schools Programme, in which we work in partnership with schools and Music Education Hubs to co-produce activity over three years, creating a creative whole school plan for music.

Our **Family Programme** invites families to Wigmore Hall to take part in inspiring, interactive workshops

and concerts for families with babies, children in their early years and children aged 5+. Beyond the Hall our partnerships enable us to make music with families who have experienced domestic violence, poverty and homelessness.

Our work with **Young People** includes a range of initiatives and events including a creative ensemble with young autistic people aged 15+, a free ticket scheme for school groups and under 25s, and a series of events created with and for young people, including relaxed and low stimulus concerts.

Music for Life is our pioneering programme for people living with dementia and their families, friends and carers, working across care and community settings and at the Hall itself.

Pathways is a range of paid schemes and training opportunities for people at the early stages of a career in participatory music making, including Trainee Music Leader, Open Academy/Wigmore Hall Learning Fellowship Ensemble, Rosie Johnson Wigmore Hall Learning Composer, Trainee Learning Assistant, Music for Life and early years training schemes.



Learning &
Participation

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