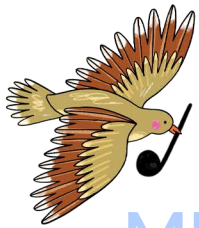
PRIMARY SCHOOLS
TEACHER'S RESOURCE PACK

The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS



The Nightingale – Lucy Walker







MEET THE COMPOSER

Lucy Walker (b. 1998) is quickly establishing herself as one of Britain's foremost emerging compositional voices. Originally from the North East of England, Lucy is now based in Cambridge, where she completed her postgraduate studies in 2021. Recognised as one of Classic FM's Rising Stars in 2024, Lucy is gaining a reputation for her vibrant choral writing and has received numerous high-profile commissions, including works for the BBC Singers, VOCES8, The Sixteen, various UK cathedral choirs, and Anna Lapwood. Her music is regularly broadcast on national radio, features on commercial recordings, and is increasingly performed across Europe and the US.

Christina Rossetti's poem 'Bird Raptures' inspired the musical atmosphere of this piece. The lilting metre of each line reminded Lucy of the timeless essence of a folk tale, so she set out to create the sound world of an invented folksong – something simultaneously new and ancient-sounding. The wistful minor key, which fluidly shifts into brighter, major moments, represents the captivating legend of the power of the nightingale's song to bring both sorrow and joy.

Each verse carries the same melody, but with different chords and interplay between the vocal parts, and even some moments of jazz-inspired chromaticism in the piano accompaniment. The melody should always be smooth and soaring, and the text present to amplify the storytelling of the poetry.

INSTRUCTIONS

We have provided you with everything that you will need to teach this song to your class or choir. You can choose to learn only voice part 1 and sing in unison, or split your group into two and learn both part 1 and part 2. The vocal range is the same for both parts.

RESOURCE BANK

- Performance Video
- Warm-Up Video
- Line-by-Line Learning Video (Part 1 only)
- Audio Tracks:
  - Full Audio
  - Part 1 Audio
  - Part 2 Audio
  - Piano Accompaniment Audio
- Animated Score Video
- Sheet Music
- Lyrics Sheet



STEP 1

Watch the **Performance Video** of The Sixteen singing the full version of this song, so that your pupils can get used to what the music sounds like.

STEP 2

Join in with the **Warm-Up Video** to get your bodies and voices ready for singing.

STEP 3

Learn the song using the **Line-by-Line Learning Video** (Part 1 only), or teach it yourself using the **Sheet Music** or **Lyrics Sheet**.

STEP 4

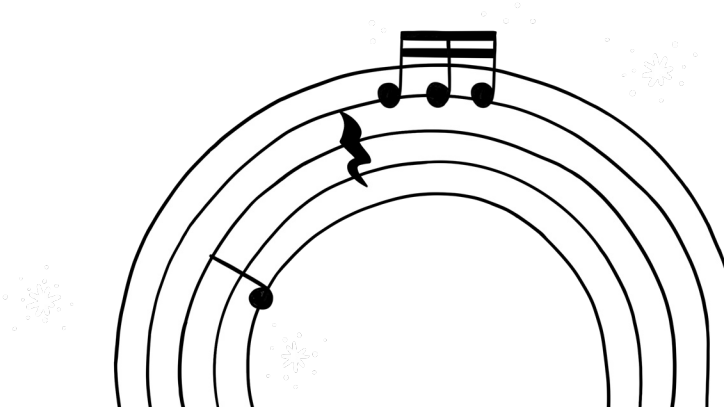
Split the group in half and learn the second part using the **Single Part Audio Track** for Part 2 (optional).

STEP 5

Practise the song by singing along with the **Performance Video** or **Full Audio Track**. For variation, you can also practise by singing along to the **Animated Score Video**.

STEP 6

Perform the song using the **Piano Accompaniment Track.**



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Once you have learned the song, here are some ideas to expand your learning into other areas of the music curriculum.



LISTENING

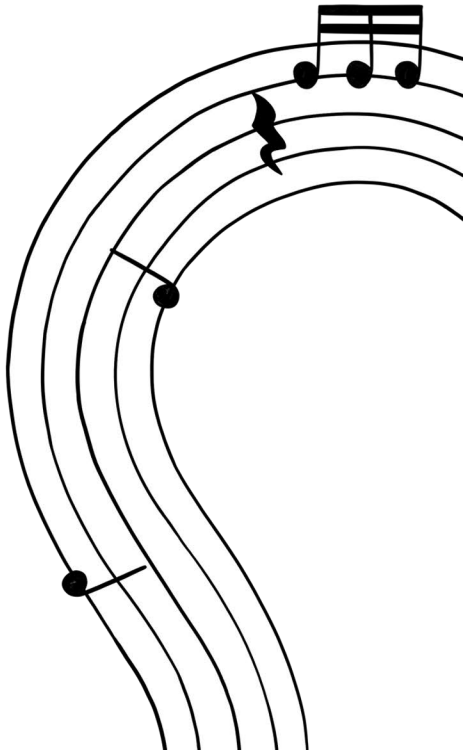
EXERCISE 1

Many composers have been inspired by birdsong. Listen to The Lark Ascending by Ralph Vaughan Williams, a piece inspired by a poem of the same name by George Meredith which begins:

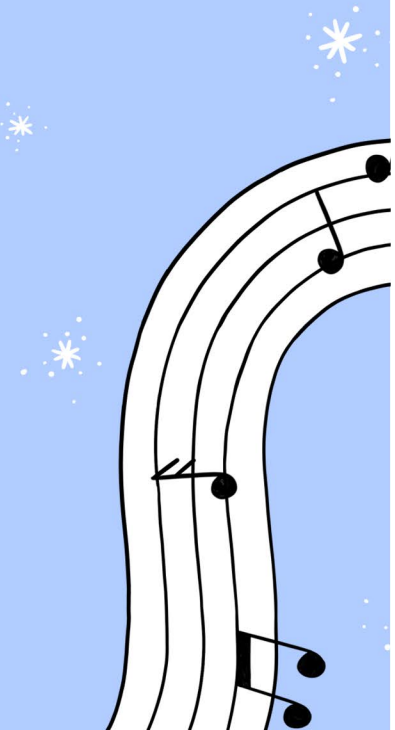
He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake,
All intervolv'd and spreading wide,
Like water-dimples down a tide
Where ripple ripple overcurls
And eddy into eddy whirls;
A press of hurried notes that run
So fleet they scarce are more than one,
Yet changingly the trills repeat
And linger ringing while they fleet…

The Lark Ascending YouTube link

Discuss how the music gives the impression of the lark's song. With younger children you could draw the rise and fall of the lark's song in the air with your finger as you listen.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES continued



EXERCISE 2

Listen to the opening section of Spring from Antonio Vivaldi's Four Seasons and notice the birdsong-like passages in the violin parts, and then listen to Aviary from Carnival of the Animals by Camille Saint-Saens. Discuss what all these pieces of music have in common in their depictions of birdsong. HINT: Think about the speed, pitch, and repetition within the melodies.

Spring Vivaldi YouTube link

Aviary from Carnival of the Animals YouTube link

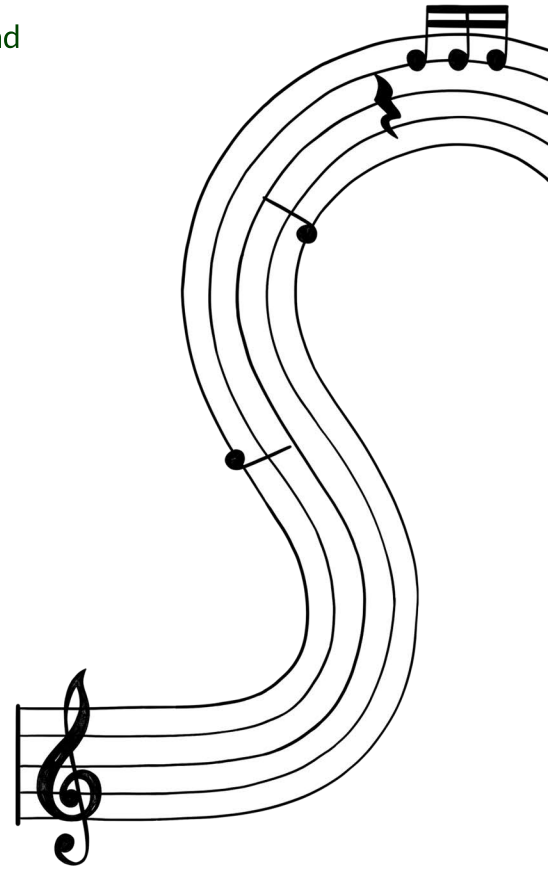


EXTENSION ACTIVITIES continued



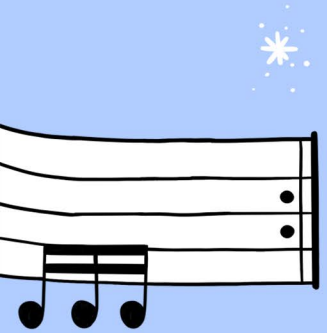
COMPOSING

Create your own soundscape to represent birdsong using your voices, body percussion, instruments and any other sound-making objects you have to hand. Discuss the kind of sounds birds make (cuckoo, owl, robin, dove) and experiment with recreating these with your different sound sources. Decide on a structure for your piece; perhaps one bird will call out to others who gradually join in and then fade out again, leaving the original bird alone? Add some environmental sounds if you like, such as wind (whoosh sounds), rustling leaves (crumple paper), or raindrops. Record your piece and play it back to the class for discussion.



CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Use these activities to expand your learning into other areas of the KS2 curriculum.



DANCE

Discuss and demonstrate the kind of movements different birds make. You could even go outside and observe some birds, or watch some videos of birds for inspiration. Play a recording of The Lark Ascending, Spring, or Aviary (see previous activities) and dance along in time to the music, making movements like a bird.

DANCE

Create a poem inspired by nightingales. Begin by brainstorming suitable vocabulary, remembering that the nightingale is known for its beautiful song and being active at night. Read the poem **Bird Raptures** by Christina Rossetti (which is the lyric for the song The Nightingale) for inspiration, then create your own poem. Pupils could have a choice of different poem styles to work with such as haiku or acrostic, depending on ability / age.

Bird Raptures *Christina Rossetti*

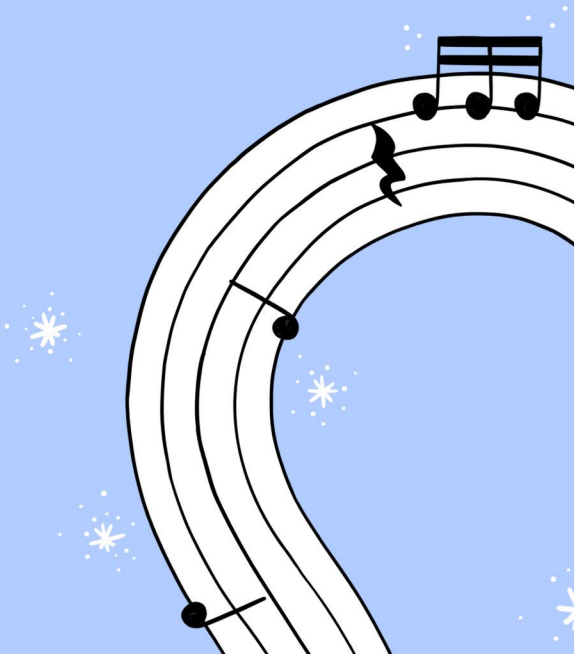
The sunrise wakes the lark to sing,
The moonrise wakes the nightingale.
Come darkness, moonrise, everything
That is so silent, sweet, and pale,
Come, so ye wake the nightingale.

Make haste to mount, thou wistful moon,
Make haste to wake the nightingale:
Let silence set the world in tune
To hearken to that wordless tale
Which warbles from the nightingale.

O herald skylark, stay thy flight
One moment, for a nightingale
Floods us with sorrow and delight.
To-morrow thou shalt hoist the sail;
Leave us tonight the nightingale.



CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES continued



GEOGRAPHY / SCIENCE

Choose a bird to research. Find out what it looks like, where it lives, what it eats, what it sounds like, and how it moves. Create a poster, fact-file, or record an audio or video report about your chosen bird.

ART

Experiment with different media to create a night-time scene that a nightingale might be found in.

