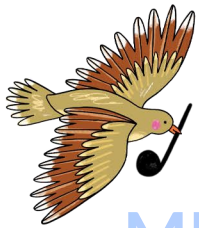
PRIMARY SCHOOLS
TEACHER'S RESOURCE PACK

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 the 3 part version (Soprano, Alto Tenor/Bass) or the 4 part version (Soprano, Alto Tenor, Bass).

A 2 part upper voices version is available on the Primary Schools page.



RESOURCE BANK

- Performance Video (4 part version)
- Warm-Up Video
- Audio Tracks:
  - 3 Part Tracks; Full Audio; Soprano Audio; Alto Audio; Tenor/Bass Audio; Piano Accompaniment 3 part Audio.
  - 4 Part Tracks; Full Audio; Soprano Audio; Alto Audio; Tenor Audio; Bass Audio; Piano Accompaniment 4 part Audio.
- Animated Score Video 3 part version; 4 part version
- Sheet Music

STEP 1

Watch the **Performance Video** of The Sixteen singing this song (4 part version), 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

Choose whether you are learning the 3 part or 4 part version.

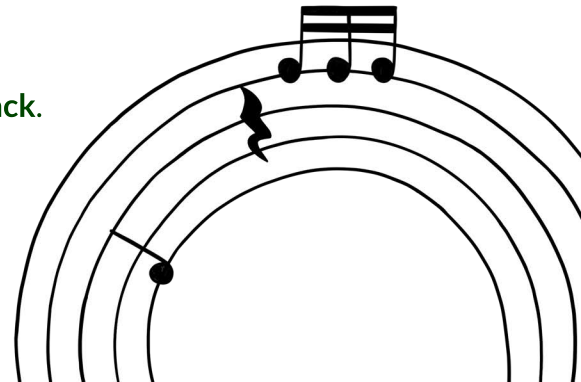
- **3 part version: listen to the 3 part full audio track; Single Part Audio Tracks** for each of the 3 vocal lines are below, where each part is more dominant but you can still hear the other parts. The **Sheet Music** can be downloaded below.
- **4 part version: Single Part Audio Tracks** for each of the 4 vocal lines are below, where each part is more dominant but you can still hear the other parts. **The Sheet Music** can be downloaded below.

STEP 4

Practise the song by singing along with the **Full Audio Track** or the **Animated Score Video**.

STEP 5

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

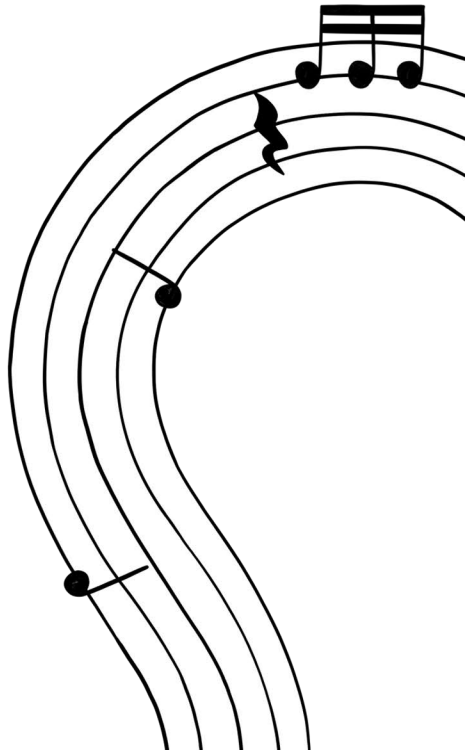
EXERCISE 1

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:

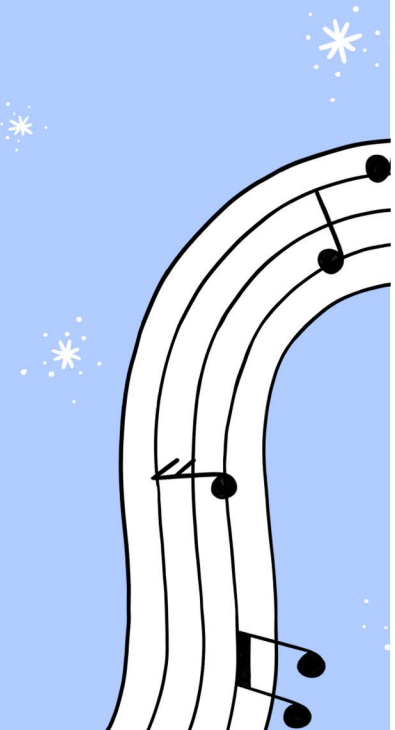
He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake,
All intervolv'd and spreading wide,
Like water-dimples down a tide
Where ripple ripple overcurls
And eddy into eddy whirls;
A press of hurried notes that run
So fleet they 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, think about tempo, pitch, texture and dynamics.



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.

