

# TEACHING TIPS:

- This song has a **fairly wide range**, from bottom B to high D, so make sure you warm up the whole voice before singing it. Try 'sirening' from the bottom of the range to the top, starting on a low note. Repeat the exercise, starting a semitone higher each time. Then, remember to sing the whole song with a smile!
- There are lots of **syncopated rhythms** throughout, so ensure the class can speak the words rhythmically before they sing them. Clap the pulse at the same time to highlight when the notes fall between beats e.g. '*joyful sound*'.
- Focus on singing the wider **interval leaps** accurately and without swiping. For example, the perfect fifths in the chorus on '*joyful*' and '*message*', and the minor sixth '*of sun*' in verse 1 (and subsequent verses).

Notation

Improvise

Sing

Listen

Play

Compose

Genre/History/Musicians

## ACTIVITY

AGES  
7 - 11



### Brilliant Birdsong!

As a class, listen to some birdsong ([www.british-birdsongs.uk](http://www.british-birdsongs.uk) is a great site to look at for this) and identify ones that you could simulate using percussion instruments or vocal sounds. (If you have any instrumentalists amongst you, see if they could use their instruments for this.) Focus particularly on the **timbre, pitch and rhythms of the different bird calls**.

Having chosen your birds, **create a number of different birdsong motifs**. Remember, you don't need to *copy* each bird call, but use it as *inspiration* for your motif, e.g. you might choose a chaffinch call and use a tambourine to tap at first then shake, starting quietly, with a **crescendo** through the taps and **diminuendo** through the shake; or use a sand tube to create the call of a barn owl.

Once your motifs are created, work as a group to **improvise a brilliant birdsong composition**. Choose a 'caller' to start the piece by setting the scene. They can call out the weather, time of day, season and location, for example, 'It's a sunny morning in spring in the Yorkshire Dales.'

As you improvise, make sure you watch each other and visually communicate when someone should play next, join in, or sit out. You might want to select a leader for this, but working as a team is good too.

### WHAT'S ACHIEVABLE?

To begin to define and recognize a range of timbres.

To compose motifs using appropriate timbres and dynamics on instruments.

To perform an improvised composition in ensemble, communicating with fellow musicians.

### LISTEN

The composer Olivier Messiaen was crazy about birdsong! He spent over four decades studying and notating it and composed numerous pieces using it as his inspiration. **Reveil d'Oiseaux (Dawn Chorus)** is a piece for piano and orchestra that contains songs from 38 different French birds. Messiaen was a devout Roman Catholic and believed that birdsong was a direct link to the music of heaven.

### RHYTHM

Duration/length of notes; regular, repeated patterns of sound

**Syncopation** – placement of notes off the main beat

**Motif** – a musical figure (usually rhythmic or melodic) used to represent a character, mood or place

### DYNAMICS

Volume

**Crescendo** – a gradual increase in volume and intensity

**Diminuendo** – a gradual decrease in volume and intensity

### PITCH

how high or low a note sits

**Interval** – the difference in pitch between two sounds

### TIMBRE

The character or quality of a musical sound

### WHAT YOU NEED

Internet connection; pitched and unpitched percussion instruments; imagination!