



This unit introduces builds on the idea (already encountered by the children in the units *Animals in Music* (year 1), *Peter and the Wolf* (year 2), *Emotion in Sound* (year 2) *Vivaldi's Winter* (year 3), *Sounds of the Sea* (year 3) and *Stories in Sound I-III* (years 1, 3 and 4) that music can also represent different things. It also introduces the idea that music can be inspired by other art forms (like poetry) and can be recorded in visual form, such as graphic score.

Through studying *The Lark Ascending* by the English composer Vaughan Williams and *Flight of the Bumblebee* by Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov the children explore how different pitch, tempo (speed), timbre (the character of a sound) and dynamics (volume) can create different effects to evoke a bird or a bee in flight. In *The Lark Ascending* Vaughan Williams uses a pentatonic scale (a scale using five pitches) in a slow, legato (smooth) melody played by a solo violin over orchestral accompaniment to conjure up the flight of a lark. In contrast in *The Flight of the Bumblebee* Rimsky-Korsakov uses a fast-moving melody which moves in very small steps to conjure up the movement of a bee.

In pairs the children improvise and compose their own composition in ternary form (using sections A B A) to characterise the contrasting flight of a bird and a bee. For part A they use the legato (smooth), pentatonic melodic line played over a drone (a note or chord which is played continuously to accompany other layers in music). By doing this they explore how to build a melody using the particular pitches of do, re, mi, sol and la (the names given to different pitches in a scale using the sol-fa method) on the glockenspiel. In part B they illustrate the flight of a bee. Taking the melody of Rimsky-Korsakov's composition as inspiration the children devise three short, fast motifs using notes which move in small steps on the glockenspiel. They experiment with different timbre's they can create with their own voices to accompany these motifs. Finally, they consider the different dynamics they want to make use of and record the piece in a graphic score, exploring how music can be encountered and recorded in a different way from traditional notation.

Lesson Sequencing

In lesson 1 the children are introduced to *The Lark Ascending* written by the English composer, Vaughan Williams between 1914 and 1920. The piece was written to describe a lark, flying in the sky over the countryside. It was inspired by a poem, written in 1881,

also called *The Lark Ascending* by the poet George Meredith. It is a contemplative piece which the children are encouraged to listen to in a relaxed, quiet manner, and then produce a picture, or graphic score (a picture which acts a guide or musical map for a piece of music) to reflect the rise and fall of the free melodic line of the solo violin.

In lesson 2 the children explore how the melody of the violin in *The Lark Ascending* conjures up the flight of the lark. They explore how Vaughan Williams achieves this, using a legato (smooth) melody, in a free rhythmic style which makes use of the pentatonic scale. A pentatonic scale uses five pitches, in this case do, re, mi, sol and la (the names given to different pitches in a scale using the sol-fa method). They go on to explore in pairs how they can use the pentatonic scale on a glockenspiel to improvise (make up on the spot) their own slow and legato (smooth) melody following a line drawn by their partner which indicates a rise and fall in pitch.

In lesson 3 the children consider what accompanies the solo violin in *The Lark Ascending*. They learn about the simplest form of harmony, a drone which is a note or chord which is played continuously to accompany other layers in music including a melody. At the beginning of *The Lark Ascending* the string section of the orchestra form a chord which is sustained during the first part of the free-flowing solo. In pairs the children go on to put a drone under the melodies which they devised last lesson using whatever appropriate instruments/recordings of instruments/an online drone are available. The drone note should be either a C or a G to correspond with the pentatonic melody in C.

In lesson 4 the children listen to *The Flight of the Bumblebee* which they first encountered in year 1. It is an orchestral interlude written by the Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov for his opera *The Tale of the Tsar Saltan*, composed in 1899–1900. It is intended to musically evoke the flight of a bumblebee. Whilst it is a short and incidental part of the opera the music is extremely well-known and has been made into numerous different versions and transcribed for different solo instruments. The children compare the melodic line which evokes the movement of the bee with the solo violin part of *The Lark Ascending*, considering how the different composers have created the contrasting characteristics of flight of these two animals. They consider how music can create different effects using contrasting patterns of pitch, tempo (speed) and timbre (the character of a sound) and in pairs start to create their own composition in ternary form (using sections A B A) to characterise the contrasting flight of a bird and a bee. For part A they use the legato, pentatonic melodic line devised in lesson 3 played over a drone. Part B will illustrate the flight of a bee. Taking the melody of Rimsky-Korsakov's composition as inspiration the children should devise three short, fast motifs using moving in small steps on the glockenspiel. These will be played over a drone which the children create with their voices. They should create a low sound and consider how they can vary the timbre of their voice to evoke the sound of a bee (for example

creating a buzz).

In lesson 5 the children study the dynamics (volume) used in the Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Flight of the Bumblebee* noting how crescendos (getting gradually louder) and diminuendos/decrescendos (getting gradually quieter) mimic the sound of the buzzing of a bee. In pairs, they go on to practise their own compositions in ternary form adding different dynamics to the piece and creating a graphic score (a picture which acts a guide or musical map for a piece of music) to record their compositions, which they will perform and record in lesson 6.

In lesson 6 the children practise, perform and evaluate the piece which they developed from lessons 2-5, learning that we can evaluate a performance to make it better next time. By practising the piece so it is ready for performance they develop their skills in playing with another person in a duo.

Musical Focus

Pitch and Melody

- Free-flowing melody, ascending and descending to imitate bird in flight
- Using poetry for inspiration, graphic score
- Pentatonic scale—sol-fa: do, re, mi, sol, la

Timbre

- How instruments create different sounds, use of the violin bow

Texture/Structure and Form

- Solo with accompaniment
- Drone
- Ternary form

Articulation/Dynamics

- Legato/Crescendo, diminuendo (or decrescendo)

Links to Prior/Following Units

Year 4

Autumn B—*Take the 'A' Train* (Texture—Melody and accompaniment)

Spring B—*Going Solo* (Texture—music for a solo instrument; Pitch and Melody—moving by jump and by step; Articulation and dynamics –legato, dynamics to vary expression; Form/Structure—ternary form)

Summer A—*Stories in Sound III* (Representation in sound—tone poem; Texture/Structure and Form— ostinato bassline/rhythmic ostinato, building layers of texture; Dynamics—crescendo)

Year 5

Autumn B—*This Little Babe* (Pitch—high pitch of treble voices)

Year 6

Autumn A—*Voice and Body Percussion* (Dynamics— including f, mf, p, mp, cresc. and dim)

Spring A—*Blues and the Groove* (Harmony—using the minor pentatonic scale in the blues)

Spring B—*Minimalism* (Dynamics—using a variety of different dynamics; f, p, mf, mp, cresc. and dim.)

Outcomes

Use a pentatonic scale to improvise over a drone to replicate the flight of a bird. Formalise improvisation into a composition in ternary form working in pairs to replicate the flight of a bird and a bee. Record these compositions in a graphic score and perform these to the rest of the class.

Key Learning Points

- Music can be inspired by other art forms, like poetry and can be recorded in a graphic score
- Music can create different effects using contrasting patterns of pitch, tempo, timbre and dynamics.
- A composition can be in ternary form (A B A)
- In *'The Lark Ascending'* Vaughan Williams uses a pentatonic, free-flowing, legato, slow melody played by a solo violin over orchestral accompaniment to conjure up the flight of a lark in our imagination

- The orchestral accompaniment of 'The Lark Ascending' uses a drone
- In contrast the 'Flight of the Bumblebee' uses a fast-moving melody which moves in very small steps to conjure up the movement of a bee.

Progression: Technical, Constructive, Expressive

Singing

Children learn and sing call and response and action songs, to warm up at the beginning of each lesson. This develops their technical singing skills which include posture hold, breath control, singing with a pulse, imitating rhythms, varying speed, holding a particular pitch, varying pitch, varying volume and singing together in an ensemble. Practising songs over the course of six lessons ensures familiarity and increasing sophistication of musical expression. The children use the songs which they sing at the beginning of the lesson to develop their skills in varying pitch, in particular using the sol-fa hand signals to indicate pitch which they then use when creating their own compositions on the glockenspiel based on a pentatonic scale.

Listening

Children practise 'active' listening, developing skills of answering directed questions which relate to how the music achieves what it does by reference to the dimensions of music. They develop their conscious understanding of how music is constructed, focussing on the dimensions of pitch, melody, timbre, texture, structure/form, articulation and dynamics. By studying The Lark Ascending and The Flight of the Bumblebee, they begin to develop an increasing understanding of the expressive qualities of music from a particular culture/genre.

Practising

Composing and practising a piece which makes use of the voice and glockenspiel to create melody and harmony by way of a drone develops technical motor skills and an internal sense of the rise and fall of pitch and texture created by harmony. Creating a piece which uses melody over a drone created in different ways (whether made by an instrument, recording or the voice) using varying dynamics and articulation, in ternary form develops knowledge of handling pitch, melody, timbre, texture, structure/form, articulation and dynamics as component dimensions of composition. Practising the skills required for building the composition gradually over the course of the unit, ensures increasing confidence and sophistication in the expressive quality of musical outcomes.

Performing

Working towards performance of a composition over the course of six lessons ensures increased technical accuracy, confidence, fluency, expression and the ability to play securely with another person, in a duet.