

Friday Afternoons:
Star

Teachers notes on these resources:

- Adapt, adapt, adapt! These resources are designed in a very flexible way as no two classes are the same. You know your students best, so please do change the bits you need so your class can get the most out of them. And if you want to change the themes I've mentioned in the resources- please do to make them topic or project specific.
- These resources are simply starting points, feel free to extend in whatever way suits you and your class.
- The resources are written as if talking to the students, with questions that you can ask directly to your class. However, they are designed to be used in creative sessions facilitated by you, rather than printed out and given to the children as worksheets.
- Have fun! These are three really lovely songs- listen as much as you can to them, and really explore them, just like you would a poem or a story. If this work takes you off on a tangent, that is great!
- Listen to more of Errollyn Wallen's music! Her music is brilliant- take a listen!
- Did you know, Errollyn was commissioned to do a new arrangement of Jerusalem at the Proms 2020?
You can find out more about her approach to this challenge here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-54115638>

What is a composer and what do they do?

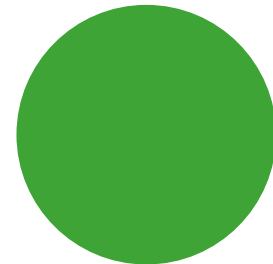


Composers are people who tell stories, convey emotions and paint pictures through the music they write.


A composer might be inspired by nature, paintings, poetry, politics, a life event, a shape... anything really! They take this inspiration and create melodies, harmonies and rhythmical patterns that then take audiences on a journey.

The composer can write for whatever instruments they like; it might be a solo instrument, a duo, a quartet, or even a huge symphony orchestra (which could be about 80 different musicians).

Many composers play an instrument too (although this isn't always the case) as it helps to know how all the instruments work, and the possibilities of all the different sounds.



Errollyn Wallen - The Composer



Errollyn Wallen is one of the most prominent composers that there is writing today.

Most recently she arranged a version of Jerusalem for the Last Night of the Proms, but she has also written many, many pieces for orchestras, opera companies and chamber groups (smaller groups of musicians e.g a duo, or quintet).

Wallen has won lots awards for writing music, and was recently awarded a CBE from the Queen.

She lives in a lighthouse in Scotland where she can see basking sharks and whales from her window.

Star

Star is a calm and magical song. Wallen imagined that one dark, misty night in December she could hear the bells of St Paul's Cathedral all the way up in the Scottish Highlands.

Let's Listen to Star



Listen to Star. This song is filled with magic!

- Can you hear the piano paint the picture of a shooting star? How does it do this?
- What about the bells of St Paul's Cathedral, can you hear the piano paint the picture of them?
- What lyrics stick out to you and why?
- How does the song make you feel?

As you listen again, why not make a star filled Christmas card (or holiday card) for somebody in your family, or it could be for your friend...or favourite teacher!

Creating your own melodies



In music we call the tune of a song or piece of music played by instruments, the melody. In Star, it's the musical line sung by the voices.

With some jars, and water, we can create our own Star melodies, inspired by the bells of St Paul's Cathedral. There are lots of videos of these bells, here are a couple...

Video 1 - 13 - second clip of the bells on Christmas eve

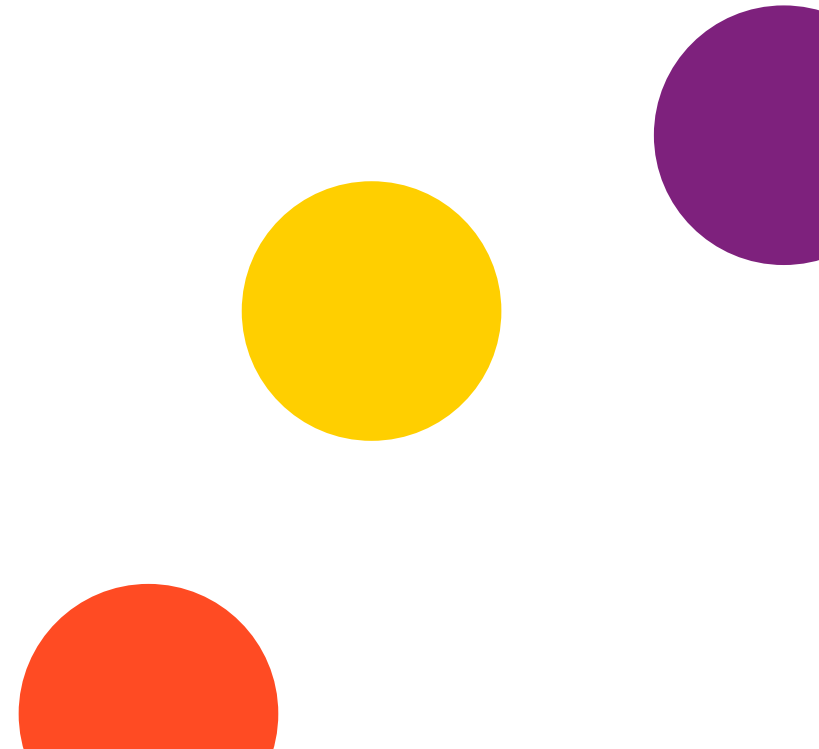
Video 2 - the bells on Remembrance Sunday

(This exercise can be done as a whole class or in smaller groups...or at home!)

1. Find four or five jars and fill them with different amounts of water.
2. Find a beater- this might be a pencil, a pen or a metal beater from the percussion box
3. Play the jars with the beater- where is the sound the strongest? And can you hear the different pitches (how high or how low a note sounds)? Are the jars with more water higher or lower in pitch than the ones with less water?
4. Make lots of different musical patterns- which one is your favourite? Maybe your star melody will sound like the bells of St Pauls Cathedral too? Or maybe you're inspired by shooting stars!
5. Record these different star melodies so that the player can listen back to their masterpiece!

Extention activities

- Put two of the melodies together- play a duet!
- Make your star melody longer and add in more jars!
- If your young people play instruments, see if they can work out the notes and play their melodies on their instruments
- Find some star footage online and write your own star soundtrack using the jars!



Many composers have been inspired by Stars!



So many composers have been enthralled by a starry night sky. Why not take a listen to these other pieces? You'll hear bright shooting stars and the epic vastness of space.

Starburst by Jessie Montgomery

Where We're Going by Hans Zimmer (from the film, Interstellar)

Jupiter by Holst

Whilst listening, here are some cross-curriculum activities that will also encourage some active listening:

1. Create some artwork inspired by the music- let the music guide you as you put paintbrush, pen, pencil or crayon to paper.
2. Write a poem, again inspired by the music. How does the music make you feel and what can you see in your imagination? Once written, read it aloud over the music!
3. Imagine that you are an art critic and you are writing a review of this piece... what will you write? And can you tell your readers a little bit about the composer too?

Have you learnt how to sign this song?



Signing is an excellent way for everyone to join in with some singing. Dr Paul Whittaker OBE has created a video so that everyone can learn how to sign this song- have you tried it?

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Registered office: Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Snape, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1SP.