

Song of the Birds



*Birdsong Inspired Choral Concerts and Education
Workshops for Primary School Children*

About the Project

Introduction

The natural world has moved human beings to make art since time immemorial. Building on a collection of choral works inspired by bird song from the 15th Century to the present day, professional vocal ensemble *The Swan Consort* are offering singing workshops to primary school aged children in the UK. In these workshops, students will experience the consort in live performance, learn about the birds of the British Isles, and devise their own polyphonic choral improvisation based on the bird songs. They will learn to warm up their voices, sing in harmony, and have the opportunity to perform alongside the professionals. The project engages children with the nature on their doorstep, offers coaching in group singing, and draws children into dialogue with composers who, throughout history, have been inspired by the songs of the birds. *The Swan Consort's* Birdsong Workshops have been successfully piloted in two primary schools in Brighton and Hove, in association with Brighton Early Music Festival (2021-2022).

Schools Will Enjoy:

- **2 x 60-minute Birdsong Workshops** with five professional singers in which children (up to 75) will:
 - experience **three live performances** from The Swan Consort
 - participate in a **full vocal warm up** led by professional singers
 - learn key facts and characteristic calls of native British birdlife
 - **learn a 15th century choral song** based on bird calls, culminating in co-performance with The Swan Consort
 - **devise a structured improvisation** based on bird calls, culminating in a group performance
- **A differentiated schools preparation pack** including Bird-Themed Lesson Plans for cross-curriculum links, building on information provided by the RSPB (Maths, Science, English), devised by qualified teachers
- **Music Education Resources** including:
 - Video and audio recordings of singing warm-ups, exercises and songs to learn with guide on use in the classroom
 - Follow-up worksheets and videos for revising and rehearsing music learned in the workshop
 - Access to legacy resources for music teachers who might feel confident to recreate the workshop for future year groups
- We are committed to negotiating access to **free children's tickets** for local concert performances of *Song of the Birds* programme and **discounted ticket prices for guardians** of children attending partner schools.



About: The Swan Consort

The Swan Consort is an elite chamber ensemble specialising in the vocal music of the European Baroque and Renaissance periods. Founded in 2018 by British Asian conductor and educator Anita Datta, the consort has performed across the UK and received acclaim internationally. Recent appearances include Brighton Early Music Festival, Festival Renaissance (ES), Ryedale Festival, and The Royal Opera House Mumbai. The ensemble is committed to democratising choral performance and bringing musical experiences to regional audiences.



About: The Workshop Leaders

The Swan Consort's founder and Artistic Director, Anita Datta (MA Cantab, PGCE/QTS, AHEA), is a fully qualified teacher and respected choral educator who has worked with young singers of all ages in various educational and liturgical settings. She has trained child choristers in London and East Yorkshire, worked in schools across the country, and is currently Conducting Fellow for the National Youth Choir of Wales. She is also a regular contributor to Music Teacher Magazine. Her educational programming builds both on her practical experience in classrooms, and her research background in education and anthropology. Anita Datta will be the primary workshop facilitator for all Birdsong Workshops, alongside four other members of The Swan Consort.

Workshop facilitators include:

Ailsa Campbell : Experienced Youth Choir and Schools workshop leader, including as National Youth Choirs of Great Britain (NYCGB) fellow. Voces8 Scholar 2022-2023.

Robin Datta : QTS, former teacher in St Helens, having worked with KS1/2 age children in practical and theoretical music lessons and coaching in conjunction with Liverpool Cathedral.

Samuel Gilliatt : Specialist youth choral leader. Roles include Assistant Musical Director of Barnsley Youth Choir, Choral Animateur at Lancaster Priory, Staff Member NYCGB and Conducting Fellow *Sing for Pleasure*.

Feedback For Birdsong Workshops with The Swan Consort

“...an enormous thank you for our fabulous workshop on Thursday. The children were really buzzing & inspired afterwards & we all enjoyed your beautiful singing, many of the adults supporting said how much they had enjoyed the session too! ... Thank you again & good luck with other education projects you do, you have put together a really good formula. ”

Emma Bright, Music Lead, Westdene Primary School, Brighton and Hove

“THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your concert/workshop yesterday. The children really enjoyed it. It was very interactive and engaging. The behaviour was very good as a result of the engagement of the children. Well done!”

Juan Maestro, Music Teacher, Elm Grove Primary, Brighton and Hove

Schools Will Provide

Necessary	Highly Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suitably sized room to accommodate students, accompanying teachers, and 5 members of The Swan Consort facing the children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whiteboard or Screen with Projector for PowerPoint presentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers at the school will accompany students in the appropriate ratios to maintain the safety of the children	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £150 contribution towards cost of running the workshop	