



FEATURE

WHAT ARE BIRDS SINGING ABOUT?

Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 5, 7, 9 and 10

OBJECTIVES

- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (*Pr5*)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (*Re9*)
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art (*Co10*)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (Vol.40 No.2)
- Hear the Music Playlist
- Poetry Extras
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “What Are Birds Singing About?” on pages 10-13 before reviewing the words below. [This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

SYRINX - the voice organ in birds, located at the junction of the trachea and bronchial tubes.

TYMPANUM - External hearing structure in animals

TERRITORY - an area defended by an animal or group of animals against others of the same sex or species

BIRD LANGUAGE - Communication and language between birds of the same species or different species

MOBBING CALL - signals made by the mobbing species while harassing a predator.

RHYTHM - a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound

HARMONIC - relating to or characterized by musical harmony

CALL - a note uttered by a bird for the purpose of contact, alarm, or marking its territory

VOCALIZATION - sing with several notes to one vowel.

PENTATONIC - a five-note scale

MELODY - musical sounds in agreeable succession or arrangement

DEVELOP

Ask students the following questions:

Where are a bird's vocal cords located?

How is it that some birds can sing for minutes at a time without stopping their singing?

There are two main reasons why birds sing? What are they?

What manmade items have affected and changed some birds song?

How do birds tell each other if there's a predator nearby?

What inspired Mozart to compose Piano Concerto No. 17?

Which composer kept a detailed journal of bird songs that he used in his music?

What year was the first bird song ever recorded?

Which bird is known to be among the closest to human musical melody? (Answer: Thrush)

2. Listen to the selections in Hear the Music as a class.

What sounds can you identify?

What instruments do you hear?

How would you describe the essence of these songs?

How do they make you feel? Why?

Do you hear the birdsong? What does the rhythm sound like?

CLOSE

Have students pick a bird of their choosing, research their bird call and have them bring it back to the class and explain why they chose it. Draw a picture of how the bird call “sounds”.

OR

Pick one of the poems and listen to the reading of them. Have students explain how the rhythm of the poem sounds like a bird, and how the poet describes the bird.

ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they answer the review questions?

Did they pay attention to the details of each song and select their own?