

Cantus Arcticus (Concerto for Birds and Orchestra) Op.61: Images Inspired by Music

In 1972, the Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara was commissioned to write a ceremonial piece for the University of Oulu, Finland. He combined birdsong with orchestral music to create a haunting and evocative sound.

The birdsong was recorded in the Arctic Circle and Finland and includes the calls of the shore lark and a flock of swans. There are a number of versions available on YouTube but we have chosen this link which includes a slideshow of the music written by Rautavaara. As the music plays and its magic takes hold, the score becomes a sequence of beautiful graphic images of pattern: drawings of sound. Alternatively, looking away from the screen and focussing attention purely on the music allows the imagination free reign.

We hope that the music will inspire you to create your own visual responses - for ideas on how to explore drawing and music have look at these exciting resources:

'A Cheerful Orchestra and Other Ideas for Drawing Music' by Hannah Coulson

'Drawing Music' by Sheila Ceccarelli

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