



What If Trees Could Sing?

*EDEN Engagement: London
Root City Curriculum
Mike Roberts*

SEPTEMBER 2021



International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC)
and
Joyce DiDonato's

EDEN ENGAGEMENT

About

Three-time Grammy Award winning opera superstar Joyce DiDonato has created the global tour of EDEN, her major concert hall performance about environmentalism. Her personal commitment and partnership with ITAC has launched a re-imagining of the impact of a concert experience through teaching artist-led workshops in every city. The International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC) is the world-wide network of artists who work in community and educational settings, who have the skills to bring change to communities. Together ITAC and EDEN Engagement will pilot a new approach to prove that touring can be a legitimate and powerful tool for change in communities.

Cities on the tour are designated either "Root Cities" or "Seed Cities". Root Cities are multiple day events (up to five days) that engage the youth with a specific environmental issue. The teaching artist selects a specific environmental issue they care about, which has a direct relevance for local concerns, and that has a direct link to something in the EDEN performance. This workshop was the pilot workshop that took place during the summer of 2021. The London Root City Curriculum will expand soon into a multi-workshop project.

Teaching Artist: Mike Roberts

Objectives:

- To help participants understand, or further understand, the challenges facing our environment
- To release creative expression
- To help participants express their understanding through creative outputs (music, lyrics, improv)
- To learn the EDEN Community Song "Seeds of Hope"
- To potentially adapt and add to "Seeds of Hope" through improvisation
- To steer participants towards direct action that has a positive impact on our environment



Workshop: What If Trees Could Sing?

Warm Up Session [50']:

- Physical warm up games (e.g. passing sounds around a circle) [5']
- Singing warm up exercises (for choirs this would consist of the usual vocal warm up regime [5'])
- Watch Joyce's short introductory video [5']
- Quick Learn: Britten's "Cuckoo" from 'Friday Afternoons' – dividing the choir and taking it in turns to sing each part [20']
- Encourage participants to 'composer' their own 'bird call' in place of "cuckoo" whilst improvising to the accompaniment [10']
- Perform "Cuckoo" with an improvised 'dawn chorus' (made up of the various alternative bird calls) in place of the "cuckoo" element [5']

Drum Circle Session [50']: After the warm up activities, a drum circle (or simply a circle where participants each have a percussive instrument) is an excellent setting within which to release creative potential.

- Setting the parameters: i) have fun; ii) no wrong rhythms; iii) don't think TOO hard; iv) rumble/start/stop/dynamic signs [5']
- Introduce basic hand drum technique or discuss alternative sounds with other percussion [5']
- Pass the beat' exercise: Single 'hit', passed from one to another around the circle [10']
- Call and Response' exercise: Leader performs some rhythms for group to repeat; then all participants take a turn to perform their own rhythm to be repeated by the group before moving to next participant. [10']
- 'Rhythmic Name' exercise: Encourage participants to think of inventive ways to articulate their name and then translate this into a rhythm on their drum. Synchronise tempo for the Rhythmic Names and perform them together to create a unique group 'Groove' [10']
- 'Melodic Name' extension: Encourage participants to improvise a melody to their Rhythmic Name. [10']

Melodic Composition Session [50']:

- Asking the question 'What if Trees Could Sing?', encourage participants, either individually or in pairs, to write a lyric phrase from a tree's perspective in response to our current climate crisis. Share the lyric phrases with the whole group. [15']
- Using a drone of some kind (e.g. open 5th, triad omit3 add3), encourage the group as a whole to improvise a melody to their lyric phrase. [15']
- Working individually, or in the same pairs, encourage participants to consolidate a melody for their lyric phrase. Share the new musical song phrase with the whole group. [20']



Seeds of Hope [120' to include break]:

- Teach the entire song, 'Seeds of Hope' [60']
- BREAK [15']
- Consolidate song with a couple of run throughs [10']
- Using the drone in bars 17 to 21, encourage participants to perform their musical song phrase, improvising pauses between repetitions. [10']
- Encourage participants to write new text for their musical song phrase that expresses either a 'call to action' or a 'decisive action' in terms of impacting our environment positively. [10']
- Encourage participants to sing the alternative lyrics between bars 124 to 128 [10']
- End with a complete performance of the song to include the improvisatory sections at the start and end [5']
- It's expected that further workshops will be required to consolidate and refine the performance of 'Seeds of Hope'.

Plenary [15]:

- Ask participants what they most enjoyed about the workshop(s)
- Ask them if anything has surprised them today
- Ask them what things they've learned
- Ask each participant to articulate ONE action that they will commit to in order to have a positive impact on the environment

Resources:

- [Cuckoo, Benjamin Britten](#)
- For [Drum Circle inspiration](#)
- Seeds of Hope: Enclosed





Seeds of Hope

EDEN Project Community Song

*Composed by the Children of the Canterbury Choir,
Bishop Ramsey CE School, England, with Mike Roberts*

We asked, "What if trees could sing?"...

Prelude: "Once, I was a seedling; And from the ground I started to sing... sing... sing!"
(Joyce Solo)

V1 *Tree Perspective...*

Hear my voice; the message I bring; and listen to the song I sing;
Is this world gonna be OK, when the last of my leaves have fallen away?
Brothers, sisters all cut down; I'm on my own, as nature drowns
Don't chop me down, don't you cut away; unsustainable price you are going to pay!

Chorus

Why?.... Why should I die? Why?.... No air supply?
Why?.... Why should I die? Why?.... Why, oh why?

V2 *Human Perspective...*

Wildlife could grow very strong; if we will help, help it along;
All we need is to show some care with the things we consume and the things that we wear.
Sisters, brothers, all join as one; creating change, changing what's wrong.
The need is great and we can't delay there is no time to lose, make changes today!

Chorus

No!... don't let them go! No!... let fresh air flow
No!... don't let them go! No!... commit to sow!

Bridge

Think what we could do, if we renewed;
Our world with seeds of life again!
Think what we could grow, if we would sow;
Our world with seeds of hope again!
[repeat]

Final Chorus

Go!... commit to sow! Go!... what can we grow?
Go!... commit to sow! Go!... fresh seeds of hope!

Coda
(Joyce Solo)

Hear our voice; the message we bring; and listen to the song we sing

Seeds of Hope

EDEN Project Community Song

We asked: "What if trees could sing?"...

Composed by the Children of the Canterbury Choir,
Bishop Ramsey CE School, England, with Mike Roberts.

A ♩. = 45 rit.

A ♩. = 45 rit.

(use pedal for legato feel as appropriate)

B A tempo Joyce Solo poco rall. . . .

Once, I was a seed-ling; And from the

B A tempo poco rall. . . .

ground I start-ed to sing, sing, sing, sing!

mf cresc.

mf cresc.

V.S.



17 $\text{♩} = 135$ *optional improvisation of material developed in workshop*

p cresc.

$\text{♩} = 135$

p cresc.

22 **C** *mf*

Hear my voice; the mess-age I bring, and list-en to—the song—I sing;— is this world gon-na

C *mf*

27

be O K—when the last of my leaves have fal-len a-way—

mf

32 **D** Choir

Bro-thers, sis - ters all— cut—down; I'm on my own; as na - ture drowns don't

D

36

chop me down... don't you cut a - way... un - sus - tain - a - ble price... you are

39

go - ing to pay!

42

why? why should I die? why?

48

No air sup - ply why? why should I

53

die? why?

56

why? Oh why?

59

W - l d - l f e _ _ c o u l d g r o w _ _ v e r - y s t r o n g , i f w e w i l l h e l p , h e l p i t _ _ a - l o n g ;

F

63

A l l w e n e e d _ _ i s t o s h o w s o m e c a r e _ _ w i t h t h e t h i n g s w e c o n - s u m e _ _ a n d t h e

66

things that we wear

69

G

Sis-ters, broth-ers all join as one; cre-a-ting change, chang-ing what's wrong; The

G

73

need is great and we can't de-lay there is no time to lose, make chang-es to-day!

77

H

No! Don't let them go! No!

H

f *f*

83

Let fresh air___ flow! No! Don't let___ them_

88

go! No! Com-mit___ to sow!___

93

Think, what we___ could do,___ if we___ re - newed___ our world_ with seeds

96

___ of life___ a - gain! Think what we___ could grow,___ if we___ would sow_

99

1. 2.

our world... with seeds... of hope... a - gain seeds of hope... a - gain!

102

J Go! Com-mit to sow!

106

J Go! What can we grow?

110

J Go! Com-mit to sow!

114

Go! Fresh seeds_ of

117

hope! Hear our voice; the mess

120

- age we bring; and list - en to_ the song_ we sing_

Acknowledge Applause

L

X4-8

124

optional AD LIB repeats as choir leave - improvisation of material developed in workshop

f dim.

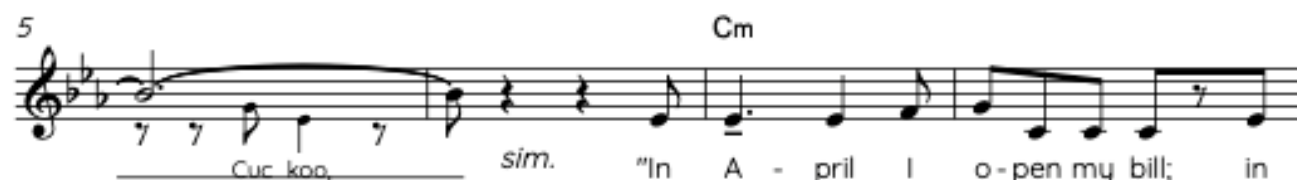
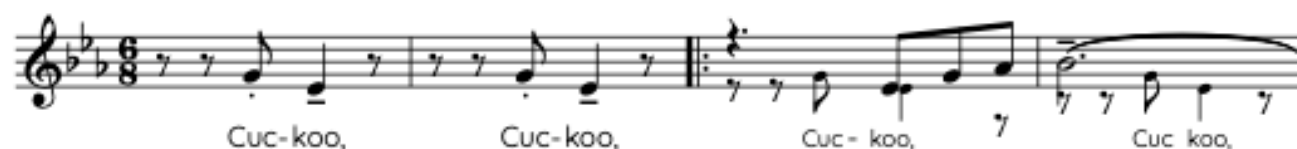
L

CUCKOO

Words by
JANE TAYLOR

Music by
BENJAMIN BRITTEN

What do you do? _____



Cuckoo!

Score and Lyrics



FRIDAY AFTERNOONS



Aldeburgh Music

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The character and timing of the words of any performance shall be the property of the publisher.

★ Words by
JANE TAYLOR

CUCKOO!

Music by
BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Quietly

1st Voice *pp* Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, What do you do? _____

2nd Voice *pp* (ad lib) Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa,

5 *p* In A - pril I o - pen my hill. In May _____ I
sempre pp Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa,

10 *poco più f* sing night and day. In June _____ I change my tune; In Ju - ly Far far I fly. In
poco più f Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa,

15 Au - gust a - way _____ I
mf Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, *dim*

20 *p* must? _____ *pp* Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, *ppp* Cuc-kaa!
p *dim* *pp* *ppp* Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa, Cuc-kaa!

If for two parts, change parts ad libitum

★ From *Tom Tiddler's Ground* – Walter de la Mare

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Lyrics

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CUCKOO!

Cuckoo, Cuckoo,
What do you do?
'In April I open my bill;
In May I sing night and day;
In June I change my tune;
In July far far I fly;
In August away I must.'
Cuckoo, Cuckoo!
Cuckoo!



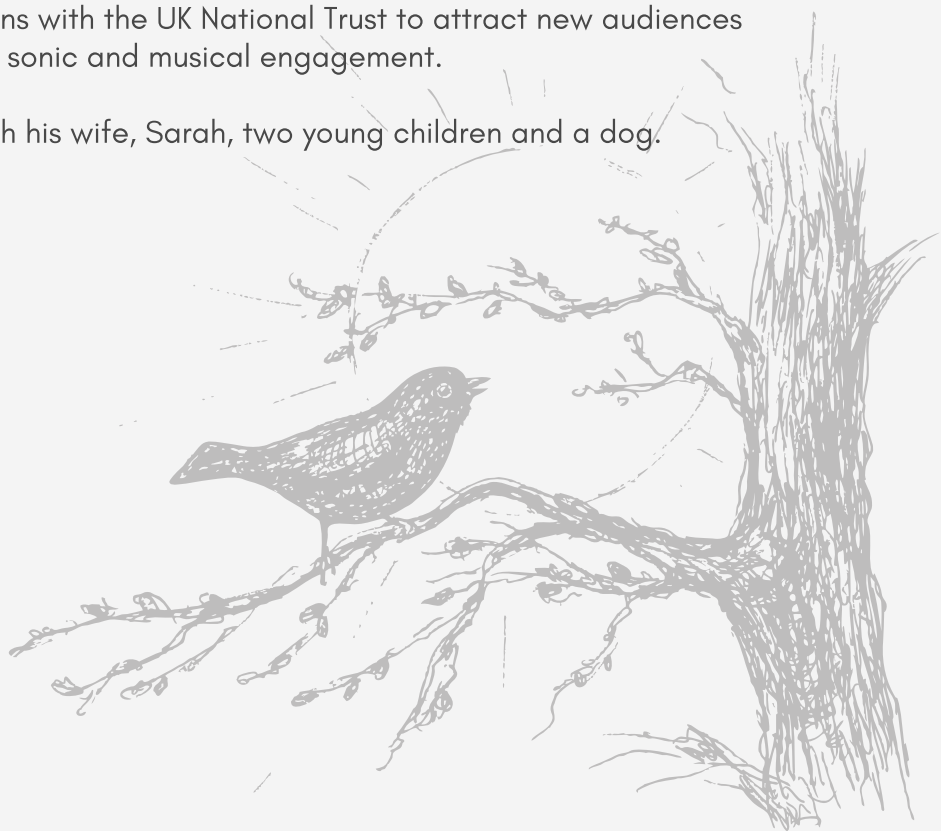
ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTIST

MIKE ROBERTS

Mike Roberts is an award-winning, composer, sound artist and professor with specialisms in electronic, choral and community music. His artistic practice involves sound, music and multi-disciplinary art forms, working in collaboration with local communities, to inspire wonder, creative responses, learning and engagement. He is also Founder and Head of the Electronic & Produced Music Department at the internationally renowned Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London.

Whilst Mike's credits as a composer include commissions for numerous high-profile organisations such as The Jim Henson Organisation, BBC, Barbican and Wigmore Hall, he considers his most important work to be in social engagement – where he specialises in collaborating with diverse groups, enabling them to produce unique songs that focus on the core themes of their communities. Much of this work is with community choirs where he has curated the composition of hundreds of unique musical themes and songs that emerge from the environment he creates to release and enable participant creativity. Most recently, Mike was awarded two separate commissions with the UK National Trust to attract new audiences to the themes of multiple sites through sonic and musical engagement.

Mike lives in South Cambridgeshire with his wife, Sarah, two young children and a dog.



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