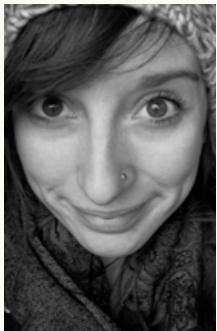


# *Ancient Forest*

Alexandra N Botham

# Forest Soundscape

## Making music in the woods



**Alex Botham.**  
The forest has many sounds; the wind in the trees, the crunch of walking on autumn leaves, rain splashing on leaves, birdsong, running water, a crack of a dry twig trampled and rustling leaves. This is the forest's natural soundscape.

### Introduction

Listen to the soundscape made by Alex and her group as they explore the sounds of the forest using found objects and their voices.

**Music file** Listen to the forest soundscape

**Film file** See how the soundscape was made

### Make your own Forest Soundscape

On the following pages you will find:

- A list of activities to build the piece of music
- Instructions on how to use the score
- The 'Form' – a skeleton structure for the piece
- Sound cards – a set of cards with motifs for each person or group
- A poem, 2 "Rainsongs" and a "Magic Names" sheet
- Audio recordings



Photos: Peter Ralley

## Activities

**Collect "Woodland Treasures"** that you can use to make sounds: rustling leaves, jingly pebbles, tapping stones, scraping bark... Now try using these "Woodland Treasures" to act out the sound cards – which materials sound most like a scurrying mouse or a faery bell?

**Try creating a "Rainsong"** Experiment by tapping the palm of your hand with your fingertips or tapping pebbles together. Does the rain sound more convincing with slow, steady tapping, fast tapping or random tapping?

Now create two contrasting "Rainsongs" (A and B) and fit them into your piece. If you get stuck, you can use the "Rainsongs" provided.

### Experiment with building chords

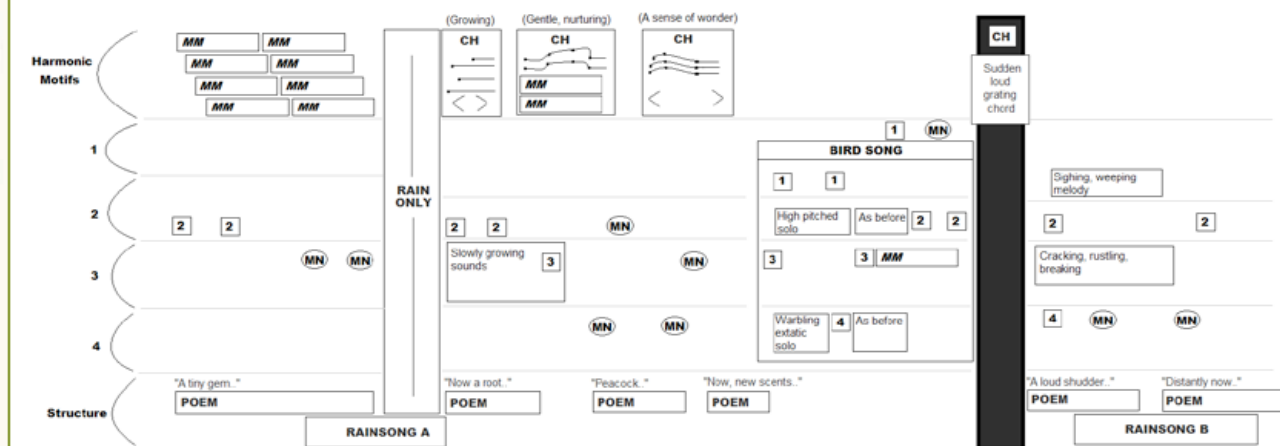
Person 1 begins by singing a long note, then Person 2 can build a different note on top. Experiment by building notes on top of each other in this way to build chords.

The group can create a magical, ghostly effect by starting with a very quiet chord and gradually making it louder.

**Write a "Woodland Treasures" poem** about all of the beautiful treasures in the woodland – the owls that silently drift through the trees like forest spirits, or the tiny acorns, like little gems, precious gathered on the forest floor... Or you can use the poem provided.



**Use the "Magic Names" list** Can you find an old gnarled oak tree, or hear a chiff chaff in the woodland? Each of the animals, plants and insects that you can see and hear around you have scientific Latin names. A lot of these Latin names sound very grand and magical. Look at the "Magic Names" sheet and try to find them in your own woodland – if you can't find them or aren't sure what they are, use a guide to help you.

**Create your "Mystical Melody"** Create a short memorable tune that the whole group can sing. You could also use a tune that you all know (a short line from a Christmas Carol would work very well), or use the example from the audio online.



### Key

- MM** Mystical Melody starts here – create your own or use one from the example audio
- CH** build a chord – see Activity sheet
- MN** insert a name from the Magic Names sheet here – or use one of the Latin names that you discovered yourself.
- POEM** a poem is spoken at this point. This can be done by any person/ group.

-  getting louder
-  getting quieter

### How to use the score:

The Form sheet gives you a basic structure for the piece – it is divided into ‘Harmonic Motifs’, parts 1-4, and a ‘Structure’ that relates to the poem and Rainsongs. The duration of the piece should be roughly between 3 and 5 minutes. The Form follows the outline of a poem – you can use your own or use the poem provided and the quotations on the Form sheet to guide the piece. Use the descriptive words to help guide your music.

The Sound Cards are written for 4 people (or 4 groups). Each person has 9 cards and may choose to use all of them or just one of them. These cards can be separated and used in any order as many times as you like throughout the piece. On the Form sheet, there are specific indications to certain performers where a card should be used (see numbers in square boxes). Each card should take between 1 and 5 seconds to perform each time, but it can be repeated.

The straight and wavy lines on the Sound Cards indicate a rough melody. When the line is at the top of the box, the melody is high and when the line is nearer the bottom, it is low. Use the line as a guide to move between higher and lower notes. You should also use this rule when interpreting the Harmonic Motifs on the Form sheet.

Try out the activities to help you begin work on your piece and don’t forget to look at the ‘Key’ so that you understand what the symbols on the Form sheet mean.



## 2 Rainsongs

Each 'group' must choose a rain sound:

- tapping the palm of your hand with your fingertips
- whispering the word 'puh'
- whispering the word 'duh'
- making a tutting sound
- using pebbles or stones to tap together

There are 4 groups and each group has a line (marked 1, 2, 3, 4). Each '○' represents one rain sound. Listen carefully to the rest of the group.

e.g. In Rainsong 1, after group 1 has made their first rain sound (○), there is a slight pause and then group 2 make a rain sound. Then straight after that, group 3 makes three rain sounds – and so on.

The Rainsongs are split up into 8 boxes to help you to keep track of where you are.

### Rainsong 1

Play this once very slowly.

Repeat 1 – gradually get faster

Repeat 2 – very fast

Repeat 3 – gradually getting slower and quieter

1	○		○	○		○	○	○	○○		○		
2		○		○		○	○	○	○	○○	○	○○○○	○
3			○○○			○○○		○○○○	○		○	○○○○	○
4							○○○		○○○	○	○	○	○○

### Rainsong 2

Play this once quickly

Repeat it a second time very slowly and clearly

1	○					○			○		○
2		○○				○		○			
3			○		○	○○			○		○
4	○	○○○				○	○		○○		○○

## Poem

A tiny gem, still green  
 Buries itself in the gaping earth and is swallowed.  
 The earth knows what to do  
 It calls forth the magic name, "Quercus robur!"  
 The wind whispers the name all night  
 And the rain knocks on the grey earth – wake up!

Now a root, and a stem, and a leaf.  
 Shoots burst upwards, hungry  
 For the light that has warmed the earth's gentle bed.  
 Happily, the sun stretches down  
 To guide the young shoots.

Peacock and Purple, Admiral Red and Lunar Yellow glow  
 With featherless wings, create a dramatic stained glass window.  
 Now new scents of berries and fruits attract  
 A flock of singing acrobats!

A loud shudder in the belly of the earth  
 A nightmare flash that wakes the dreamers  
 The spirit world disappears, and its magic with it.

Burnt fingers of trees bend and snap  
 As the wind tries to stretch them into waking  
 They groan and cry with the gentle drops  
 Of tears that fall from an unwashed sky.

Distantly now, the folks and children drift,  
 The woodland only stares, black and white, scar-faced  
 And aching  
 All colour drained as blood, sapped,  
 All used up. Empty now, and hollow.



# Magic names

Each of the animals, plants and insects that you can see and hear around you have scientific Latin names. A lot of these Latin names sound very grand and magical. Do not worry about the 'correct pronunciation' of these words.

## Trees

English oak	"Quercus robur"
Yew	"Taxus baccata"
Ash	"Fraxinus excelsior"
Crab apple	"Malus silvestris"
Crack willow	"Salix fragilis"
Elder	"Sambucus nigra"
Holly	"Ilex aquifolium"
Silver birch	"Betula pendula"

## Birds

Chiff chaff	"Phylloscopus collybita"
Jay	"Garrulus glandarius"
Nightingale	"Luscinia Megarhynchos"
Nuthatch	"Sitta europaea"
Tawny owl	"Strix aluco"
Great spotted woodpecker	"Dendrocopos major"
Lesser spotter woodpecker	"Dendrocopos minor"
Green woodpecker	"Picus viridis"

## Flowers

Dog rose	"Rosa canina"
Herb Robert (Bloodwort)	"Geranium robertianum"
Wild strawberry	"Fragaria vesca"
Nettle	"Urtica dioica"
Foxglove	"Digitalis purpurea"

## Other animals

Hazel dormouse	"Muscardinus avellonarius"
Badger	"Meles meles"
Grey squirrel	"Sciurus carolinensis"
Long eared bat	"Plecotus auritus"
Grass snake	"Natrix natrix"
Adder (snake)	"Vipera berus"
Slow worm	"Anguis fragilis"
Lizard	"Zootoca vivipara"
Toad	"Bufo bufo"
British pool frog	"Rana lessonae"
Natterjack toad	"Bufo calamita"
Great crested newt	"Triturus cristatus"

## Insects

Garden spider	"Araneus diadematus"
Woodlouse spider	"Dysdera crocata"
Brown hawker dragonfly	"Aeshna grandis"
Blue damselfly	"Enallagma cyathigerum"
Orange and black sexton beetle	"Nicrophorus vespillo"
Peacock butterfly	"Aglais io"
Red admiral butterfly	"Vanessa atlanta"
Purple Emperor butterfly	"Apatura iris"
Small tortoiseshell butterfly	"Aglais urticae"
Goat moth	"Cossus cossus"
Lunar yellow underwing (moth)	"Noctua orbona"

You should just use the Latin words as though they were words in a spell – give the words a sense of magic in the way that you speak them.

# Sound cards

<p>1</p>  <p>“Soo-swee soo-swee soo-swee” (Chiff chaff)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>“<b>Bufo Bufo</b>” croaky, like a toad</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Make a rustling sound that gradually gets louder</p>
<p>1</p>  <p>Low, rumbling sound</p>	<p>1</p> <p>“<b>Aglais io</b>” with a sense of nobility</p>	<p>1</p> <p>COPY a sound that you can hear in the woodland</p>
<p>1</p> <p>Make a sound using Woodland Treasures that you have gathered</p>	<p>1</p> <p>“<b>Vipera berus</b>” in a hissing tone</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Dramatic narration: “Empty now and hollow.”</p>
<p>2</p>  <p>“Wooo, woo-woo-wooo” (Tawny owl)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>“<b>Strix aluco</b>” gently, like an owl</p>	<p>2</p> <p>A soft “ahhh” sound, like a soft, sighing breeze</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Make a nibbling sound, like a squirrel or a mouse</p>	<p>2</p> <p>“<b>Apatura iris</b>” with a sense of nobility</p>	<p>2</p> <p>COPY a sound that someone else is making</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Dramatic narration: “Wake up!”</p>	<p>2</p> <p>“<b>Meles meles</b>” with a low grumble</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Dramatic narration: “Drained as blood, sapped”</p>

<p>3</p>  <p>Warbling, melodic whistle (Nightingale)</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>“Araneus diadematus”</b> whispered, sinister spidery voice</p>	<p>3</p> <p>COPY a sound that someone else is making</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Make a soft hammering sound, like a woodpecker</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>“Vanessa atlanta”</b> with a sense of nobility</p>	<p>3</p> <p>A soft “ahhh” sound, like a soft, sighing breeze</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Dramatic narration: “Happily the sun stretches down”</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>“Cossus cossus”</b> in a whispered voice</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Dramatic narration: “The woodland only stares”</p>
<p>4</p>  <p>Low whistle (Green woodpecker)</p>	<p>4</p> <p><b>“Fraxinus excelsior”</b> croaky, like an old tree</p>	<p>4</p> <p>COPY a sound that you can hear in the woodland</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Dramatic narration: “A tiny gem”</p>	<p>4</p> <p><b>“Noctua orbona”</b> with a sense of nobility</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Make a low creaking sound</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Make a sound using Woodland Treasures that you have gathered</p>	<p>4</p> <p><b>“Natrix natrix”</b> in a hissing tone</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Dramatic narration: “tears that fall from an unwashed sky.”</p>

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## Edits to Ancient Forest materials

### Ancient Forest

#### *Notes for teachers and group leaders*

This soundscape is suitable for **anyone** of **any age** or **musical ability**. This is a starting point, feel free to **choose** which parts of the pack you use.

#### **Learning objectives:**

- *“This tree was seventy years old!” “What is an acorn?”*  
This activity pack aims to **encourage** groups to discover special things about the woodland for themselves.  
Teachers and group leaders might use the pack as an extension of classroom activities whilst students are learning about the **lifecycle** of plants, **food chains, biodiversity**...  
Teachers working with music groups will find these activities useful for those starting to compose and for students who are more advanced composers.
- *“We need to **protect** our woodlands.”*  
This activity pack has a conservation message and aims to help groups to discover why the woodlands are important places to them.
- *Woodland memories*  
The activity pack is designed to be a different creative experience that is treasured by the group.

#### **Useful skills:**

- **Teamwork**  
The group are encouraged to discuss their ideas together, developing the musical ideas and writing expressive poems.
- **Leadership**  
Activities like ‘building chords’ offer an opportunity for the group to have a go at conducting each other. The chords can be built up as someone in the group points to the next person to sing, or a person can direct the dynamic of a chord (how loud or quiet it is) simply by raising and lowering their hand.
- **Creative thinking**  
Each activity demands that the group contribute their own ideas to shape the piece; from talking about things that they think are special about the woodland, to thinking about how to make croaky toad noises and rain sounds!
- **Confidence building**  
This activity pack is designed so that **anyone** can take part and everyone’s contribution is valued. Music teachers might like to use the activities as an informal session for students who are learning to compose.

#### **Helpful resources:**

- Guide book about plants and animals

#### **Key words:**

Conservation, plants, animals, composing, play, creativity, investigation, student-led.



## 2 Rainsongs

Each 'group' must choose a rain sound:

- tapping the palm of your hand with your fingertips
- whispering the word 'puh'
- whispering the word 'duh'
- making a tutting sound
- using pebbles or stones to tap together

There are 4 groups and each group has a line (marked 1, 2, 3, 4). Each 'o' represents one rain sound. Listen carefully to the rest of the group.

e.g. In Rainsong A, after group 1 has made their first rain sound ('o'), there is a slight pause and then group 2 make a rain sound then straight after that, group 3 makes three rain sounds – and so on.

The Rainsongs are split up into 8 boxes to help you to keep track of where you are.

### Rainsong A

Play this once very slowly.

Repeat 1 – gradually get faster

Repeat 2 – very fast

Repeat 3 – gradually getting slower and quieter

<b>1</b>	o	o	o	o	o	oo	o
<b>2</b>	o	o	o	o	o o	o oo	o ooo
<b>3</b>	ooo	ooo	oooo	o	o ooo	o	
<b>4</b>				ooo	ooo	o o o	oo

### Rainsong B

Play this once quickly

Repeat it a second time very slowly and clearly

<b>1</b>	o			o		o	o
<b>2</b>	oo			o	o		
<b>3</b>	o		o	oo		o	o
<b>4</b>	o	ooo		o	o	oo	oo

