

**4K** **ATTENBOROUGH'S  
WONDER OF SONG**

**1 x 50 min.** Written and directed by **Mike Birkhead**

**4K, 5.1 and Stereo** Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler**



**TERRA MATER**  
Factual Studios

**T**he unexpected story of Earth's great animal orchestra—join us and David Attenborough for the natural world's finest concert seasons! Meet warbling whales, crooning cuckoos, singing gibbons, wailing wolves and some belting birds that are starting a singing revolution about to change everything we think we know about song.

### **THE SONG REVOLUTION**

Darwin believed that all animals—humans and non-humans—were capable of music and that it had a clear biological basis. But today, scientists are making unexpected discoveries that are shattering long-held Darwinian ideas. This programme looks at the natural history of song: what we know, what we thought we knew, and the unexpected science turning it all on head!

### **DAVID AND THE MESSIAH**

If there's one thing that might just match Attenborough's love of nature, it's the pleasure he derives from the music of Handel. As he listens to the choir of St Paul's Cathedral sing the Messiah, we learn about his love of song. But do other animals share musicality with humans? As we move through the singing seasons, we'll explore the evolutionary origins of music.

### **WHERE SONG BEGAN**

Australia's vast forests of bird-pollinated trees are the place where it all began. Here, all our birds' ancestors burst into song 45 million years ago. The explosive phrases of pied butcher birds like jazz flautists playing in the treetops; bright flocks of lorikeets

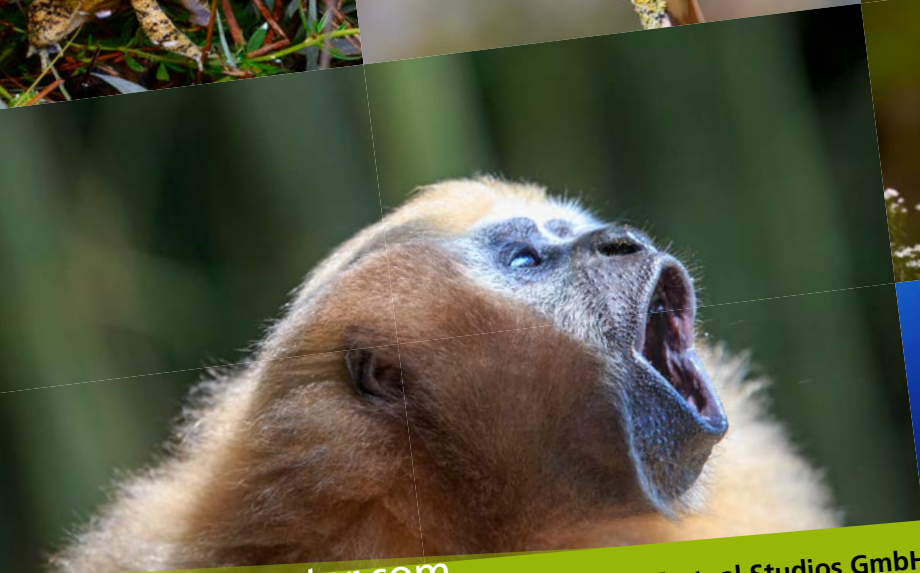
flickering past that roar like sports crowds; brainy, playful, American magpies and their curlicues of rich, melodic sound, and most of all, the astonishing lyrebirds. Birds are the singers that science thinks it knows the most about. But is that so?

### **THE UNSUNG HEROINES**

Today, however, we are beginning to understand that everything that underpins what we know about birdsong might be wrong. Now, scientists are discovering that females too have astoundingly complex voices. After decades of research into the males' song, it is now the female in the spotlight. They too are mimics and can copy the beating of bird wings and sound of tree branches rubbing together. They imitate the calls of predators to keep their clutch safe. These findings have started a revolution in our understanding of why, and how, birds sing.

### **THE SOUND OF SILENCE**

Just as we are beginning to understand the secrets of song, it is disappearing. Attenborough will ask some of the greatest sound recordists in the world to play him soundscapes recorded in specific landscapes in which he has filmed in the past and also ones recorded now to see how the natural world is growing more silent. Many of the animals that do remain are having to sing louder to make themselves heard in a noisier, more disparate world. Now that we understand what song is and how great mysteries are still being revealed, it perhaps makes the song of the great animal choirs of the world seem even more precious.



**NATURE**

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