



Cloudgazing

British composer **Jonathan Harvey** was inspired to compose *Cirrus Light* by watching summer clouds in the sky from his wheelchair. He said:



'The cirrus clouds, which are so high, well formed and slow changing, were often illuminated by a beautiful light. The clarinet searches the sky for them.'

You can listen to *Cirrus Light* using the link below:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1x6QLHUDsIHcUeI4zRrwnY>

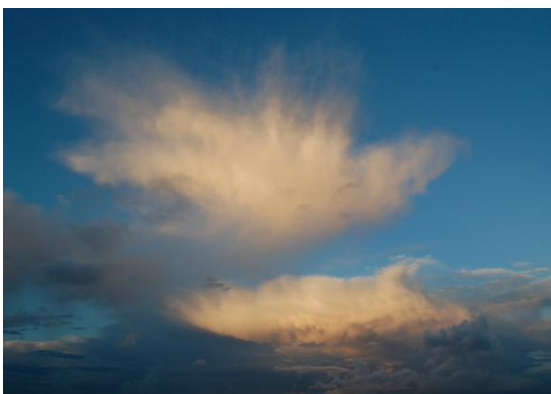
The piece, composed for solo clarinet, is made up from just **5 distinct and contrasting musical ideas** which are varied and transformed:

- A muttering semi quaver figure in the low register
- 'Other-worldly' high long notes with glissandi in between
- Bird like' chirps which leap around
- Repeated notes using alternative fingerings
- An 'almost toneless' figure, sometimes slow sometimes fast

You can listen to examples of these musical ideas on the resources website:

<http://resources.bcmg.org.uk/creating-music-at-home-instrumentalists/clouds> . All excerpts are performed by BCMG clarinettist Jack McNeill.

Your turn!



Find a relaxing spot and do some **cloud gazing** of your own! **Notice** the shapes of the clouds and how they change colour and shape over time.

Take **photos** or **film** them, try **sketching** or **painting** them. Take **multiple** photos to show how they **change over time**.

You could try to **identify** the clouds and give them their proper names. For help with this you can download the BBC's Cloud Spotting Guide here:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/tv/greatbritishweather/cloudspottingguide.pdf>

Make a collection of your 3 or 4 favourite clouds. You might want to do this over a few days to make a **contrasting** selection. If you are stuck or there are no clouds(!) you could try using some from the resource GALLERY or find some on the internet.

How can you **describe** each cloud using your musical instrument? **Create a musical idea** for each cloud. Think about:

- The overall musical **shape**
- How **loud** or **quiet** the sound will be
- Is it a **fast** or **slow** idea?
- What **kind of sound** on your instrument it could be - trills, airy, bowed, plucked, flutter tongue, harmonic...?

Now think about the **different ways clouds change and transform** over time.



You could use this SEQUENCE for inspiration.

Think about how clouds:

- Gradually **change** from one **shape** to another
- Change **colour** with the changing light
- **Move** further apart or closer together
- **Grow** in size
- **Break** apart
- **Merge** with other clouds

How can you **show the changes** musically by **transforming** or **developing** your musical cloud ideas? Now **organise** your different clouds and their transformations into a **final** piece.

Send your music to learning@bcmg.org.uk