



# Why Birds Sing: A Journey Into the Mystery of Birdsong

*David Rothenberg*

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The astonishing richness of birdsong is both an aesthetic and a scientific mystery. Evolutionists have never been able to completely explain why birdsong is so inventive and why many species devote so many hours to singing. The standard explanations of defending territories and attracting mates don't begin to account for the variety and energy that the commonest birds exhibit. Is it possible that birds sing because they like to? This seemingly naive explanation is starting to look more and more like the truth. *Why Birds Sing* is a lyric exploration of birdsong that blends the latest scientific research with a deep understanding of musical beauty and form. Drawing on conversations with neuroscientists, ecologists, and composers, it is the first book to investigate the elusive question of why birds sing and what their song means to both avian and human ears. Whether playing his clarinet with the whitecrested laughing thrush in Pittsburgh, or jamming in the Australian winter breeding grounds of the Albert's lyrebird, Rothenberg immerses himself in the heart and soul of birdsong. He approaches the subject as a naturalist, philosopher, musician, and investigator. An intimate look at the most lovely of natural phenomena, *Why Birds Sing* is a beautifully written exploration of a phenomenon that's at once familiar and profoundly alien.

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