

Classical Music Lovers B

11 April 2024 – Presented by Carol Chetwynd

The Natural World

I originally thought to divide my presentation into the four elements of Ancient Greece: Earth, Air, Fire and Water which classified the material world. However fire became a bit of a problem so I have brought them up to date and classified the Natural World as: **Animals, Land, Water and Plants**

Lets begin with Animals ...

1. Rimsky Korsakov - Russian – One of the Five (Mussorgsky, Borodin who worked together to create a distinct national style of classical music) written as an orchestral interlude (so stage crew could scene changes) for his opera The Tale of Tsar Saltan. Evokes the seemingly chaotic and rapidly changing flying pattern of a bumblebee. Military background.

[Flight of the Bumblebee - Canadian Brass \(youtube.com\)](#) 2.24

2. Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky – Wealthy military and wealthy family. One of 7 children. Very close to his mother who died when he was 14. Trained as a lawyer and worked in the Russian Civil Service. Swan Lake was initially a failure but now most popular. Derived from Russian and German folk tales. **Swan lake theme by Stjepan Hauser:**

[HAUSER - Swan Lake \(youtube.com\)](#) 2.55

3. Camille Saint – Saens - French composer, organist, conductor and pianist. No previous career straight into music – musical prodigy. Concert debut aged 10.

Lang-Lang - Chinese, most accomplished classical musician of modern times (United Nations). “Lang-Lang”effect! Married to Gina Redlinger (Korean/German parents) also an accomplished pianist. One child.

[Lang Lang - Saint-Saëns: Carnival of the Animals: Aquarium \(youtube.com\)](#) 2.27

4. Ralph Vaughan Williams – English composer. Works include operas, ballets, chamber music, secular and religious pieces. Trained as a violinist as a boy and much preferred it to the piano. **The Lark Ascending**- Inspired by a poem by George Meredith of the same name.

*For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup
And he the wine which overflows
to lift us with him as he goes.*

Played by an American violinist Hilary Hahn, a product of the Suzuki Program. Also fluent in four languages English, German, French, Japanese.

[Hilary Hahn - V. Williams "The Lark Ascending" \(youtube.com\)](#) 15.36

5. Camille Saint – Saens - French. Musical prodigy. Enjoyed perfect pitch. Fluent in Latin, Greek. **Carnival of the Animals**: Written for private performance, he prohibited public performance during his lifetime as he considered it too frivolous! Published year after his death and became his most famous work.

Royal March of the Lion:

[Marin Alsop--Saint-Saens: Carnival of the Animals, I. Introduction&Royal March of the Lion \(youtube.com\)](#) 1.56

The Aviary:

[10/14 Schumann Duoplays Aviary from Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals \(youtube.com\)](#) 1.11

Now We Move To Water ...

6. Franz Schubert - Austrian composer. Aged 31 when he died but managed to compose, 600 vocal works, seven symphonies, four operas and a large amount of piano and chamber music.

Jacqueline du Pre - Regarded as one of the greatest cellists of all time. Diagnosed with MS at 28 she died 14 years later aged 42. Married Daniel Barenboim and converted to Judaism. Assisted suicide?

Daniel Barenboim - Argentinian born Jew. Re married 1988. Two sons. Gave his first formal concert in Buenos Aires aged 7. Conducted first performance in Israel of Wagner's music in 2000.

[DuPré, Perlman, Barenboim, Mehta, Zukerman: Schubert -Piano-Quintet "Trout" in A Major, D.667 \(youtube.com\)](#) 8.29

7. George Handel - German British composer. **Water Music** - First played on July 17, 1717 . George I went for an excursion on the royal barge upstream from Whitehall to Chelsea. A barge with 50 musicians followed him. Played three times on round trip. Rumoured that it was composed to help the king refocus attention on him and away from his son and heir who was much more in the public eye with his lavish parties.

[Handel Water Music Suite No 2 in D Dur The Bach Orchestra of the Netherlands \(youtube.com\)](#) 10.37

8. Andre Rieu - Dutch - Conductor of the Johann Strauss orchestra created in 1987. Speaks six languages. Plays a 1667 Stradivarius violin. **Blue Danube**. Johann Strauss the Second – Austrian. A waltz composed in 1866. Also has words but not very often sung. Unofficial national anthem of Austria.

[André Rieu - The Beautiful Blue Danube \(youtube.com\)](#) 8.13

Now We Move to Land ...

9. Edvard Grieg - Norwegian - Used Norwegian folk music in his compositions. Ill health throughout his life – lung diseases, pleurisy, TB. His wife died after 2 years of marriage. Wrote Peer Gynt suite which Chronicles the journey of its title character from the Norwegian mountains to the Sahara Desert. Peer Gynt comes across the mountain king, a troll, who offers to make him a troll too. Part of this is In the Hall of the Mountain King. Became a staple in film.

[Edvard Grieg: In the Hall of the Mountain King // Nicolò Foron & London Symphony Orchestra \(youtube.com\)](#) 2.28

10. Gustav Holst – English composer played the trombone professionally. Conducted with his left hand because of neuritis in right hand. **The Planet Suite** – Each movement is named after a planet and its supposed astrological character:

- **Jupiter** – the bringer of jollity - characterises abundance of life and vitality. Used as the melody for the patriotic hymn, “*I vow to thee my country*”.
- **Mars** - Bringer of war
- **Venus** – the bringer of peace
- **Mercury** – the winged messenger
- **Saturn** – the bringer of old age
- **Uranus** – the magician
- **Neptune** the mystic.

(Pluto was not discovered then (1916) and has since been downgraded to a dwarf planet)

[The Planets - IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity - Gustav Holst \(youtube.com\)](#) 7.19

11. Antonio Vivaldi - Italian, seventeenth/eighteenth century composer. As we know a lot of his music was written for the all female music ensemble from a home for abandoned children. Died in poverty. **Four Seasons**: Written early in his career. Wrote to accompany sonnets supposedly also written by Vivaldi. Autumn :

*The hunters emerge at the new dawn,
And with horns and dogs and guns depart upon their hunting
The beast flees and they follow its trail;
Terrified and tired of the great noise
Of guns and dogs, the beast, wounded, threatens Languidly to flee, but harried, dies.*

[Vivaldi Four Seasons: Autumn.](#) 11.54

12. Frederick Chopin - Polish composer and pianist. Wrote primarily for piano. Poor health 39 when died. Musical family. Sometime lover of George Sand (Lucile Dupin)

[Frédéric Chopin - Spring Waltz \(youtube.com\)](#) 4.53

Now We Move To Plants ...

13. Clement Leo Delibes - French – Best known for ballet Coppelia and the opera Lakme. Born into a musical family. Lakme set in British India mid nineteenth century. Love story on the lines of Romeo and Juliet. **Flower Duet** between Lakme and her servant Mallika gathering flowers by the river.

[Flower Duet \(Lakme, Delibes\) — Olga Peretyatko & Elina Garanča \(youtube.com\)](#) 8.07

14. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The Nutcracker -- Adaptation of a story by Alexandre Dumas which explains how a prince was turned into a nutcracker. Music used in several films. This particular dance is one of several that takes place in the kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy who welcomes Clara and her Nutcracker prince. Composed in 1892.

[George Balanchine's The Nutcracker - Waltz of the Flowers \(youtube.com\)](#) 6.20

15. Kate Emily Barkley Moss – British singer, violinist and composer. Pseudo folk song.

Floral Dance. Written in 1912 after a visit to the Cornish town of Helston. Yearly celebration to honour Flora the Roman goddess of flora and fauna. She wrote both music and lyrics.

[Dads Army. Cornish Floral Dance. \(youtube.com\)](#) 11.00