



Smithsonian Associates

Music Inspired by the Natural World

DR. RACHEL FRANKLIN, SMITHSONIAN ASSOCIATES

JUNE 7 Creatures of the Earth and Sky

The depiction of living creatures is one of the most delightful but challenging aspects of the composer's craft. Is it necessary to attempt a literal copy of an animal's call and, if not, what musical device could successfully invoke the sound? Such works as Dvorak's "American" string quartet, Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of the Animals" suite, Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending" and Rimsky Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumble Bee" are among many examples in our enchanting menagerie.

Works explored, media used:

Larks on a Scottish Beach

Antonin Dvořák, 1841-1904: String Quartet No. 12, Op. 96, "The American", 1893

- Škampa Quartet

Dvořák, String Quintet, Op. 97, 1893

- Škampa Quartet, Krzysztof Chorzelski

Georg Frederick Handel, 1685-1759: *Sweet Bird* from his oratorio “L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato” HWV 55, 1740

- Amanda Forsythe, Emi Ferguson & Voices of Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irco0KyYLBk>

Enrique Granados, 1867-1916 : *The Maiden and the Nightingale* (la maja y el ruiseñor) from “Goyescas”, Op. 11, 1911

- Alicia de Larrocha

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9IAaB02SxU>

Olivier Messaien, 1908-1992: Talking about the song thrush

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkKrD9knBvU>

Messaien: *La Grive Musicienne* from “Petites esquisses d'oiseaux” , 1985

- Peter Hill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hsR3i15gJM>

Toru Takemitsu, 1930-1996: *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*, 1977

- Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2JoZ3FR32c>

Einojuhani Rautavaara, 1928-2016: *Cantus Arcticus*, 1972

- NDR Youth Symphony Orchestra, Stefan Geiger

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCtpGQWtgbQ>

Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958: *The Lark Ascending*, 1914-1921

- Iona Brown, Neville Marriner, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbFi85piaEg>

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, 1844-1908: *Flight of the Bumblebee*, from “The Tale of Tzar Sultan”, 1900

- Mikhail Pletnyev, Russian National Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgLODq5URUo>

Edvard Grieg, 1843-1907: *Butterfly*, from Lyric Pieces Op. 43, No. 1, 1886

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921): *Carnival of the Animals*, 1886. Published 1922

- Sheku Kanneh-Mason, family & friends

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGFW5UqeFil&t=201s>

Aaron Copland, 1900-1990: *The Cat and the Mouse*, 1920

- Aaron Copland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyYjLelm0Ew>

Compilation of arias by Rossini and others : *Duetto buffo di due gatti*, 1825

- Kiri Te Kanawa & Norma Burrows

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNyR6rsGDyg>

George Gershwin, 1899-1937: *Promenade – Walking the Dog*, from the film “Shall We Dance”, 1937

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcBK5pqsijl>