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Hey there! Thanks for joining me for episode 43 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I am delighted to have you here with me today. Today's episode is brought to you by my Busy Preschoolers Do Music course, which is my play-based, interactive course for the youngest musicians in your house. You can learn more about that course at busykidsdopiano.com/busypreschoolers, and I'll also place that link in the show notes as well.

Where I live in the Southeast United States, springtime is underway. If I sit on my porch in the evenings, I can hear a chorus of loud insects -- buzzing bees, chirping crickets and singing cicadas. Maybe where you live you, too, have a chorus of musical insects that chirp and buzz all around you at certain times of the year. Many composers have been inspired by these singing insects and written musical pieces that imitate their sounds. Today, we're going to learn about 3 songs that are inspired by insects. Let's see if you can guess which insect inspired the first song we're going to learn about...

The piece you're listening to now is a famous tune by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov called "The Flight of the Bumble Bee." It has been transcribed for just about every orchestral instrument there is, so be sure to check out this week's playlists to see lots of different arrangements of this famous song. The piece was composed by Rimsky-Korsakov as an orchestral interlude during his opera. The bee in this piece never slows down in her flight, but gets faster and faster and more energetic! The original instruments used in the piece were those of a full symphonic orchestra, including tubas, trombones, trumpets, horns, bassoons, clarinets, flutes a piccolo, cellos, violas, violins

The piece is played during the opera when a magic swan-bird changes a prince into a bumblebee so that he can fly off and catch up with a ship he is chasing. This piece is still wildly popular and you will hear it used in commercials, video games, movies -- just about anywhere and everywhere music can be used!

Buzzing bees also inspired a piece by Frederic Chopin -- the second movement of his Etude in F Minor.

This bee sounds a bit less frantic than the bee in Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestra. She is, perhaps, more soft-spoken and just flying along, minding her own business. We learned about Frederic Chopin a few episodes ago, and so you might remember that he composed especially for the piano. Chopin didn't actually give this piece the nickname "The Bees" -- it was given by a publisher after he wrote it. This piece is incredibly challenging to play on the piano because the rhythm in the left hand and the right hand work against each other in a really complicated pattern. This piece is in a minor key, and minor keys are sometimes associated with sad or scary sounding music. But you'll notice this piece is actually quite light and playful.

Our final song for today is all about a tiny nuisance of an insect -- the flea.

This piece is called "The Song of the Flea" and it is written by Russian Composer Modest Mussorgsky. In this satirical story, a king keeps a flea at court, and dresses it up in lavish clothes and gives it a position of honor. The flea invites all its relatives to join him at the king's court. Despite the fact that he and his friends bite everyone, no one dares to kill the fleas or complain about them to the king.

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Mussorgsky originally composed this piece for a soprano to sing, but it has been sung by bass singers -- the singers of the opera who sing in low, deep tones. When you check out this episode's playlist, you'll see the translation of the Russian text appear below the clips of this performance. Be sure to read the words to this silly song.

Be sure to head over to my show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/43 You will not want to miss the link to this episode's curated playlist, where you can check out many different performances and interpretations of the songs we discussed in this episode. Again you can find that at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/43.

I hope you've enjoyed listening to and learning about these 3 insect-inspired works of art in this episode. I look forward to connecting with you again in 2 weeks on the Busy Kids Love Music podcast. Bye for now!