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Welcome, busy kids and music lovers, to another exciting episode of Busy Kids Love Music! I'm your host Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy kids Do Piano, and today we're embarking on a celestial journey in anticipation of the 2024 Solar Eclipse. In this two-part series, we'll explore classical compositions inspired by the sun and the moon.

Our first stop is the radiant world of the sun. The sun has been a muse for many composers throughout history, and today, we'll delve into three remarkable pieces that capture the essence of this celestial body.

Our first selection is Richard Strauss's Alpine Symphony. This monumental tone poem takes us on a musical expedition through the breathtaking Alpine landscape. So why include Alpine Symphony in a podcast about the sun? Well, the Alpine Symphony vividly depicts a sunrise, with Strauss skillfully crafting musical images that mirror the awe-inspiring moment when the sun bathes the mountain peaks in golden light. This particular movement in the symphony starts during night fall. Can you hear when the “night” music changes into the “sunrise” music? Strauss used one of the largest orchestras ever assembled during his 1915 symphony performance and the sun is depicted by a particularly strong brass section. Doesn't it have an overwhelming effect?

Can you hear the shimmering strings and the majestic brass? It's as if the sun itself is rising over the horizon, casting its warmth and brilliance across the world. Now you might be wondering what a “tone poem” is. A tone poem, also known as a symphonic poem, is a form of orchestral music that tells a story or creates a specific mood, image, or atmosphere. Strauss's Alpine Symphony is a splendid musical representation of the sun's power and beauty.

Now, let's shift our focus to another brilliant work, Joseph Haydn's String Quartets Op. 20, often referred to as the 'Sun' quartets.

Haydn, known as the "Father of the Symphony" and "Father of the String Quartet," composed this set of six string quartets with innovative flair. They came to be known as the "Sun" quartets because the cover of the first printed edition featured an illustration of a rising sun. But don't you also think the first violin part has some sunburst-like motifs in this quartet?

"What is a string quartet?" you ask. Well, imagine a musical team of four awesome players – two violins, a viola, and a cello – coming together to create a magical sound adventure. This fantastic group is called a string quartet! Picture the first violin leading with a melody like the hero of the story, the second violin adding harmony as a trusty sidekick, the viola filling in with cool middle notes, and the cello providing a strong and low foundation. It's like a musical family having a super fun conversation with their instruments.

Haydn's 'Sun' quartets are a testament to the composer's creativity and playfulness. The lively and radiant character of these quartets captures the spirit of the sun, making them a delightful addition to our solar-themed journey.

Our final destination for this episode is Carl Nielsen's Helios Overture. Nielsen, a Danish composer, drew inspiration from Greek mythology for this piece. Helios, the sun god, is vividly brought to life in the surging orchestral waves of this overture.

Nielsen's Helios Overture is a dynamic and energetic portrayal of the sun's journey across the sky. The swirling orchestration and triumphant melodies convey the powerful radiance of Helios as he drives his chariot across the heavens.

If you head to this episode's show notes at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/119](https://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/119), you'll find a link to this episode's playlist, featuring performances of the 3 pieces inspired by the sun that we explored in today's episode. Again that link is at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/119](https://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/119).

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That concludes our first episode of the Solar Eclipse series, exploring classical songs inspired by the sun. I hope you enjoyed this musical journey through the cosmos. Stay tuned for the next episode where we'll explore compositions inspired by the mysterious and enchanting moon. That episode will air in 2 weeks right here on the Busy Kids Love Music podcast.

As always, thank you for joining me for musical discoveries. Don't forget to subscribe to the podcast on your favorite listening platform, and if you have any favorite sun-inspired classical pieces, share them with me on social media! Until next time, keep listening, keep learning, and keep loving music! Bye for now!