

transcript.

Hello, and welcome to Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for kids and families that celebrates the composers, instruments, and stories of classical music. I'm Carly, the creator of the Busy Kids Do Piano program, and I'm so glad you're joining me today for a brand-new episode that feels just right for this time of year.

Here in the United States, we often say, "April showers bring May flowers." Have you heard that phrase before? It's a way of reminding ourselves that the rainy days of April are leading us into the beauty of springtime blooms.

So, with those rainy April days in mind, today's episode is called "April Showers," and we're going to explore three classical pieces that capture the sound and feeling of rain.

Grab your rain boots, maybe a cozy blanket, and let's dive in!

The beautiful piano piece you're listening to was composed by Frédéric Chopin, a composer we've talked about previously on the podcast, and it's one of his most famous works. You may have heard this music as background in movies or even in video games. People call it the "Raindrop Prelude" because, if you listen closely, you'll hear a note – Ab – repeating over and over again, almost like the steady drip, drip, drip of raindrops falling.

Legend has it that Chopin wrote this piece while staying at an old monastery during a storm. He kept hearing the sound of rain hitting the roof, and some people believe that inspired this music.

Chopin wrote 24 preludes for the piano, covering all major and minor keys. When you listen to his "Raindrop" prelude, can you hear how the rain seems to grow heavier, almost like a thunderstorm is passing through? And then, just as quickly, it quiets back down to a gentle sprinkle.

transcript.

Have you ever been caught in a sudden spring rainstorm? One minute you're outside having fun, and the next minute the sky opens up and you're getting soaked!

That's exactly the feeling Claude Debussy gives us with his piece called "Gardens in the Rain." The music moves fast and playfully, almost like the wind is swirling around you while the rain falls in all directions. Let's have a listen...

We've talked about Claude Debussy on the podcast before, so you may remember that he is a French composer. What's really fun about this piece is that hidden inside the music are little snippets of old French nursery rhymes. So it's like being in a magical garden where the rain is dancing, and songs from your childhood are drifting through the air.

How do you think Debussy's "rain" sounds differ from Chopin's? I think the rainstorm in Debussy's music sounds more hectic and aggressive than Chopin's. What differences do you notice?

For our last rainy piece today, we're traveling into the world of modern music with a composer named Eric Whitacre. He wrote a piece called "Cloudburst," and it's like taking a musical journey straight through a thunderstorm!

At the start of the piece, the music feels quiet and calm, as if the clouds are just starting to gather. But as it goes on, the storm arrives! You'll hear voices whispering, fingers snapping, hands clapping, and instruments rumbling to create the sounds of raindrops, wind, and thunder.

It's such a cool example of how composers can use not only instruments, but even the human voice and body, to make the sounds of nature come to life.

transcript.

When you listen, close your eyes and imagine standing outside as the first drops begin to fall... and then the big, loud cloudburst comes pouring down!

So, whether it's a quiet sprinkle, a surprise storm, or just the gentle drip of raindrops on the roof, these composers found ways to bring the sounds of April showers to life through music. I hope the next time you're listening to the rain outside your window, you'll think of Chopin, Debussy, and Whitacre—and maybe even hum a little melody inspired by the weather.

I've created a playlist on YouTube of a few different performances of all 3 of these pieces of music so that you can listen to them in their entirety as you go about your week. You'll find that playlist linked in the show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/147.

Thanks for joining me for today's episode of Busy Kids Love Music. I'll be back in two weeks with another brand new episode to share more musical adventures. Until then, keep listening to and learning about the music all around you. Bye for now!