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Hey there and welcome to episode 63 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so happy you're joining me today. Our episode today is brought to you by my Busy Preschoolers Do Music course, which is my introductory course for the littlest learners that's filled with play-based activities as we explore musical concepts together. We just released Part 3 of the Busy Preschoolers course, and I'd love for you to check it out – it's my most popular piano lesson course and it's such a fun way to get your little ones going with music instruction. You'll find out all the details about the course at busykidsdopiano.com/busypreschoolers, and I'll link to it in the show notes as well.

On our last episode, we kicked off a new, 3-part composer series on George Frideric Handel. We learned a little bit about his life and background and musical style. In today's episode – part 2 of the series – we're going to listen to and learn about one of his most famous creations – Music for the Royal Fireworks.

We learned in our last episode that Handel spent part of his career under contract of King George of Great Britain. The Music for the Royal Fireworks is a suite that he wrote during that time, to celebrate the end of a war and the signing of a treaty in 1748. A suite is a form of music that is a collection of different movements that are typically in the same key. The music Handel wrote for the occasion would be part of the most spectacular fireworks show that Europe had ever seen. Handel was 64 years old when he composed it, and it would be the last orchestral work he would compose during his lifetime.

The majestic overture – the opening movement – is what you're listening to now. There was a bit of a stand-off between the King and Handel over the instruments that would be used in this grand occasion. Handel originally planned for a traditional orchestra of strings, winds and percussion. The King, however, insisted that

nly “war-like” instruments should be used – meaning, an orchestra without strings. There was quite a back-and-forth exchange with a mediator trying to smooth things out between them, and Handel finally gave in to the King’s wishes at the last minute.

The creator of the fireworks display for the occasion designed a fireworks machine that was 114 feet high and 410 feet long – and took 5 months to build. There were over 10,000 rockets used in the fireworks display. As you can imagine, a lot of time and money was spent to ensure this fireworks display was a grand event.

Over 12,000 people came to hear the full music rehearsal, which was a public event, six days before the firework show. There were so many people that it caused a three-hour traffic jam of horses and buggies on the London Bridge.

The fireworks show itself was not quite what its creators had envisioned. It rained, causing some fireworks to light slowly. In the middle of the show, a pavilion caught fire, and a stray rocket set fire to a woman’s clothes. Other fireworks burned two soldiers and blinded a third. At midnight, the display was stopped, though many fireworks had been unused. The biggest success of the evening? Handel’s music.

Though Handel had removed the stringed instruments to satisfy King George, he re-scored the suite for full orchestra when the music was next performed a month later. After Handel’s death, Mozart would call this work a “spectacle of English pride and joy.” The work is in five movements, with the overture containing the bulk of the music, followed by four smaller, more intricate movements.

You’ll often hear this music as background for – you guessed it – fireworks displays, and it’s also often performed by symphony orchestras and used in weddings. When you head over to this episode/s show notes at [buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/64](https://www.buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/64), you’ll have a chance to see some fireworks displays that have been choreographed to this music

transcript.

and also listen to other arrangements of the various movements of the Music for the Royal Fireworks on the YouTube playlist I've compiled for you. Again, you'll find the link to that at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/64.

Thanks so much for joining me today to learn about Handel's Royal Fireworks. I look forward to connecting with you again in 2 weeks on the podcast, when we finish up our series on Handel with part 3. Bye for now!