

Jealous female birds drown out flirting males

Biologists have discovered that female birds change the way they sing to drown out their male partners and prevent them from flirting with other females.

It is proof that males everywhere can fall victim to female jealousy.

Researchers from Oxford University discovered that warbling antbirds, which form life-long partnerships in the tropical forests of South America where they are found, normally sing duets to mark their territory.

But when single females in the area sing in an attempt to attract a mate, the paired females change the volume and pattern of their song so that it "jams" any response from their male partner.

The males, however, which became excited when they heard the song of the lone female, responded by changing their songs to avoid this interference from their mates.

The researchers believe their findings provide an insight into how animals have evolved duets and may even shed light on the origins of dance and music in humans.

Dr Nathalie Seddon, a zoologist at Oxford University who has just been awarded a L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science award for her work, said that the birds in partnerships compete to be heard, leading to innovative changes in their songs.

She said: "Males and females in the Amazon forest tend to pair for life, so they tend to produce songs in duets to defend their territories."

"A females will jam the notes of the male's song if they hear a single female in the area while the male attempts to interject another song so they can be heard in a kind of acoustic battle."

Dr Seddon and her colleague Dr Joseph Tobias conducted their research by tracking 17 pairs of antbirds in the Peruvian rainforest. By playing each couple the songs of a rival pair or the song a single female, they were then able to record how they reacted.

When faced with a rival pair, the couple responded together in a precise and co-ordinated duet, but when they heard a single female, the duet broke down as the paired females attempted to block out the calls of their partners.

Dr Tobias said: "Single females are a threat to paired females because they increase the likelihood that males will cheat on their existing partner or abandon them for a new one. We know that divorce is common in antbirds."

Dr Seddon has also discovered that different species of birds can share the same "language" to allow them to communicate with each other. She has found that males in separate species of antbirds will use identical songs to warn off males in other species to protect food sources.

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The Island

LEISURELAND

by Renuka Jeya Raj

Music lovers will enjoy an evening of grand ceremonial music at the Camerata Musica performance of Handel's 4 Coronation Anthems and Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, on Saturday, 25 July at St. Michael's Church Colombo 03 (known as the "Gal Palliya") at 7 pm. The concert will be conducted by Lalanath de Silva, and Asitha Tennekoon will be the Chorus Master. Peshali Yapa and Kumudini David will be the soloists in the Pergolesi.

The Coronation Anthems were the composer Handel's first commission as a citizen of the quite newly formed "United Kingdom of Great Britain". It was written for the crowning of Duke Georg August of Hanover (Germany) as King George II on 11 October 1727. The set is scored for chorus (in as much as seven parts) and orchestra.

The performance will begin with the anthem, The King shall rejoice followed by My Heart is Inditing, The Stabat Mater, with an interval between its two parts, follows. The other two anthems are Let thy hand be strengthened and finally, Zadok the Priest.

The King shall rejoice, was used at the historic moment of the crowning and is the longest of the anthems. It is based on the text of Psalm 21: 1, 5 and 3, as it appears in the (Anglican) Book of Common Prayer. There is brilliant word painting throughout, and it ends with a joyful Alleluia double fugue.

The words of My Heart is Inditing are based on Psalm 45:1, 10, 12 and Isaiah 49:23. This anthem is the most feminine of the set and was composed for

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the crowning of Queen Caroline. The final movement though, is a fugal return to some of the pageantry of its companion anthems. The trumpets and timpani are held in reserve for a majestic ending.

The text for Let Thy Hand be Strengthened is taken from Psalm 49: 14-15. It was used at the time of the Recognition. The word painting is again very telling, on the words "exalted", "justice", "mercy" and "truth". There are several chordal suspensions, with masterful use of the oboe to reinforce the soprano and first violins. The final "Alleluia" movement, with the voices doubled by the instruments, makes for a characteristically ecstatic conclusion.

The well-known Zadok the Priest has text adapted from 1 Kings 1:38-40. It has been sung at the time of anointing, at every British

Coronation since its premiere, the last being that of HM Queen Elizabeth II on 02 June 1953. It begins softly in the strings, with polyphonic layers interweaving to produce a lush baroque ambience, before the chorus enters in all its glory, augmented by trumpets and timpani. This supremely dramatic choral entry would have been worthy of Beethoven. This anthem ends the concert, with a grand declamation of Alleluia.

Stabat Mater is a 13th century

sequence variously attributed to Pope Innocent III and Jacopone da Todi. Its title is taken from the first line, Stabat mater dolorosa ("The sorrowful mother stood"). The hymn is one of the most powerful and emotional of medieval poems ever written, and meditates on the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the crucifixion.

The words of the Stabat Mater are in two sections - the first part focuses on the grieving Mary and describes her anguish, standing at the foot of

the cross on which her son was dying (1-6), while the rest focuses on the listener (singer) and his/her reactions to Mary's inspiration. It also constitutes a prayer to the Virgin (7-12).

Kumudini David, Soprano, has been studying vocal music since 1998 under Mary Anne David. She completed her Royal Schools of Music Grade 8 vocal music exam in

the Music Directors at the Asian International School, Colombo and has her own teaching practice. She trains and conducts the OGA choir of her old school, Ladies' College, has given a number of solo performances in many cities in the Netherlands and was also a member of the Conservatory Choir and the Chamber Choir Quod Libet of which she was a frequent soloist. Peshali has performed as a soloist with the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka and the Chamber Choir Camerata Musica on many occasions. In 2008, she took the role of Mercedes in a complete staged production of Bizet's opera "Carmen", in New Delhi, India.

The Conductor for the evening, Lalanath de Silva began conducting at an early age and was appointed as the Deputy Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka (SOSL) in 1992. In 2000 he succeeded the late Dr. Earle de Fonseka for a period of two years as the Conductor of the SOSL until he took up an UN appointment in Geneva. Lalanath has also appeared as guest conductor with several other orchestras. He is a self-taught composer and draws inspiration from both the western and oriental traditions of music. His earliest orchestral composition, an overture, was performed by the Colombo Sinfonietta in 1974 when he was 15 years old. Since then he has written many orchestral and choral works. Among these are a Christmas Oratorio (with libretto in Sinhala by the late Fr. Marcelline Jayakody), and several overtures including one commissioned by the SOSL for its Silver Jubilee. One of his recent compositions "Sangeetha Bindu" for Flute and Piano has been performed in concerts across Europe, Latin America, Sri Lanka and USA and a CD of it, released. His work "Tablesque" for strings was performed by the European Union Chamber Orchestra in several summer festival concerts across the UK. The Sitar Concerto has been performed in India and Sri Lanka. Lalanath's last performance with the SOSL was Haydn's Creation bringing together a choir of 50 singers, and the combined forces of the SOSL, the Bombay Chamber Orchestra and the Amsterdam Chamber Orchestra. This is his second appearance with Camerata Musica, since his 2004 Mozart Requiem.



Lalanath de Silva

Peshali Yapa

Kumudini David

Camerata Musica performance from the Ceremonial to the Profound

2004, and won the Concerto competition of the SOSL in 2006. She is an active member of the Merry An Singers and is a member and soloist of Camerata Musica. She enjoys classical, gospel vocal music in particular and choral music in general.

Mezzo Soprano Peshali Yapa graduated with Honours from the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, The Netherlands, with a double Bachelor of Music degree in Performance and Teaching. She is presently one

Britons bored for two years!

The average Briton will spend more than two years of their lives bored to tears, a study has shown.

Experts found the typical adult will waste almost six hours a week feeling completely and utterly bored with life.

It is the equivalent of 13 days a year, or 786.5 days over the average adult lifetime of 60.5 years.

The main reason for the boredom was "having no money".

"This survey is quite depressing, as it shows that most people are dissatisfied with the humdrum of daily life," said Scott O'Donnell of www.triviala.com, which commissioned the survey.

"It comes as no surprise to learn that a percentage of us are bored with work at times, and deciding what to eat on a



Waiting in queues is among the top 5 things which make us bored

daily basis can be tedious.

"But it's easy to avoid the dullness of television adverts, Big Brother and reality television as there are other simpler ways to enjoy life."

The study also revealed 55 per cent of us are bored of having to watch the pennies and budget to get through the month.

Another 47 per cent of people said they quickly became bored waiting in queues for people to serve them and 45 per cent said listening to people whine about feeling ill bored them.

Other things which bore people include reality television, work, their social life and eating the same food day in and day out.

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I Do... Virtually