

Tom Lehrer

Miscellaneous

The Elements

Now, if I may digress momentarily from the main stream of this evenings symposium, I'd like to sing a song which is completely pointless but which is something I picked up during my career as a scientist. This may prove useful to somebody some day perhaps, in a somewhat bizarre set of circumstances. It's simply the names of the chemical elements set to a possibly recognizable tune.

There's antimony, arsenic, aluminum, selenium,  
And hydrogen and oxygen and nitrogen and rhenium,  
And nickel, neodymium, neptunium, germanium,  
And iron, americium, ruthenium, uranium,  
Europium, zirconium, lutetium, vanadium,  
And lanthanum and osmium and astatine and radium,  
And gold and protactinium and indium and gallium,  
And iodine and thorium and thulium and thallium.  
There's yttrium, ytterbium, actinium, rubidium,  
And boron, gadolinium, niobium, iridium,  
And strontium and silicon and silver and samarium,  
And bismuth, bromine, lithium, beryllium, and barium.  
Isn't that interesting?

I knew you would.

I hope you're all taking notes, because there's going to be a short quiz next period.

There's holmium and helium and hafnium and erbium,  
And phosphorus and francium and fluorine and terbium,  
And manganese and mercury, molybdenum, magnesium,  
Dysprosium and scandium and cerium and cesium.  
And lead, praseodymium, and platinum, plutonium,  
Palladium, promethium, potassium, polonium,  
And tantalum, technetium, titanium, tellurium,  
And cadmium and calcium and chromium and curium.  
There's sulfur, californium, and fermium, berkelium,  
And also mendelevium, einsteinium, nobelium,  
And argon, krypton, neon, radon, xenon, zinc, and rhodium,  
And chlorine, carbon, cobalt, copper, tungsten, tin, and sodium  
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These are the only ones of which the news has come to Harvard,  
And there may be many others, but they haven't been discovered.  
Now, may I have the next slide please?  
Got carried away there.