

Meridian Music of the Week!

Issue No. 215 (based on original Newsletter No.177 – December 2024)

Each week ALL our children will be listening to a piece of music as part of our music lessons. We'll be talking about it in class and discussing what we like, what we don't like and what it makes us think about. Parents/carers/family - why not join in and listen for yourself at home! All music is available **free** on YouTube as well as paid services such as iTunes and Spotify.

This week's music...



‘Oom Pah Pah’ and ‘I’m Reviewing the Situation’ (reprise) from the musical ‘Oliver!’

Music and lyrics by **Lionel Bart** (1960)

‘Oom Pah Pah’ from the original film musical version of 1968 – [HERE](#)

2015 Strictly Come Dancing waltz version with Kelly Bright and Kevin Clifton! - [HERE](#)

‘I’m Reviewing the Situation’ (reprise) from the original film musical version of 1968 – [HERE](#)

The last of Oliver Twist!

Well, it's the last week of the year – and the final week of our newsletters about Lionel Bart's musical ‘Oliver!’ We've got **two** songs to listen to – as well as finding out how the story ends! Both the songs this week are quite unique in the musical - in different ways – there aren't really any other songs like them. But first - what happens next?...

At the end of last week, we left Fagin wondering (and singing!) whether he should leave his life of crime or not. If you watched the video, you'll know that he decides to stay. But what about Oliver? The next thing we see is Mr. and Mrs. Bumble visiting Mr. Brownlow. They say they'd heard about where Oliver had gone and wanted to show something to Mr. Brownlow. The truth is, they're hoping to make some money out of what they have. They show Mr. Brownlow a necklace locket that they say was left with Oliver when he was born at the workhouse (I wonder why they never mentioned it before?...)

Mr. Brownlow looks at the picture inside it – and it's a portrait of his niece – just like the one he has on his wall! He finally realises that Oliver must be the son of his niece who died when she gave birth to him in the workhouse. That makes Mr. Brownlow Oliver's Great Uncle! He is really angry at them for not showing it to anybody sooner, he knows they just wanted to make money out of it.

Mr. Brownlow: “You kept this all these years?”

Mrs. Bumble: “I only came here to help you!”

Mr. Brownlow: “You came here to profit from your own greed and dishonesty!”

Mr. Brownlow gives them some money to go away – and we never see them in the story again (at least, not in the film).

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Nancy, Fagin and Bill Sykes discuss taking Oliver on the burglary.

Meanwhile...

Meanwhile, back at Fagin's place, Bill Sykes is getting ready to go out on a burglary. And he decides to take Oliver with him! Why? Because he needs Oliver's help to break into a house through a small window,

"I need a little one – and he's nice and thin!"

Nancy begs Bill not to take Oliver, but he is determined and tells her to meet him later, after the burglary,

"Be at the tavern at eleven o'clock!"

After he leaves, Nancy realises that Oliver might be in great danger, so she decides to go to see Mr. Brownlow to see if she can help Oliver.

She tells Mr. Brownlow,

"He's in danger – in bad company!"

She doesn't tell him about Bill Sykes and even now, she stays faithful to him. But, nevertheless, she decides she will help Mr. Brownlow get Oliver back:

"I'll bring him to you. London Bridge at midnight."

And she makes him promise that he will come alone, without any police. Mr. Brownlow agrees.

Burglary!...

We then see Bill Sykes and Oliver carrying out the burglary at a house. Bill breaks open a small kitchen window and makes Oliver climb through it so he can open the front door from the inside and let Bill in. But as Oliver is quietly unbolting the door, he slips and knocks things over, making a terrible, loud noise. This wakes up the owner of the house who chases Bill and Oliver away. He sets his two dogs after them – but Sykes' dog Bullseye protects them and scares off the other two dogs!

Eventually, Bill (with Oliver) finds Nancy at the tavern (pub). Nancy says she wants to take Oliver back to Fagin's to go to sleep – but really, she's trying to help Oliver meet up with Mr. Brownlow at midnight. Bill says that Oliver must stay and makes Bullseye guard him while he has a long conversation with Fagin.

Nancy finally comes up with a plan to help Oliver escape from the pub and this is where the song 'Oom Pah Pah' comes in.



A tuba which makes the 'Oom Pah' sound.

'Oom Pah Pah'

Many people think that this song - with a simple **melody** (tune) and slightly silly **lyrics** (words) is one of the weakest in the musical. But it is really unique because it's the only song that is actually used as an important part of the action. Nancy starts singing the song **on purpose** as a way of trying to get the whole pub singing and dancing so that no-one will notice her help Oliver to escape.

The title 'Oom Pah Pah' comes from the name of a type of music that was popular in Victorian times. The deep 'Oom Pah' sound would usually be played by a **tuba** (a deep sounding **brass instrument**) and it would

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accompany a song where people were expected to join in and sing along. 'Oom Pah' music was (and still is!) very popular at German beer festivals, so it's not a surprise that Lionel Bart used it as an inspiration for his song that was to take place in a noisy pub.

Well, for Nancy, the song works! There's so much noise and dancing in the pub that she manages to sneak away with Oliver.

But Bullseye barks loudly and Bill sees her and chases after them!

Nancy and Oliver run to London Bridge with Bill chasing them all the time. She sees Mr. Brownlow on the bridge and tells Oliver to go to him. But just as he's about to go, Bill catches them! He hits Nancy and runs off with Oliver as some men arrive to try and capture him.



Sykes' dog - Bullseye!

The Chase...

Bill realises that the men might have seen Bullseye and might recognise him and so he tells Bullseye that he can't come with them. But it seems that Bullseye doesn't want to go with them anyway. He saw Bill being violent to Nancy and now he starts to work **against** Bill. He goes to the men who are now chasing them and they recognise him as being Bill Sykes's dog. Then Bullseye starts to lead the men to where Bill has gone!

Bill arrives at Fagin's and tells Fagin to give him money so he can run away and escape. Fagin tells Bill he should leave Oliver behind, but Bill says people won't dare do anything to him so long as he has Oliver with him. He uses Oliver as a hostage! Suddenly, they hear Bullseye's bark outside and realise that people have discovered where they are. Fagin tells the boys to escape from the building:

"Out the back way – come on!"

Just before they leave, Fagin grabs his private treasure box to take with him. But during the escape, Fagin slips and dops all of his treasures into the murky canal water where it sinks – never to be seen again. Poor Fagin!

Meanwhile, Bill has taken Oliver up to the rooftops with him as he escapes the chasing crowd and policemen. He tries to get from one roof to another one - but realises it's too far to jump. So, he gets Oliver to hang a rope over a wooden beam so that he can swing on it to escape. Oliver is really scared as the wooden beam is very high up. But as Bill Sykes swings to the next roof, a policeman shoots him! That's the end of evil old Bill Sykes...

Fagin and Dodger reunite...

Finally, we see Fagin who has obviously managed to escape. A bit like in last week's song, he sadly wonders whether, after all this, he should give up crime forever:

"Can somebody Change? It's possible,

Maybe it's strange, but it's possible.

All my dearest companions and treasures, I've left them behind,

I'll turn a leaf over and who can tell what I may find?"

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Dodger meets up again with Fagin.

But, just as he's about to walk off into the morning sun, out from behind a letterbox, pops Dodger! He shows Fagin a wallet that he pick-pocketed during the chase of Bill Sykes and smiles at him. Guess what? Fagin starts to change his mind again! We hear the song we heard before – but this time with new lyrics – and it's a **duet** (two people singing) between Fagin **and** Dodger. It's the only song in the musical to be sung twice!

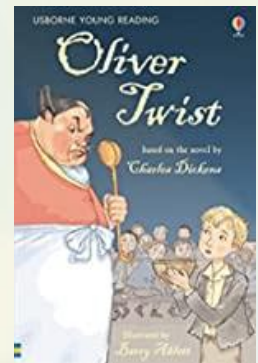
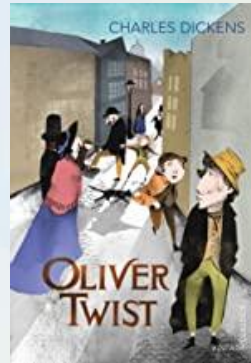
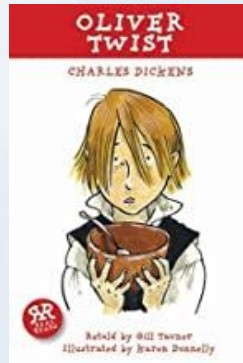
Fagin: "I'm reviewing, the situation."
Dodger: "Once a villain you're a villain 'til the end!"
Fagin: "Your light fingers..."
Dodger: "Your inspiration..."
Both: "What a team!"
Dodger: "Am I your partner?"
Fagin: "More a friend!
For your talent is employable,
So, make your life enjoyable,
A world with pockets open-wide,
Awaits your whim to grope inside."
Dodger: "Collections undetectable,"
Fagin: "We might retire respectable!"
Dodger: "Together 'til our dying day,"
Fagin: "The living proof that crime can pay."
Both: "I think we'll have to think it out again!"

Off they walk into the sunrise, ready to set out on a new life of crime!

And that's pretty much the end of the story. At the very end of the film, we see Oliver go back to Mr. Brownlow's house (remember, we've discovered that Mr. Brownlow is Oliver's mum's uncle). Clearly, he was rescued from the rooftops and he will live happily ever after, never having to go back to the workhouse or work with thieves and villains again.

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I hope you've enjoyed the story of Oliver Twist. When you get a little older, I'd love you to **read the original book by Charles Dickens!** There's lots more in it than in the film (although, obviously, there's no singing!) In fact, there are also many **children's** versions of the book which you might find in the school library – or that you can get quite cheaply on Amazon. Here's a few you might like...



I hope you have a marvellous and merry Christmas!

Listen & enjoy...
Mr. Mole
Music Teacher

