

Meridian Music of the Week!

Issue No. 212 (based on original Newsletter No.174 – November 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...



'Be Back Soon' from the musical 'Oliver!' Music and lyrics by Lionel Bart (1960)

'Be Back Soon' from the original film musical version of 1968 – [HERE](#)

Or, listen to, and see photos of Rowan Atkinson (Mr. Bean!) singing it in the 2009 London revival – [HERE](#)

One great song ends... another begins!

The great songs come around really quickly in this part of the musical of 'Oliver!'. In the 1968 film, this week's song 'Be Back Soon' comes only **one and a half minutes** after 'I'd Do Anything'!

Almost as soon as Nancy and Betty have left Fagin, the boys get ready to go out for their first stealing trip of the day. Dodger has a chat with Fagin because Oliver has asked if he can go out with the other boys. Fagin agrees, "Good luck on your first job my dear! I'll be waiting for you here when you come back."

Fagin gets the boys ready almost as if he's a sergeant-major giving orders to a group of soldiers - "Line up! Single file! Quick march!" Fagin starts the song and the boys begin to march. Fagin even pretends to use his tatty umbrella as a **piccolo** (a small, high-pitched flute which is commonly used in military marching bands).

A simple song?...

The song sounds quite simple – but it's actually more complicated than it first appears. Both Fagin and the boys sing different sections but each has different words and a different tune. However, later in the song, they all sing their words and tunes **at the same time** – and even though the tunes are different, they go together musically.

In classical music this is known as **counterpoint**. It is a technique that was used by many of the famous classical composers – particularly Mozart.



A performance of Mozart's 'Cosi Fan Tutti'

Continued/...

Of course, Mozart was far too clever to be happy with just having two different melodies playing at the same time. In one **aria** (song) in his opera 'Cosi Fan Tutti', he has **five** different singers singing **five** different melodies and lyrics at once! That's just showing off – but it sounds fantastic. You can listen to it [HERE](#).

Anyway – back to 'Oliver!'...



Lionel Bart – who wrote the words and music to 'Oliver!'

What's the song 'Be Back Soon' all about?...

In 'Be Back Soon', Fagin sings about how he'll miss the boys when they're gone, but he makes sure they understand they shouldn't come back until they've stolen lots of expensive things for him.

**"You can go but be back soon,
You can go but bring back plenty,
Of wallets full of cash,
Don't want to see any trash!"**

The boys understand Fagin very well and they sing:

**"Our pockets hold a watch of gold,
That strikes upon the hour,
A wallet fat, an old man's hat
The jewels from the Tower
We know the nosey policemen
But they don't know this tune,
So long, fare-thee-well, pip-pip, cheerio,
We'll be back soon."**

Interestingly, these **lyrics** (words) are an example of how some of the songs in the musical changed when the film was made out of the original theatre stage show. When it was first performed (in London only) the original words were:

**"We know the Bow Street Runners,
But they don't know this tune..."**

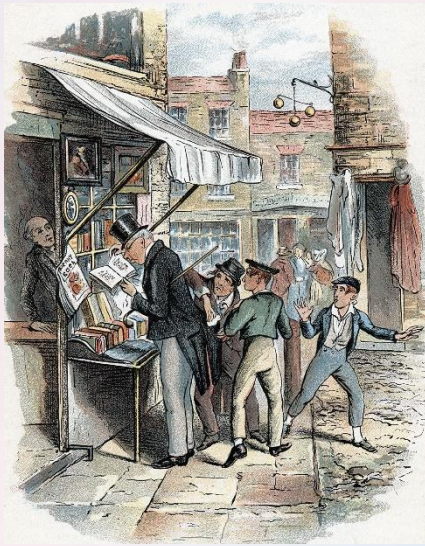
But when they made the film, they realised that American and other audiences probably wouldn't know who the 'Bow Street Runners' were – so they changed the words. They were the very first London Police Force, so named because they were based in Bow Street where there was a famous magistrate's court.

Dodger and Oliver jump on a canal barge to get into the centre of London and leave Fagin behind. What will happen next?



An old drawing of a Bow Street Runner

Continued/...



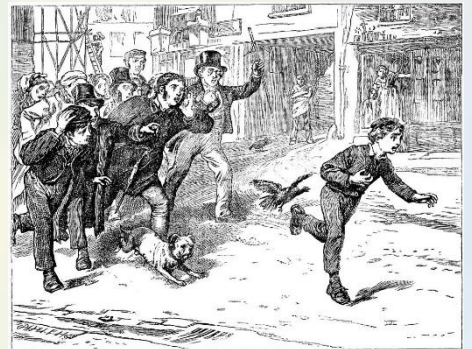
An illustration from the original Charles Dickens book – Dodger and Charley try to pick Mr. Brownlow's pocket.

The story continues...

Well, in the film, there is now a gap of nearly twenty minutes until the next song. And this is because a lot of action happens! Dodger and another boy called Charley Bates try to steal a rich man's wallet while he's looking in a book shop (we find out later that his name is Mr. Brownlow). Oliver is watching them from a few feet away. Dodger gets the wallet but the man notices and turns round quickly to find... Dodger and Charley gone – and Oliver standing right behind him!

The man assumes that Oliver is the thief and asks for the wallet back. Oliver runs away and a great chase gets underway. Dodger and Charley follow the chase from a distance so they can find out what will happen to Oliver. People in the street chase after Oliver and they call a policeman (a Bow Street Runner?) to help. Dodger and Charley try to help by sending the chasing crowd the wrong way and hiding Oliver on a meat wagon – but he gets found out by the butcher.

Oliver runs again (with Dodger and Charley following). He climbs a ladder up to a railway bridge but a steam train speeds towards him and Oliver falls! But he misses the train and a policeman finally grabs him. The policeman shouts down to Mr. Brownlow "Can you identify this boy as the thief sir?" and Mr. Brownlow says "Yes, well... I saw him running away".



Another illustration showing Oliver running away through the streets

What will Fagin say?...

When Dodger and Charley realise that Oliver is going to be arrested for robbery, they get away as quickly as they can – and go back to Fagin to tell him what has happened.

He's not pleased, not pleased at all!

Bill Sykes tells Fagin that he shouldn't worry, Oliver will just go to prison. But Fagin IS worried:

"I'm afraid he may say something that'll get us into trouble!"

And it's this worry that will set up the next section of the story – how will they get Oliver back?...

You'll have to wait until next week!

Listen & enjoy...

Mr. Mole

Music Teacher



Words to 'Be Back Soon' on the next page...



'Be Back Soon'

(from the original stage production)

FAGIN

You can go, but be back soon
You can go, but while you're working.
This place, I'm pacing round...
Until you're home, safe and sound

Fare thee well, but be back soon
Who can tell where danger's lurking?
Do not forget this tune
Be back soon.

BOYS

How could we forget, how could we let
Our dear old Fagin worry?
We love him so, we'll come back home
In, oh, such a great big hurry

It's him that pays the piper.
It's us that pipes his tune
So long, fare thee well, Pip! Pip! Cheerio!
We'll be back soon.

FAGIN

You can go but be back soon
You can go, but bring back plenty
Of pocket handkerchiefs and you should be
clever thieves.
Whip it quick and be back soon
There's a sixpence here for twenty
Ain't that a lovely tune?
Be back soon.

DODGER

Our pockets'll hold a watch of gold
That chimes upon the hour

BOYS

A wallet fat, an old man's hat

DODGER

The crown jewels from the tower
We know the Bow Street Runners,

ALL

But they don't know this tune.
So long, fare thee well, Pip! Pip! Cheerio!
We'll be back soon.

FAGIN

Cheerio, but be back soon.
I dunno, somehow I'll miss you
I love you, that why I say, "Cheerio"...
Not goodbye.
Don't be gone long be back soon.
Give me one long, last look... bless you.
Remember our old tune...
Be back soon!

BOYS

We must disappear, we'll be back here,
Today... perhaps tomorrow.
We'll miss you too...

FAGIN

It's sad but true
That parting is such sweet sorrow.

ALL

And when we're in the distance
You'll hear this whipered tune...
So long, fare thee well, Pip! Pip! Cheerio!
We'll be back soon

OLIVER

So long, fare thee well, Pip! Pip! Cheerio!
We'll be back soon

BOYS

So long, fare thee well, Pip! Pip! Cheerio!
We'll be back soon