

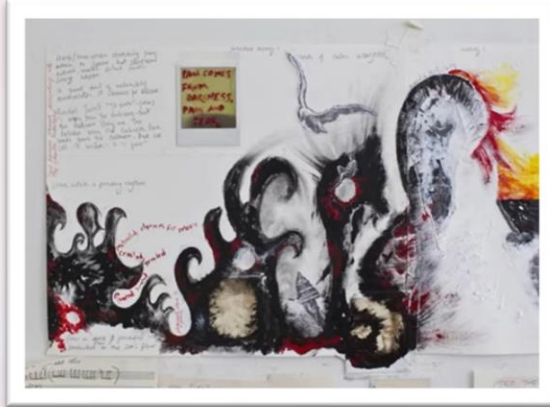
Meridian Music of the Week!

Issue No. 26

Even though Meridian is currently closed for most children – our music newsletter will STILL come out each week! Just as before, there will be a new piece of music to listen to. But this time, there will also be some **ideas for activities** which children might want to try if they're at home – connected to the music in some way.

As always, all the music is available **free** on YouTube as well as paid services such as iTunes and Spotify.

This week's music...



'Night Ferry' by Anna Clyne (2012)

To watch a video introduction to the whole piece, and listen to a section of it, check out the short BBC videos which you can find [HERE](#).

You can also watch a short video of the composer talking about how she wrote the music [HERE](#).

This week's music is very **different** - but also very **similar** to music we have listened to before. The main reason it's different is because this is the first music we've listened to that was written by a **woman**! Can you believe that? She's also the youngest composer we've listened to so far. Anna Clyne, a British composer, was born in 1980. She now lives in America where she is the composer for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

So why is it similar? Well, this piece is all about a stormy sea. Remember Benjamin Britten's 'Sea Interludes' – The Storm? If you can't remember, you can hear it again [HERE](#). Ann Clyne's music is very similar because she tries to make the orchestra sound like crashing waves, wind, rain and a violent storm.

The section of 'Night Ferry' music played in the video clip above is from the middle of the piece – and it's pretty noisy! The whole piece of music is about 22 minutes long and moves from loud to quiet and back again as the sea changes. It represents a ship's journey at sea at night, from calm, to storm and back again.



But there's one very important **difference** between Clyne's music and Britten's. And that's to do with the **way** it was written. Anna Clyne didn't start with writing music – she started with making a **painting**! The picture at the top of this newsletter shows just a part of it. She made a very long (several metres) picture of the ship's journey across the sea – you can see an image of it [HERE](#). She used paint, pencils, cut-outs and even stuck in words and phrases from poetry – as well as some of her own musical ideas. Only once she had finished the piece of art did she go to the piano to start writing her music. She used her own picture of the sea as an inspiration for her own music!

The poetry she included in her huge picture was taken from a famous old poem called '**The Rime of the Ancient Mariner**' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge – written in 1797. Anna Clyne has said that it was a big influence on her writing this music.

Now, old poems are quite difficult to read (especially if they're over 200 years old!) but 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' is such a great story, I've GOT to tell you about it!

continued/...

Have you ever heard the phrase '**Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink**'? Or, have you ever heard someone say '**It was like an albatross around my neck**' when something was holding them back - or weighing them down? Well, both of these ideas are from this poem! Here's the story...

At a wedding, one of the guests is stopped by an old, grey-bearded man (the 'Mariner' or 'sailor') who says he wants to tell them a story about a sea voyage he took a long time ago. The wedding guest doesn't really want to listen to this old man's story, but as the Mariner begins his tale, his glittering eyes captivate the guest.

* * * *

The Mariner's story starts with his ship starting its journey. All is well at first, but then a terrible storm drives the ship southwards towards the icy waters of the Antarctic. The ship gets stuck in the ice – but an albatross (a huge seabird) appears and guides the ship to safety.

The ship's crew feed the albatross and praise it for helping them – but the Mariner shoots the bird with a crossbow and kills it! The crew are furious with the Mariner because they think this will bring the ship bad luck. And they're right! They are chased by angry ghosts and spirits that sweep the ship all the way to the Equator. But even though the weather is now calmer, they have no water left and are beginning to die of thirst.

The crew blame the Mariner for their thirst and, as a punishment, they make him wear the dead albatross around his neck! In the poem, the Mariner says...



**Ah! Well a day! What evil looks
Had I from old and young
Instead of the cross, the albatross
About my neck was hung.**

After a long time, they come across a ghost ship. On board this ship is the Skeleton of Death and a deathly pale woman called 'Nightmare Life-in-Death' who are playing dice to decide who will win the crew's souls. The game ends with the Skeleton of Death winning the lives of the crew, but the pale, ghostly woman wins the life of the Mariner. She decides he must face a fate worse than death as a punishment for killing the albatross. One by one the rest of the crew dies, but the Mariner lives on, being forced to watch the crew's dead eyes curse him - for seven days and nights!

The story then gets even stranger...

The Mariner's curse begins to fade and he notices the creatures of the sea. He praises them for their beauty and begins to pray for them. As he does so, the albatross falls from his neck and his guilt begins to go away. It begins to rain and, because of the Mariner's prayers, the bodies of the dead crew become possessed by good spirits. They rise from the waters and help to steer the ship.

Eventually the Mariner sees the shore of his homeland but isn't sure if it's just a dream. Suddenly his ship sinks in a whirlpool and the Mariner is left floating in the sea. A hermit (someone who lives alone, apart from society) sees this from the shore and goes out towards the Mariner in a boat rowed by a sailor and his boy assistant. When they pull the Mariner from the water, they think he is dead. But when the Mariner opens his mouth, the sailor shrieks with fright – and his assistant boy thinks the Mariner is the devil himself! Once they are finally back on land, the Mariner tells the hermit the story of his voyage.

And this is the Mariner's final punishment for killing the albatross. He is forced to travel the world, for ever, telling his story over and over as a warning to others.

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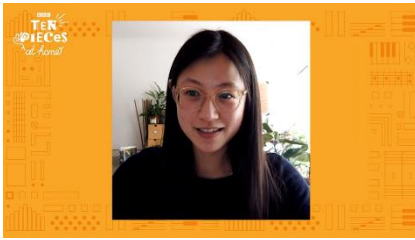
After hearing all this, the wedding guest goes home and thinks about what he has heard. Who was the old man telling him this story? **Was** it just a story? Was the old man actually the Ancient Mariner himself? The wedding guest never knows...
Weird story isn't it?

Listen, enjoy and get stay safe!
Mr. Mole
Music Teacher



Activity on the next page!

ACTIVITY



Watch and listen to [this web page & short video](#) to find out about the activity...

The artist Amy Leung will explain the activity this week! She's going to show you how you can make a 3D piece of art, inspired by Annal Clyne's 'Night Ferry'.

You don't need much in the way of materials – and you might be able to create something cool!

Just like last week, you can also take a photo of your art work and upload it to the BBC website by clicking [HERE](#) – but you can also send them to us here at Meridian using the usual email address - office@meridian.e-sussex.sch.uk

Get creative!