

Meridian Music of the Week!

Issue No. 29

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...



'Nessun Dorma' from the opera 'Turandot' by Giacomo Puccini (1926)

There are LOTS of videos of this on the internet – but I think the best version (by **Luciano Pavarotti**) can be found [HERE](#).

Opera meets football – AGAIN!

You might remember a few weeks ago, our music of the week was '**Zadok the Priest**' by Frideric Handel? And you might remember I said that lots of people thought it was the music used on TV for Champions League football matches (which it wasn't!)

Well, this week's music **also** has a football connection. Which I'll talk about in a minute...

The music '**Nessun Dorma**' (which means 'Let no-one sleep' in Italian) is possibly the most famous **aria** (song from an opera) **EVER** written. The opera is called 'Turandot' (pronounced 'too-ran-doe') by Italian composer Giacomo Puccini. Puccini actually died before he finished writing the opera - so it was finished off after his death by another composer called Franco Alfano – and first performed in 1926.

The story of the opera is quite famous too. This is what happens...



Princess Turandot is the daughter of the Chinese Emperor. She's quite a tough character! She has reached the age when she is expected to get married – but she says that she will only marry a man of noble blood who can answer **three riddles**. If he can't answer the riddles, he will have his head chopped off! In fact, the most recent person to try his luck at marrying her was the Prince of Persia. He failed to answer the riddles correctly, and so is due to be executed the following day.

The next day at the execution, a mysterious character called Prince Calaf appears and falls madly in love with Princess Turandot at first sight. Royal advisors try to put Calaf off by telling him about the Princess' cold heart, her three riddles and the risk he's taking with his life – but the Prince ignores them. He bangs a gong to show he will take Princess Turandot's challenge!

Later that day, a crowd gathers to watch the challenge of the riddles. Princess Turandot asks Calaf what his name is but he doesn't tell her. She gives the Prince a final chance to leave but he insists on trying to win her in marriage. So, she starts the three riddles...

Continued/...



1. She asks, 'What is born each night and dies each dawn?' Prince Calaf answers 'Hope' – and it's the right answer!
2. So, she asks the second riddle, 'What flares warm like a flame, yet it is no flame?' Calaf hesitates, then answers 'Blood' – and, again, it's the right answer!
3. By now Princess Turandot is worried, so she asks the third and final riddle, 'The ice that gives you fire, what can it be?' Calaf pauses, and thinks, then eventually replies, 'YOU!' He has answered all three riddles correctly!

The crowd celebrate Calaf's victory, but the princess pleads with the emperor not to have to marry this unknown Prince. Calaf sees that she is upset – so he sets her a riddle of his own – 'If you can discover my name before the morning, then I shall give you my life'!

The Royal Palace announces that 'No-one shall sleep' ('**Nessun Dorma**') until the name of the unknown Prince is discovered – otherwise the penalty is death! Princess Turandot even threatens to torture Calaf's father so he will reveal his son's identity. But eventually the coldness leaves her heart and she begins to cry. Eventually, Prince Calaf tells her who he is and lets her decide whether she will marry him – or execute him.

Dawn arrives and Princess Turandot finally speaks to the Emperor and the crowd outside the palace. She announces: 'I have discovered the stranger's name – and it is LOVE!'

THE END!

Some story eh?

So, the aria we are listening to is from the part of the opera where Prince Calaf hears the Royal Palace announcement that 'No-one shall sleep'. In the song he repeats these words, but also sings about how he is sure he will be victorious in marrying the Princess by the dawn.



So, the question is, what has any of this got to do with **FOOTBALL?**

Well... Back in 1990 the Football World Cup was held in Italy. When the BBC showed the matches on TV, the programmes always started with a sequence featuring 'Nessun Dorma' You can actually watch it [HERE](#).

They obviously wanted some Italian music for an Italian tournament!

It was a very famous tournament for the England Team. They reached the semi-final and played against Germany – but unfortunately, they lost on penalties.

The game was particularly famous for one player in particular – Paul Gascoigne. You can see him in the photo at the beginning of this newsletter, behind a young Gary Linaker who was the England captain at the time. Gascoigne (or 'Gazza' as he was known) was our best player – and well known for being funny and fond of practical jokes.

However, in the semi-final he got a yellow card for a foul. And that meant that he would have to miss the World Cup Final, even if England had won the semi-final. When he realised this during the match, he began to cry - and the film of this became famous all over the world.



If you ask any football fan old enough to have watched the 1990 World Cup what the song 'Nessun Dorma' means to them – they'll almost certainly say 'Gazza's tears'...

Who would have thought that Puccini's classical music about a prince, a Chinese princess and three riddles would become a famous football tune! As I've said before, music is strange like that! 😊

Listen, enjoy and stay safe!

Mr. Mole

Music Teacher



Activity on the next page!

Activity!

I suggested this video activity several weeks ago when we listened to 'Zadok the Priest' – the 'Champions League' football music – but no-one sent any videos in 😞

So, I'm trying again! I'd LOVE to see someone have a go!

Video 'acting' challenge!



Have you ever imagined being on Match of the Day and scoring an amazing goal in front of the cameras? And then having it replayed in slow-motion? I certainly have! Your task is to film yourself scoring a goal - and celebrating it - with an imaginary ball (or balloons are good for this). BUT

you have to act it out in **SLOW-MOTION!** No cheating using camera phone technology! If you can have '**Nessun Dorma**' playing in the background at the same time – that would be brilliant!

You can email any of your videos to office@meridian.e-sussex.sch.uk and we'll see how amazing your goal is! We won't post/publish anything you send – unless you ask us to!