

Meridian Music of the Week!

Issue No. 41

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...



'Who Will Buy?' from the musical 'Oliver!'

Music and lyrics by Lionel Bart (1960)

'Who Will Buy?' from the original film musical version of 1968 – [HERE](#)

Or, you can watch a crazy, sixties-tastic video of Nancy Sinatra's cover version of the song - [HERE](#)

Believe it or not, we're on our seventh song of the musical and we're only at the beginning of the second half of the film! This is a very different song from most of the others we have looked at. It's a sort of solo for Oliver – but a lot of the song is sung by a variety of other people who aren't really main characters in the story. It's also a complicated song because it combines many different short melodies and lyrics, based on the cries of people selling things in the street.

But before we talk about it – we need to know what has happened to Oliver since he was caught by the police!

So, Fagin and Bill Sykes decide someone needs to go down to the courthouse to find out what will happen to Oliver. But because both of them are well-known criminals (and would be spotted by the police) they decide that Nancy should go instead.

At the courthouse, Oliver is brought in by a policeman. But a magistrate (judge) called Mr. Fang makes a mistake and thinks Mr. Brownlow (the man whose wallet was pick-pocketed) is the criminal! When his assistant explains that it's a boy who is accused of the crime, Mr. Fang tells Oliver to stand on a box because he's too small for him to see. The judge asks Oliver lots of questions and Nancy gets worried when Oliver is asked about where he lives and who looks after him. But Oliver doesn't say anything to the judge about Fagin and the other boys.

The judge announces that Oliver will have to go to gaol for 'three months hard labour'. Mr. Brownlow says this is outrageous because the judge hasn't asked him anything yet. But then the owner of the bookshop speaks up and says that he saw two **other** boys steal Mr. Brownlow's wallet.

Nancy leaves the court and goes to see Fagin and Dodger who are hiding outside. She tells them that Oliver has been let free and that he didn't say anything about them to the judge. Fagin is pleased and relieved. Just then they see Oliver leaving the court with Mr. Brownlow and we hear that he is taking Oliver back to live with him! He obviously feels bad because he had

accused Oliver of a crime he didn't commit. Nancy, Fagin and Dodger see Oliver getting into Mr. Brownlow's posh horse and carriage and they tell Dodger to follow Oliver to find out where they're going. Fagin is still worried that Oliver might tell someone about him and his pick-pocketing crimes.

In this scene in the film, it's interesting what the music is doing. When Oliver is talking to Mr. Brownlow, the orchestra plays the tune that will be Oliver's main solo in the song which is coming up. But when Dodger runs down the street chasing the horse and carriage, the orchestra plays a speeded-up version of 'Be Back Soon'. Dodger catches up with the carriage and sits on the back of it so he can find out where it is going. And that's the end of the first half of the show!

Finally, we're going to get to our song...

When musicals are written to be performed on stage in the theatre, it is traditional that the second half should open with an attention-grabbing song. This is often performed with a big dance routine to wow the audience. In a theatre, the audience would have just come back to their seats from their interval – so the composer needs to come up with something spectacular to get them back into the story. 'Who Will Buy' is certainly a song that does that!

The scene opens in a posh bedroom and we see Oliver asleep in a comfortable bed as a maid comes in and opens the curtains. The sun is shining, a bird is tweeting, and we hear a voice singing outside the window. It is the voice of a flower-girl in the street asking 'Who will buy my sweet red roses? Two blooms for a penny'. The voice wakes Oliver and he goes to the window to look.

We can tell from what Oliver sees that he is in a posh house in a well-off part of London, with a small park and clean streets. The flower-girl continues her song and, in the background, the orchestra starts to accompany her. This is the beginning of this week's song – and it's 8 minutes long!



Next, in the street we see a group of girls carrying pales of milk and singing 'Any milk today mistress?' As they do so, other people start to appear on the street. Then, we hear 'Ripe strawberries, ripe!' sung to a different melody as a girl tries to sell strawberries from a basket. The flower, milk and strawberry sellers all begin to sing their different tunes at the same time. Then a knife grinder with his

grinding wheel sings in a deep voice 'Any knives to grind?' and he joins in with the others. The scene fills with all kinds of people selling things and offering their services to the people who live on the street. In the theatre, this would look really impressive to the audience, seeing so many colourful characters all singing at the same time and filling the stage.

Finally, they all sing the title of the song 'Who Will Buy?' and Oliver begins his solo:

**'Who will buy this wonderful morning?
Such a sky you never did see.
Who will tie it up with a ribbon,
And put it in a box for me?'**

After living in the terrible workhouse and living with Fagin in the dirty streets of the poor parts of London, Oliver can't believe how his luck has changed.

More sellers enter the street and sing their different songs until everyone is singing the main tune that Oliver just sang. We then get a big dance routine with everyone moving to the song. We see maids in houses cleaning carpets, window cleaners up ladders, nannies pushing babies in prams and children on their way to school. Finally, the song comes to a climax with the appearance of a marching army band parading down the street and Oliver joins in the singing again.



Lionel Bart (the musical's composer) keeps the music interesting by changing the **tempo** (speed) as well as the **rhythm** (sometimes there are three beats to a bar, sometimes four) and has fun fitting together all the different characters' melodies and lyrics together. He did this with two melodies in the previous song 'Be Back Soon' – but this time he has many, many more!

As the song finishes, we see Bill Sykes and Dodger hiding in the park looking suspiciously at Oliver on his bedroom balcony. What will they do?

You'll have to wait until next week to find out!

Listen & enjoy...

Mr. Mole

Music Teacher

