CHRISTMAS PUDDING

2014

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Robert Middleton

Christmas Pudding is an anthology devoted essentially to aspects of the use of language, particularly in poetry but also in wit and humour. Poetry is a vehicle for sharing ideas and emotions and, as such, is a mark of our civilisation and collective intelligence: it also promotes an understanding of the nature and importance of language, man's highest natural attribute. I am concerned that few people read poetry today and that the contemporary dominance of the visual media poses a threat to our command (and even understanding) of language and to a decline in writing skills.

I was deeply influenced by the teaching and literary criticism of Yvor Winters at Stanford University in the early 1960s, by his rigorous insistence on the distinction between connotation and denotation in poetry and by his moral crusade against the decline of reason as a precept in art and literature (and life) since the end of the eighteenth century. The accompanying relaxation of content and meaning that characterise verse for the last two hundred years is, at least in part, responsible for a breakdown in communication between writer and reader: today, 'anything goes' - much verse is obscure and, if it were not divided into lines, would be indistinguishable from prose. I share Winters' view that the late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century was a golden age for poetry and that several poets of this age developed a 'timeless' medium for poetic expression characterised by the clear communication of ideas and emotion, using words not only for their sound, rhythm and imagery but also to convey meaning. I recognise, however, that the poetry of this period may not be easily accessible to the general reader as a result of unfamiliar poetic conventions and shifts in the meaning of words. I also dissent from Winters' rather pessimistic view that not much of comparable quality has been produced since. Until 2011, *Christmas Pudding* drew heavily on poetry of the 'golden age'; since then I include much modern and contemporary verse that, in my opinion, meets Winters' strict criteria. If I no longer insist on form, my criterion remains nevertheless quality of language and content - and, a new ingredient: wit.

In addition to the desire to entertain and amuse, *Christmas Pudding* has thus a serious intent: I aim to include poems that use language in a rational and comprehensible way, that have a clear meaning with a minimum of decoration and cliché and that express feelings we can share. My choice is intended to show that poetry can be (I would even say, should be) a means of communication between normal rational people.

The inspiration for *Christmas Pudding* is *Christmas Crackers*, an anthology of wisdom, wit and linguistic surprise collected by the distinguished scholar John Julius Norwich. I have tried to emulate his mixture of humour and erudition, although a significant part of my raw material is drawn from the more mundane spheres of e-mail and the Internet. My title seems to me apposite: a Christmas pudding is full of varied, interesting and sometimes surprising ingredients, is well-rounded, requires a considerable amount of stirring in its preparation, is still good a long time after the first serving and is not heavy if enjoyed sparingly. Moreover, a pudding is the least pretentious of dishes and acknowledges Norwich's superior recipe.

Alfred Anderson

Wilfred Owen

Reginald Middleton

"…the protagonists of 1914 were sleepwalkers, watchful but unseeing, haunted by dreams, yet blind to the reality of the horror they were about to bring into the world."
Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*

"This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them. Nor is it about deeds or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, dominion or power, except War. Above all, this book is not concerned with Poetry. The subject of it is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity.

Yet these elegies are not to this generation, this is in no sense consolatory. They may be to the next. All the poet can do today is to warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful. If I thought the letter of this book would last, I might have used proper names; but if the spirit of it survives Prussia, -- my ambition and those names will be content; for they will have achieved themselves fresher fields than Flanders."

Wilfred Owen, *Preface*

e-mail robert@middleton.ch
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http://www.pamirs.org/Christmas-Pudding.htm

CHRISTMAS PUDDING 2014

Three men on a frontispiece: three different destinies.

Alfred Anderson, who died in 2005, was the last survivor of an unlikely but unforgettable game of football. At Christmas in 1915, after a night of carol singing on both sides of the trenches, feelings of goodwill had so swelled up that at dawn Bavarian and British soldiers clambered spontaneously out of their trenches. Shouting “Hello Tommy” and “Hello Fritz” they at first shook hands in no-man’s-land, and then presented one another with gifts. German beer, sausages and spiked helmets were given, or bartered, in return for bully beef, biscuits and tunic buttons, and they played football - before returning to the business of killing each other.

Wilfred Owen was one of the 'war poets' whose uncompromising work brought home to the British public the ugly reality of the First World War. For his courage and leadership in an action in France in early 1918 he was awarded the Military Cross. In July, he returned to France and was killed in action on 4 November during the crossing of the Sambre-Oise Canal, exactly one week before the signing of the Armistice.

Reginald George Middleton was my grandfather. He was on active service (Private 57394, Egyptian Expeditionary Forces - he gave me his medals to play with as a child), but the photo, sent on 8 November 1916 from Egypt to his son, my father, shows him not as a combatant, but as a stretcher-bearer, a medic. My memories of his gentleness match this role.

My great-grandfather, Leonard Carl Krüger, emigrated to Britain from Brunswick in 1870 with his wife Caroline Christiane née Schucht (my father told me he refused to be a combatant in the Franco-Prussian war) and set up in business as a cabinet and pianoforte maker in London - he subsequently made a name for himself and, among other things, produced furniture for Queen Mary's dolls' house in the 1920s.[1]

He kept his links to Brunswick, however, by sending his daughter to school there. Her name was Frida Emilie Wilhelmine ('Grandma Mim' to us all, a formidable personality), her brother's Wilhelm - perhaps a

[1] The Queen's dolls' house was created with advice from Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect of New Delhi under the Raj. Interestingly, Leonard Carl's other son Leonard worked for Lutyens in India and I recall, as a child, seeing models of the New Delhi architectural creations in his home.

sign of nostalgia for the Hohenzollern rulers of Prussia?[2] As a pianoforte maker he was probably also a musician, a gift he passed on to his son Wilhelm ("Uncle Will," a violinist) and to his grandson, my father, (who played the piano).[3]

My grandfather Reginald George Middleton - profession "modeller" [4] - married Wilhelmine in the parish church of Kilburn on 8 August 1907. The Krügers were naturalised British subjects and yet were treated as enemy aliens at the outbreak of war in 1914. Could Reginald have declined combat duty for family reasons? Such are the questions and ironies of history.

'Sleepwalkers' is the term used by Christopher Clark to describe the incompetent, uncomprehending and arrogant leaders of the European nations who went to war on 28 July 1914, causing the deaths of more

[2] My father and I share the middle name William. Could my grandfather's middle name also be a tribute to the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (from 1917, Windsor)?

[3] I never understood why I was never given piano lessons but must assume my parents could not afford it.

[4] His anonymous work can be seen on the woodwork of the neo-Tudor façade of the *Liberty* department store in Regent Street in London. The profession of Reginald's father John is listed on the marriage certificate as "gentleman" - a euphemism for someone in domestic service. Reginald's birth certificate of 21 August 1881 describes John as "Butler", and, on another document, simply "servant." At this period, in most European countries, domestic service was a preferred professional option for poor families with good education. My mother's father and mother were in the service of Lady Cynthia Graham - it followed that my mother's sister was named Cynthia. It is perhaps another irony of history that I myself have been in the service - if not domestic - of two exceptionally wealthy individuals.

than 9 million combatants and 7 million civilians, one of the deadliest conflicts in history and one that paved the way for major political changes, including revolutions in several of the nations involved.

War is still with us, and this year's Christmas Pudding 'celebrates' - if that is the correct word - the work of the war poets, almost all of whose work reminds us of the horrors of war. I have tried to lighten the sombre atmosphere of their poetry with, among other things, some musings on wine, a more worthy cause for celebration even if it does not help to improve memory: 'bottled poetry' (Robert Louis Stevenson);[5] and on music, 'the food of love,' (Shakespeare), 'die beste Gottesgabe' (Luther) and without which, according to Nietzsche, 'life would be a mistake.' [6]

T T T T

Seasonally appropriate

Winter Song - *Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)*
The browns, the olives, and the yellows died,
And were swept up to heaven; where they glowed
Each dawn and set of sun till Christmastide,
And when the land lay pale for them, pale-snowed,
Fell back, and down the snow-drifts flamed and flowed.

From off your face, into the winds of winter,
The sun-brown and the summer-gold are blowing;
But they shall gleam with spiritual glinter,
When paler beauty on your brows falls snowing,
And through those snows my looks shall be soft-going.

On Receiving News of the War - *Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918)*
Snow is a strange white word.
No ice or frost
Has asked of bud or bird
For Winter's cost.

Yet ice and frost and snow
From earth to sky
This Summer land doth know.
No man knows why.

[5] Shakespeare could, on occasion, be less rapturous: 'O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil.' (Othello II, 3)

[6] 'Ohne Musik wäre das Leben ein Irrtum,' *Sprüche und Pfeile.*

In all men's hearts it is.
Some spirit old
Hath turned with malign kiss
Our lives to mould.

Red fangs have torn His face.
God's blood is shed.
He mourns from His lone place
His children dead.

O! ancient crimson curse!
Corrode, consume.
Give back this universe
Its pristine bloom.

T T T T

Introduction to drinking

Wise words from that reliable source *www.bodybuilding.com*:

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
3. The Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
4. The Italians drink a lot of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
5. The Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.

Conclusion: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

T T T T

Fruit cake

You'll need the following: a cup of butter, a cup of water, a cup of sugar, four eggs, two cups of dried fruit, a teaspoon of baking soda, a teaspoon of salt, a cup of brown sugar, lemon juice, nuts and a bottle of Sauternes.

Sample the Sauternes to check for quality.

Take a large bowl. Check the Sauternes again. Turn on the electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon of sugar and beat again. Check the Sauternes.

Make sure the Sauternes is still OK. Cry another tup. Turn off the mixerer,

break two leggs and add to the bowl and throw in the cup of dried fruit. Mix on the turner - if the fried druit gets stuck in the beaterers pry them loosh with a drewscriver.

Sample the Sauternes to check for conthistency. Add one table and spoon the slat and saking boda into the jemon luce. Grease the oven and turn the cake tin 360 degrees.

Beat off the turner and go to bed.

T T T T

What's in a name (AOC)?

One of the best champagne producing villages in the Rheims district is called Bouzy.

T T T T

Peace - *Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)*

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

The Soldier - *Rupert Brooke*
If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Breakfast - *Wilfred Gibson (1878-1962)*
We ate our breakfast lying on our backs,
Because the shells were screeching overhead.
I bet a rasher to a loaf of bread
That Hull United would beat Halifax
When Jimmy Strainthorpe played full-back instead
Of Billy Bradford. Ginger raised his head
And cursed, and took the bet; and dropt back dead.
We ate our breakfast lying on our backs,
Because the shells were screeching overhead.

Hill-Born - *Wilfred Gibson*
I sometimes wonder if it's really true
I ever knew
Another life
Than this unending strife
With unseen enemies in lowland mud,
And wonder if my blood
Thrilled ever to the tune
Of clean winds blowing through an April noon
Mile after sunny mile
On the green ridges of the Windy Gile.

To Germany - *Charles Sorley (1895-1915)*
You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.

But gropers both through fields of thought confined
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.

When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm,
The darkness and the thunder and the rain.

Glory Of Women - *Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)*
You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
Or wounded in a mentionable place.
You worship decorations; you believe
That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
You make us shells. You listen with delight,
By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.
You can't believe that British troops 'retire'
When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,
Trampling the terrible corpses--blind with blood.
O German mother dreaming by the fire,
While you are knitting socks to send your son
His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

Dreamers - *Siegfried Sassoon*
Soldiers are citizens of death's gray land,
Drawing no dividend from time's to-morrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain

Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

T T T T

"Permission to speak in rhyming couplets, Sir"

T T T T

Pass the Port

A woman and a man are involved in a bad car accident; both cars are totally demolished, but neither of them are hurt.

After they crawl out of their cars, the woman says, 'Just look at our cars! There's nothing left, but fortunately we are unharmed. This must be a sign that we should meet and be friends, and live together in peace for the rest of our days.'

Man: 'I agree with you completely. This must be a sign!'

Woman: 'And look at this, here's another miracle. My car is completely demolished but this bottle of wine didn't break. Surely God wants us to drink this wine and celebrate our good fortune.'

She hands the bottle to the man, who opens it, drinks half the bottle and then hands it back to the woman.

She takes the bottle, immediately pushes the cork back in, and hands it back to the man.

Man: 'Aren't you having any?'

Woman: 'No. I think I'll just wait for the police.'

T T T T

Songs of wine

Wei City Song - *Wang Wei (699-759)*
Wei City morning rain
dampens the light dust.
By this inn, green,
newly green willows.
I urge you to drink
another cup of wine;
west of Yang Pass
are no old friends.

To Tu Fu - from Shantung - *Li Po (701-762)*
You ask how I spend my time--
I nestle against a treetrunk
and listen to autumn winds
in the pines all night and day.
Shantung wine can't get me drunk.
The local poets bore me.
My thoughts remain with you,
like the Wen River, endlessly flowing.

To Celia - *Ben Jonson (1572-1637)*
Drink to me only with thine eyes,
    And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup
    And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
    Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sip,
    I would not change for thine.
I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
    Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope that there
    It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
    And sent'st it back to me,
Since when it grows and smells, I swear,
    Not of itself but thee!

The Catholic Sun - *Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)*
Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine,

There's always laughter and good red wine.
At least I've always found it so.
Benedicamus Domino!

Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961)

The Mysteries Remain
I keep the same
cycle of seed-time
and of sun and rain;
Demeter in the grass,
I multiply,
renew and bless
Bacchus in the vine;
I hold the law,
I keep the mysteries true,
the first of these
to name the living, dead;
I am the wine and bread.

I keep the law,
I hold the mysteries true,
I am the vine,
the branches, you
and you.

Oda al vino - *Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)*
Vino color de día,
vino color de noche,
vino con pies de púrpura
o sangre de topacio,
vino,
estrellado hijo
de la tierra,
vino, liso
como una espada de oro,
suave
como un desordenado terciopelo,
vino encaracolado
y suspendido,
amoroso,
marino,
nunca has cabido en una copa,
en un canto, en un hombre,

coral, gregario eres,
y cuando menos, mutuo.
A veces
te nutres de recuerdos
mortales,
en tu ola
vamos de tumba en tumba,
picapedrero de sepulcro helado,
y lloramos
lágrimas transitorias,
pero
tu hermoso
traje de primavera
es diferente,
el corazón sube a las ramas,
el viento mueve el día,
nada queda
dentro de tu alma inmóvil.
El vino
mueve la primavera,
crece como una planta la alegría,
caen muros,
peñascos,
se cierran los abismos,
nace el canto.
Oh tú, jarra de vino, en el desierto
con la sabrosa que amo,
dijo el viejo poeta.
Que el cántaro de vino
al beso del amor sume su beso.

Amor mio, de pronto
tu cadera
es la curva colmada
de la copa,
tu pecho es el racimo,
la luz del alcohol tu cabellera,
las uvas tus pezones,
tu ombligo sello puro
estampado en tu vientre de vasija,
y tu amor la cascada
de vino inextinguible,
la claridad que cae en mis sentidos,

el esplendor terrestre de la vida.

Pero no sólo amor,
beso quemante
o corazón quemado
eres, vino de vida,
sino
amistad de los seres, transparencia,
coro de disciplina,
abundancia de flores.
Amo sobre una mesa,
cuando se habla,
la luz de una botella
de inteligente vino.
Que lo beban,
que recuerden en cada
gota de oro
o copa de topacio
o cuchara de púrpura
que trabajó el otoño
hasta llenar de vino las vasijas
y aprenda el hombre oscuro,
en el ceremonial de su negocio,
a recordar la tierra y sus deberes,
a propagar el cántico del fruto.

Five reasons for drinking - *Henry Aldrich (1647-1710)*
If all be true that I do think,
There are five reasons we should drink;
Good wine — a friend — or being dry —
Or lest we should be by and by —
Or any other reason why.

A Drinking Song - *Henry Carey (1693?-1743)*
Bacchus must now his power resign -
I am the only God of Wine !
It is not fit the wretch should be
In competition set with me,
Who can drink ten times more than he.
Make a new world, ye powers divine !
Stock'd with nothing else but Wine :
Let Wine its only product be,
Let Wine be earth, and air, and sea -

And let that Wine be all for me!

Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914)

Hail, high Excess especially in wine,
To thee in worship do I bend the knee
Who preach abstemiousness unto me,
My skull thy pulpit, as my paunch thy shrine.
Precept on precept, aye, and line on line,
Could ne'er persuade so sweetly to agree
With reason as thy touch, exact and free,
Upon my forehead and along my spine.
At thy command eschewing pleasure's cup,
With the hot grape I warm no more my wit;
When on thy stool of penitence I sit
I'm quite converted, for I can't get up.
Ungrateful he who afterward would falter
To make new sacrifices at thine altar!

John Keats (1795–1821)

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?

Pierre Motin (1566-1612)

Que j'aime en tout temps la taverne !
Que librement je m'y gouverne !
Elle n'a rien d'égal à soi ;
J'y vois tout ce que je demande :
Et les torchons y sont pour moi
De fine toile de Hollande.
Pendant que le chaud nous outrage,
On ne trouve point de bocage
Agréable et frais comme elle est ;
Et quand la froidure m'y mène,
Un malheureux fagot m'y plaît
Plus que tout le bois de Vincenne.
J'y trouve à souhait toutes choses ;
Les chardons m'y semblent des roses,
Et les tripes des ortolans ;

L'on n'y combat jamais qu'au verre.
Les cabarets et les brelans
Sont les paradis de la terre.
C'est Bacchus que nous devons suivre ;
Le nectar dont il nous enivre
A quelque chose de divin,
Et quiconque a cette louange
D'être homme sans boire du vin,
S'il en buvait, serait un ange.
Le vin me rit, je le caresse ;
C'est lui qui bannit ma tristesse,
Et réveille tous mes esprits :
Nous nous aimons de même force.
Je le prends, après j'en suis pris ;
Je le porte, et puis il m'emporte.
Quand j'ai mis quarte dessus pinte,
Je suis gai, l'oreille me tinte,
Je recule au lieu d'avancer :
Avec le premier je me frotte,
Et je fais, sans savoir danser,
De beaux entrechats dans la crotte.
Pour moi, jusqu'à ce que je meure,
Je veux que le vin blanc demeure,
Avec le clairet dans mon corps,
Pourvu que la paix les assemble :
Car je les jetterai dehors,
S'ils ne s'accordent bien ensemble.

Dylan Thomas (1914-1953)

This bread I break was once the oat,
This wine upon a foreign tree
Plunged in its fruit;
Man in the day or wind at night
Laid the crops low, broke the grape's joy.
Once in this wine the summer blood
Knocked in the flesh that decked the vine,
Once in this bread
The oat was merry in the wind;
Man broke the sun, pulled the wind down.

This flesh you break, this blood you let
Make desolation in the vein,
Were oat and grape

Born of the sensual root and sap;
My wine you drink, my bread you snap.

T T T T

T T T T

Pass the Port again

A rather drunk naked woman came out of a London night club and jumped into a taxi.

The driver stared long and hard at the woman but made no attempt to start the cab.

The woman glared back at him and said, "What's the matter with you? - Haven't you ever seen a naked woman before?"

The driver answered, "No luv, I'm just wonderin' 'ow the 'ell you're goin' to pay the fare." [7]

T T T T

The Parable Of The Old Men And The Young - *Wilfred Owen*

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And buildèd parapets and trenches there,
And stretchèd forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an Angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him, thy son.
Behold! Caught in a thicket by its horns,
A Ram. Offer the Ram of Pride instead.

But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

The songs I had are withered
Or vanished clean,
Yet there are bright tracks
Where I have been,

And there grow flowers
For other's delight.
Think well, O singer,
Soon comes night.

[7] With thanks to John Stokoe.

Bach And The Sentry - *Ivor Gurney*

Watching the dark my spirit rose in flood
On that most dearest Prelude of my delight.
The low-lying mist lifted its hood,
The October stars showed nobly in clear night.

When I return, and to real music-making,
And play that Prelude, how will it happen then?
Shall I feel as I felt, a sentry hardly waking,
With a dull sense of No Man's Land again?

Vlamertinghe: Passing the Chateau - *Edmund Blunden (1896-1974)*

'And all her silken flanks with garlands drest' -[8]
But we are coming to the sacrifice.
Must those have flowers who are not yet gone West?
May those have flowers who live with death and lice?
This must be the floweriest place
That earth allows; the queenly face
Of the proud mansion borrows grace for grace
Spite of those brute guns lowing at the skies.
Bold great daisies' golden lights,
Bubbling roses' pinks and whites -
Such a gay carpet! poppies by the million;
Such damask! such vermilion!
But if you ask me, mate, the choice of colour
Is scarcely right; this red should have been duller.

In the Trenches - *Isaac Rosenberg*

I snatched two poppies
From the parapet's ledge,
Two bright red poppies
That winked on the ledge.
Behind my ear
I stuck one through,
One blood red poppy
I gave to you.

The sandbags narrowed
And screwed out our jest,
And tore the poppy
You had on your breast ...
Down - a shell - O! Christ,

[8] See Keats, *Ode to a Grecian Urn.*

I am choked ... safe ... dust blind, I
See trench floor poppies
Strewn. Smashed you lie.

Rain - *Edward Thomas (1878-1917)*
Rain, midnight rain, nothing but the wild rain
On this bleak hut, and solitude, and me
Remembering again that I shall die
And neither hear the rain nor give it thanks
For washing me cleaner than I have been
Since I was born into this solitude.
Blessed are the dead that the rain rains upon:
But here I pray that none whom once I loved
Is dying to-night or lying still awake
Solitary, listening to the rain,
Either in pain or thus in sympathy
Helpless among the living and the dead,
Like a cold water among broken reeds,
Myriads of broken reeds all still and stiff,
Like me who have no love which this wild rain
Has not dissolved except the love of death,
If love it be for what is perfect and
Cannot, the tempest tells me, disappoint.

In Memoriam - *Edward Thomas*
The flowers left thick at nightfall in the wood
This Eastertide call into mind the men,
Now far from home, who, with their sweethearts, should
Have gathered them and will do never again.

Bellinglise - *Alan Seeger (1888-1916)*
I
Deep in the sloping forest that surrounds
The head of a green valley that I know,
Spread the fair gardens and ancestral grounds
Of Bellinglise, the beautiful chateau.
Through shady groves and fields of unmown grass,
It was my joy to come at dusk and see,
Filling a little pond's untroubled glass,
Its antique towers and mouldering masonry.
Oh, should I fall to-morrow, lay me here,
That o'er my tomb, with each reviving year,
Wood-flowers may blossom and the wood-doves croon;

And lovers by that unrecorded place,
Passing, may pause, and cling a little space,
Close-bosomed, at the rising of the moon.

II
Here, where in happier times the huntsman's horn
Echoing from far made sweet midsummer eves,
Now serried cannon thunder night and morn,
Tearing with iron the greenwood's tender leaves.
Yet has sweet Spring no particle withdrawn
Of her old bounty; still the song-birds hail,
Even through our fusillade, delightful Dawn;
Even in our wire bloom lilies of the vale.
You who love flowers, take these; their fragile bells
Have trembled with the shock of volleyed shells,
And in black nights when stealthy foes advance
They have been lit by the pale rockets' glow
That o'er scarred fields and ancient towns laid low
Trace in white fire the brave frontiers of France.

Sonnet 9: On Returning to the Front after Leave - *Alan Seeger*
Apart sweet women (for whom Heaven be blessed),
Comrades, you cannot think how thin and blue
Look the leftovers of mankind that rest,
Now that the cream has been skimmed off in you.
War has its horrors, but has this of good—
That its sure processes sort out and bind
Brave hearts in one intrepid brotherhood
And leave the shams and imbeciles behind.
Now turn we joyful to the great attacks,
Not only that we face in a fair field
Our valiant foe and all his deadly tools,
But also that we turn disdainful backs
On that poor world we scorn yet die to shield—

From **Into Battle** - *Julian Grenfell (1888-1915)*
The naked earth is warm with spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
And quivers in the loving breeze;
And life is Colour and Warmth and Light,
And a striving evermore for these;
And he is dead who will not fight;

And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees a newer birth;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

…..
The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well, for you will not sing another;
Brother, sing.'
…..

And when the burning moment breaks,
And all things else are out of mind,
And Joy of Battle only takes
Him by the throat, and makes him blind---

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air death moans and sings;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

The Day's March - *Robert Nichols (1893-1944)*
The battery grides and jingles,
Mile succeeds to mile;
Shaking the noonday sunshine
The guns lunge out awhile,
And then are still awhile.

We amble along the highway;
The reeking, powdery dust
Ascends and cakes our faces
With a striped, sweaty crust.

Under the still sky's violet
The heat throbs on the air….
The white road's dusty radiance

Assumes a dark glare.

With a head hot and heavy,
And eyes that cannot rest,
And a black heart burning
In a stifled breast,

I sit in the saddle,
I feel the road unroll,
And keep my senses straightened
Toward to-morrow's goal.

There, over unknown meadows
Which we must reach at last,
Day and night thunders
A black and chilly blast.

Heads forget heaviness,
Hearts forget spleen,
For by that mighty winnowing
Being is blown clean.

Light in the eyes again,
Strength in the hand,
A spirit dares, dies, forgives,
And can understand!

And, best! Love comes back again
After grief and shame,
And along the wind of death
Throws a clean flame.

The battery grides and jingles,
Mile succeeds to mile;
Suddenly battering the silence
The guns burst out awhile….

I lift my head and smile.

T T T T

Fractured French

Do you remember the cocktail napkins from the early 1950s?[9]

[9] Collected by F.S. Pearson with illustrations by R. Taylor, *Fractured French* appeared not only on cocktail napkins but also in separate US and British editions. There were some subtle differences: Jeanne d'Arc (*No light in the bathroom*) didn't make it into the British edition (Jeanne d'Arc = John dark, incomprehensible in the UK).

C'est à dire (She's a honey)

Pièce de résistance (Shy girl)

Mal de Mer (Mother-in-Law)

Faux Pas (Father-in-Law)

Honi soit qui mal y pense
(I honestly believe I'm going to be sick)

Marseillaise (Mother says OK)

Mise en Scène (There are mice in the river) *Chateaubriand (Your hat is on fire)*

T T T T

A propos de Chateaubriand:

Il y a des temps où l'on ne doit dépenser le mépris qu'avec économie, à cause du grand nombre de nécessiteux. (*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* 1848).

T T T T

Germany's longest word

Jeevan Vasagar, *Daily Telegraph* 3 Jun 2013

Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz - a 63-letter long title of a law regulating the testing of beef, has officially ceased to exist. The word - which refers to the 'law for the delegation of monitoring beef labelling', has been repealed by a regional parliament after the EU lifted a recommendation to carry out BSE tests on healthy cattle.

German is famous for its compound nouns, which frequently become so cumbersome they have to be reduced to abbreviations. The beef labelling law, introduced in 1999 to protect consumers from BSE, was commonly transcribed as the "RkReÜAÜG", but even everyday words are shortened to initials so *Lastkraftwagen* - lorry - becomes Lkw.

Professor Anatol Stefanowitsch, a linguistics expert at the Free University of Berlin, told the German news agency *dpa* that the beef labelling law was the longest "authentic" word in the German language.

The law was considered a legitimate word by linguists because it appears in official texts, but it never actually appeared in the dictionaries, because compilers of the standard German dictionary *Duden* judge words for inclusion based on their frequency of use.

The longest word with a dictionary entry, according to *Duden* is at 36 letters, *Kraftfahrzeug-Haftpflichtversicherung*, motor vehicle liability insurance.

However a 39-letter word, *Rechtsschutzversicherungsgesellschaften*, insurance companies providing legal protection, is considered the longest German word in everyday use by the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

In theory, a German word can be infinitely long. Unlike in English, an extra concept can simply be added to the existing word indefinitely. Such extended words are sometimes known as *Bandwurmwörter* - 'tapeworm words'. In an essay on the German language, Mark Twain observed: "Some German words are so long that they have a perspective."

The Teutonic fondness for sticking nouns together has resulted in other famous tongue-twisters such as:

Donaudampfschifffahrtsgesellschaftskapitän - Danube steamship company captain - which clocks in at 42 letters. It has become a parlour game to lengthen the steamship captain's name, by creating new words such as *Donaudampfschifffahrtsgesellschaftskapitänswitwe*, the captain's widow. And, *Donaudampfschifffahrtskapitänsmütze* - the captain's hat.

At 80 letters, the longest word ever composed in German is *Donaudampfschifffahrtselektrizitätenhauptbetriebswerkbauunterbeamtengesellschaft*, the "Association for Subordinate Officials of the Head Office Management of the Danube Steamboat Electrical Services".

The longest word in the Oxford Dictionary of English is *pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis* - at 45 letters. Its definition is 'an artificial long word said to mean a lung disease caused by inhaling very fine ash and sand dust'. The longest word to be found in Britain is the Welsh place name *Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch*.

T T T T

Pronunciation errors that made English what it is today

(from an article by David Shariatmadari in *The Guardian* of 11 March 2014

Think hyperbole rhymes with Super Bowl? Don't worry, it could be the start of something beautiful.

Someone I know tells a story about a very senior academic giving a speech. Students shouldn't worry too much, she says, if their plans 'go oar-y' after graduation. Confused glances are exchanged across the hall. Slowly the penny drops: the professor has been pronouncing 'awry' wrong all through her long, glittering career.

…. malapropisms and mispronunciations are fairly common. The 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary lists 171,476 words as being in common use. But the average person's vocabulary is tens of thousands smaller, and the number of words they use every day smaller still. There are bound to be things we've read or are vaguely familiar with, but not able to pronounce as we are supposed to.

The term 'supposed' opens up a whole different debate, of course. Error is the engine of language change, and today's mistake could be tomorrow's vigorously defended norm. There are lots of wonderful examples of alternative pronunciations or missteps that have become standard usage. Here are some of my favourites, complete with fancy technical names.

Adder, apron and umpire all used to start with an 'n'. Constructions like 'A nadder' or 'Mine napron' were so common the first letter was assumed to be part of the preceding word. Linguists call this kind of thing reanalysis or rebracketing. Wasp used to be *waps*; bird used to be *brid* and horse used to be *hros*. Remember this when the next time you hear someone complaining about *aks* for ask or *nucular* for nuclear, or even *perscription*. It's called metathesis, and it's a very common, perfectly natural process.

English spelling can be a pain, but it's also a repository of information about the history of pronunciation. Are we being lazy when we say the name of the third day of the working week? Our ancestors might have thought so. Given that it was once 'Wodin's day' (named after the Norse god), the 'd' isn't just for decoration, and was pronounced up until relatively recently. Who now says the 't' in Christmas? It must have been there at one point, as the messiah wasn't actually called Chris. These are examples of syncope.

Our anatomy can make some changes more likely than others. The simple mechanics of moving from a nasal sound ('m' or 'n') to a non-nasal one can make a consonant pop up in-between. Thunder used to be 'thuner', and empty 'emty'. You can see the same process happening now with words like

hamster, which often gets pronounced with an intruding 'p'. This is a type of epenthesis.

A dark 'l', in linguistic jargon, is one pronounced with the back of the tongue raised. In English, it is found after vowels, as in the words full or pole. This tongue raising can go so far that the 'l' ends up sounding like a 'w'. People frown on this in non-standard dialects such as cockney ('the ol' bill'). But the 'l' in folk, talk and walk used to be pronounced. Now almost everyone uses a 'w' instead- we effectively say *fowk*, *tawk* and *wawk*. This process is called velarisation.

Your grandmother might not like the way you pronounce tune. She might place a delicate 'y' sound before the vowel, saying *tyune* where you would say *chune*. The same goes for other words like tutor or duke. But this process, called affrication, is happening, like it or not. Within a single generation it has pretty much become standard English.

Borrowing from other languages can give rise to an entirely understandable and utterly charming kind of mistake. With little or no knowledge of the foreign tongue, we go for an approximation that makes some kind of sense in terms of both sound and meaning. This is folk etymology. Examples include crayfish, from the French *écrevisse* (not a fish but a kind of lobster); sparrow grass as a variant for asparagus in some English dialects; muskrat (conveniently musky, and a rodent, but named because of the Algonquin word *muscascus* meaning red); and female, which isn't a derivative of male at all, but comes from old French *femelle* meaning woman.

As we've mentioned, English spelling can be a pain. That is mainly because our language underwent some seismic sound changes *after* the written forms of many words had been more or less settled. But just to confuse matters, spelling can reassert itself, with speakers taking their cue from the arrangement of letters on the page rather than what they hear. This is called spelling pronunciation. In Norwegian, 'sk' is pronounced 'sh'. So early English-speaking adopters of skiing actually went *shiing*. Once the rest of us started reading about it in magazines we just said it how it looked. Influenced by spelling, some Americans are apparently staring to pronounce the 'l' in words like balm and psalm (something which actually reflects a much earlier pronunciation).

T T T T

Modern Technology

This story - supposedly a transcript from the WordPerfect[10] help line -

[10] For those whose computer skills began with *Word*, *WordPerfect* was (briefly) a competitor product.

still circulates on the Internet. It is a hoax, but as I have recently called up a Packard Bell online help session involving a keyboarded 'chat' with a highly competent but invisible and voiceless young man from (probably) Tamil Nadu, it strikes a chord. Si non è vero, è ben trovato.

Help Desk assistant: May I help you?
User: Yes, well, I'm having trouble with WordPerfect.
What sort of trouble?
Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away.
Went away?
They disappeared.
Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?
Nothing.
Nothing?
It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type.
Are you still in WordPerfect, or did you get out?
How do I tell?
Can you see the C: prompt on the screen?
What's a sea-prompt?
Never mind. Can you move the cursor around on the screen?
There isn't any cursor: I told you, it won't accept anything I type.
Does your monitor have a power indicator?
What's a monitor?
It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?
I don't know.
Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?
Yes, I think so.
Great. Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall.
.....Yes, it is.
When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?
No.
Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable.
.....Okay, here it is.
Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer.
I can't reach.
Uh huh. Well, can you see if it is?
No.
Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?

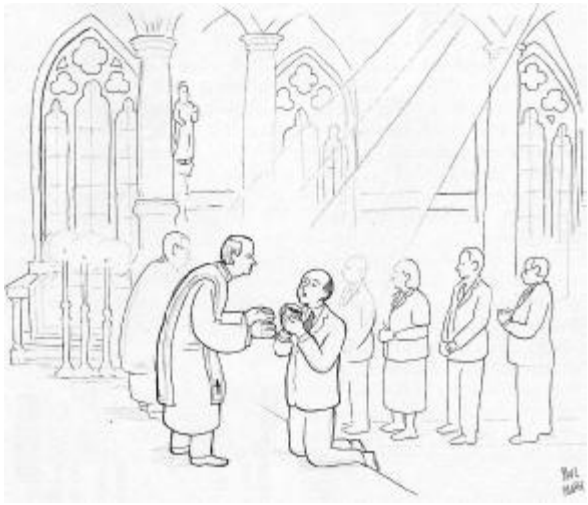
Oh, it's not because I don't have the right angle - it's because it's dark.
Dark?
Yes - the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window.
Well, turn on the office light then.
I can't.
No? Why not?
Because there's a power outage.
A power... A power outage? Aha, okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?
Well, yes, I keep them in the closet.
Good. Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from.
Really? Is it that bad?
Yes, I'm afraid it is.
Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?
Tell them you're too stupid to own a computer.

T T T T

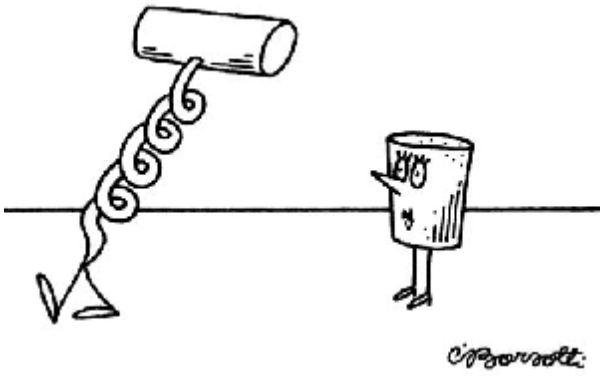
*Well now, hold on Jed - I think this **is** a Malbec*

Open a wine that will make me want to watch the shows you want to watch

They know me here



I'm getting red fruits, earth tones and oak. Amen



Will you call me?

*I recommend the white **and** the red.*
Your fish might have swallowed a duck

It's a magic potion that makes everything you say interesting

T T T T

Music

The sections which follow are taken from a delightful anthology entitled *Words about Music* (Editors John Amis and Michael Rose, Paragon House NY, 1992).

Ludwig van Beethoven

From the heart - May it go again - *to* the heart. (On the manuscript score of the *Missa Solemnis* 1824)

Franz Liszt

Most descriptions of Liszt centre on his virtuoso piano playing, and tend to emphasize its more demonic qualities. Charles Stanford, after hearing him at a semi-private gathering at Leipzig in 1875, left a different impression.

He was only present as a listener, but everyone so markedly refused to leave the room after various young people had tremblingly performed, that he happily took the hint and sat down at the piano. The moment his fingers touched the keys, I realized the immense gap between him and all other pianists. He was the very reverse of all my anticipations, which inclined me, perhaps from the caricatures familiar to me in my boyhood, to expect to see an inspired acrobat, with high-action arms, and wild locks falling on the keys. I saw instead a dignified composed figure, who sat like a rock, never indulging in a theatrical gesture, or helping out his amazingly full tone with the splashes and crashes of a charlatan, producing all his effects with the simplest means, and giving the impression of such ease that the most difficult passages sounded like child's play. It was the very reverse of the style of the young lady to whom von Bülow, after hearing her performance, went up with a deep bow and said 'I congratulate you, Mademoiselle, upon playing the easiest possible passages with the greatest possible difficulty.' I and my companion, a very punctilious person, were so overwhelmed by the performance and the personality, that we could not but 'cap' him as he stalked out into the street. He had a magnetism and a charm which was all-compelling. We understood how he could meet Kings and Emperors on an equality, and fascinate with all the wiles of the serpent. He had two smiles: the one angelical, for artists, the other diabolical, for the satellite Countesses. How innately kind he could be was proved by a little incident which occurred in Berlin shortly after his visit to Leipzig. A young lady pianist had announced a recital, advertising herself (in the hope of attracting a larger audience) as a 'pupil of Liszt'. As she had never laid eyes upon him in her life, she was horrified to read in the papers on the morning of her concert that the Abbé had arrived in the city. The only thing to be done was to make a clean breast of it; she went to his hotel and asked for an interview. When she was shown in she confessed with many tears, and asked for absolution. Liszt asked her the name of the pieces she was going to play, chose one and made her sit down at the piano and play it. Then he gave her some hints about her performance, and dismissed her with a pat on the cheek, and the remark 'Now, my dear, you can call yourself a pupil of Liszt.' (C.S. Stanford, *Unwritten Diary* 1914)

Giacomo Rossini

Dear God - here it is, finished, this poor little Mass. Is this really *de la musique sacrée* that I have written, or simply *de la sacrée musique*? I was born for *opéra buffa*, as you well know! Little science, some heart, that's all there is to it. Be blessed, then, and grant me a place in Paradise. (Passy 1863)

Camille Saint-Saëns

In 1878 Massenet and Saint-Saens were rival candidates for election to the

Institut de France.

> During the Byzantine intrigues which took place on election day, Gounod emerged as Saint-Saëns' champion and Ambroise Thomas as Massenet's. After two votes had been taken Massenet was duly elected by an absolute majority. He always tried to avoid making an enemy and therefore sent a polite telegram to Saint-Saens. It read: 'My dear Colleague, the Institut has just committed a grave injustice.' Immediately there came the furious reply: 'I entirely agree with you. C. Saint-Saëns.' (From James Harding, *Saint-Saëns and his Circle 1965)*

Richard Strauss

(From Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss* 1947) It was at a rehearsal for [a] concert that he conducted himself … that Strauss made the most memorable remark of this visit. Something was not as he liked it, and he was overheard saying:

> No, I know what I want, and I know what I meant when I wrote this. After all, I may not be a first-rate composer, but I *am* a first-class second-rate composer.

Sergei Prokofiev

Prokofiev's seventh and last symphony, written at the height of the Stalinist musical repressions, has a quiet ending. But in a work to be entered for the Stalin Prize a quiet ending was not politically expedient. So the conductor Samosud,[11] as a friend, telephoned Prokofiev.

> [He said that if he] did not make another ending, well, . . . Now, the Stalin Prize has three different awards: the first prize is 100,000 roubles, second prize 50,000 and the third prize 25,000. So Samosud said to Prokofiev: 'If you would like to have 25,000 instead of 100,000, you will leave the old ending: if you would like to have 100,000, you will compose a new one.' And Prokofiev said to me, 'Of course, I compose a new one for 100,000. But Slava, you will still live much longer than I, and you must take care that this new ending never exists after me'. (Mstislav Rostropovich, Interview 1986.)

Igor Stravinsky

> In 1938 I received a request from the Disney office in America for permission to use *Le Sacre* in a cartoon film. The request was accompanied by a gentle warning that if permission were withheld the music would be used anyway. (*Le Sacre*, being 'Russian', was not copyrighted in the United States.) The owners of the film wished to show it abroad, however (i.e., in

[11] Samuil Abramovich Samosud (1884-1964), a Georgian conductor.

Berne copyright countries), and they therefore offered me $5,000, a sum I was obliged to accept (though, in fact, the percentages of a dozen esurient intermediaries quickly reduced it to a fraction of that). I saw the film with George Balanchine in a Hollywood studio at Christmas time 1939. I remember someone offering me a score and, when I said I had my own, the someone saying, 'But it is all changed'. It was indeed. The instrumentation had been improved by such stunts as having the horns play their glissandi an octave higher in the *Danse de la Terre*. The order of the pieces had been shuffled, and the most difficult of them eliminated - though this did not save the musical performance, which was execrable. I will say nothing about the visual complement as I do not wish to criticize an unresisting imbecility; I will say and repeat, however, that the musical point of view of the film sponsored a dangerous misunderstanding.

To the Editor of the Saturday Review *25 West 45th Street, New York, 36, N.Y.*

Sir 4 February 1960

A letter printed in the *Saturday Review* for January 30th, 1960, quotes Mr Walt Disney as follows: 'When Stravinsky came to the studio . . . he was invited to conferences with (the) conductor . . . and (the) commentator . . . was shown the first roughed out drawings, said he was 'excited' over the possibilities of the film . . . agreed to certain cuts and rearrangements and when shown the finished product emerged from the projection visibly moved . . . and we paid him $10,000 not $5,000.'

In fact, my contract, signed and dated January 4, 1939, by my then New York attorney, states that the Walt Disney Enterprises paid the sum of $6,000 for the use of *Le Sacre du printemps* and that $1,000 of this fee was to be paid to the publisher for the rental of the material. My cachet, gross, was, as I said, $5,000. This contract further states that the *Sacre* was to be recorded between March 25 and April 20, 1939. At this time I was in a tuberculosis sanatorium near Chamonix. I did not, indeed, could not have consulted with the musical director or commentator of the film and, in fact I left the sanatorium only once in a period of several months and that was to conduct *Persephone* in the Maggio Fiorentino. The allegation that I visited the Disney studios on two separate occasions, once to see preliminary sketches and later to see the final film, is also false. I appeared there a single time only, as I wrote. I was greeted by Mr Disney, photographed with him, shown drawings and sketches of the already finished film and, finally, the film itself. I recall seeing a negative film of the *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and I recall that I was amused by this and said so. That I could have expressed approbation over the treatment of my own music seems to me highly improbable - though, of course, I should hope that I was polite. Perhaps Mr Disney's misunderstanding was like that of the composer who invited a friend of mine to hear the music of his new opera. When the composer had finished playing the first scene and the time had come for comment, all my friend could think of to say was, 'Then what happens?',

whereupon the composer said, 'Oh, I am so glad you like it.' (Igor Stravinsky, *Exposition and Developments*)

Arnold Schoenberg

The film industry is of course a whole world of its own, and one for which, by now, many excellent composers have written fine scores. Nevertheless it is surprising, to say the least, to find the name of Arnold Schoenberg cropping up in this connection.

Oscar Levant, pianist, composer, film, TV and radio personality, friend of George Gershwin, studied briefly with Schoenberg (also a friend of George Gershwin, incidentally: they used to play tennis together - there's another surprise) and knew the composer's difficult financial circumstances. The great film producer, Irving Thalberg, had *The Good Earth* in preparation. Schoenberg's name was suggested.

It chanced then that the Columbia Broadcasting System was presenting a broadcast in Schoenberg's honor, of which a principal work was his early 'Verklärte Nacht.' Its romantic flavor and poetic character deeply impressed Thalberg, who thereafter sent an emissary to see Schoenberg, even though the music he might write now would have no possible resemblance to 'Verklärte Nacht.' The emissary found the composer indifferent to the idea and thereupon launched into a long recitation of the possibilities for music in the film, leading up to a dramatic exposition of its 'big scene.'

'Think of it!' he enthused. 'There's a terrific storm going on, the wheat field is swaying in the wind, and suddenly the earth begins to tremble. In the midst of the earthquake Oo-Lan gives birth to a baby. What an opportunity for music!' 'With so much going on,' said Schoenberg mildly, 'what do you need music for?' (Oscar Levant *A Smattering of Ignorance* 1940)

Not surprisingly, nothing came of it. Schoenberg's was hardly the temperament.

One especially naive young man took one of his problems to Schoenberg, hopeful of a quick, concise solution. He had been assigned to write some music for an airplane sequence and was not sure how he should go about it. He posed the problem to Schoenberg, who thought for a moment and then said, 'Airplane music? Just like music for big bees, only louder.' (Oscar Levant *ibid.*)

T T T T

The Old Lute - *Po Chu-I (772-846), translated by Arthur Waley*
Of cord and cassia-wood is the lute compounded;
Within it lie ancient melodies.
Ancient melodies - weak and savourless,
Not appealing to present men's taste.

Light and colour are faded from the jade stops;
Dust has covered the rose-red strings.
Decay and ruin came to it long ago,
But the sound that is left is still cold and clear.
I do not refuse to play it, if you want me to;
But even if I play, people will not listen.
How did it come to be neglected so?
Because of the Ch'iang flute and the zithern of Ch'in.

Sonnet 128 - *William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*
How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessèd wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

Sonnet 8 - *William Shakespeare*
Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing;
Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: "Thou single wilt prove none."

To Music, To Becalm His Fever - *Robert Herrick (1591-1674)*
Charm me asleep, and melt me so

With thy delicious numbers;
That being ravish'd, hence I go
Away in easy slumbers.
Ease my sick head,
And make my bed,
Thou Power that canst sever
From me this ill;--
And quickly still,
Though thou not kill
My fever.

Thou sweetly canst convert the same
From a consuming fire,
Into a gentle-licking flame,
And make it thus expire.
Then make me weep
My pains asleep,
And give me such reposes,
That I, poor I,
May think, thereby,
I live and die
'Mongst roses.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers,
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains
With thy soft strains;
That having ease me given,
With full delight,
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For Heaven.

Music's Empire - *Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)*
First was the world as one great cymbal made,
Where jarring winds to infant Nature played.
All music was a solitary sound,
To hollow rocks and murm'ring fountains bound.

Jubal first made the wilder notes agree;
And Jubal tunèd music's Jubilee;
He call'd the echoes from their sullen cell,

And built the organ's city where they dwell.

Each sought a consort in that lovely place,
And virgin trebles wed the manly bass.
From whence the progeny of numbers new
Into harmonious colonies withdrew.

Some to the lute, some to the viol went,
And others chose the cornet eloquent,
These practicing the wind, and those the wire,
To sing men's triumphs, or in Heaven's choir.

Then music, the mosaic of the air,
Did of all these a solemn noise prepare;
With which she gain'd the empire of the ear,
Including all between the earth and sphere.

Victorious sounds! yet here your homage do
Unto a gentler conqueror than you;
Who though he flies the music of his praise,
Would with you Heaven's Hallelujahs raise.

In Commendation Of Music - *William Strode (1602-1644)*
When whispering strains do softly steal
With creeping passion through the heart,
And when at every touch we feel
Our pulses beat and bear a part;
When threads can make
A heartstring shake,
Philosophy
Can scarce deny
The soul consists of harmony.

When unto heavenly joy we fain
What'ere the soul affecteth most,
Which only thus we can explain
By music of the winged host,
Whose lays we think
Make stars to wink,
Philosophy
Can scarce deny
Our souls consist of harmony.

O lull me, lull me, charming air,
My senses rock with wonder sweet;

Like snow on wool thy fallings are,
Soft, like a spirit, are thy feet:
Grief who need fear
That hath an ear?
Down let him lie
And slumbering die,
And change his soul for harmony.

From **A Song for St Cecilia's Day** - *John Dryden (1631-1700)*
The trumpet's loud clangour
Excites us to arms, with shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms. The double double double beat
Of the thund'ring drum
Cries, Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!

Il Pianto, Cimarosa - *Auguste Barbier (1805-1882)*
Chantre mélodieux né sous le plus beau ciel,
Au nom doux et fleuri comme une lyre antique,
Léger napolitain, dont la folle musique
A frotté, tout enfant, les deux lèvres de miel,

Ô bon Cimarosa ! Nul poëte immortel,
Nul peintre, comme toi, dans sa verve comique,
N'égaya des humains la face léthargique
D'un rayon de gaîté plus franc et naturel.

Et pourtant tu gardas à travers ton délire,
Sous les grelots du fou, sous le masque du rire,
Un cœur toujours sensible et plein de dignité ;

Oui, ton âme fut belle, ainsi que ton génie ;
Elle ne faillit point devant la tyrannie,
Et chanta dans les fers l'hymne de liberté.

Free Thoughts On Several Eminent Composers - *Charles Lamb (1775-1834)*
Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites; for my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel. --
Cannot a man live free and easy,
Without admiring Pergolesi?
Or thro' the world with comfort go,
That never heard of Doctor Blow?

So help me God, I hardly have;
And yet I eat, and drink, and shave,
Like other people, if you watch it,
And know no more of Stave or Crotchet,
Than did the primitive Peruvians;
Or those old ante-queer-Diluvians
That lived in the unwash'd world with Tubal,
Before that dirty blacksmith Jubal
By stroke on anvil, or by summ'at,
Found out, to his great surprise, the gamut.
I care no more for Cimarosa,
Than he did for Salvator Rosa,
Being no painter; and bad luck
Be mine, if I can bear that Gluck!
Old Tycho Brahe, and modern Herschel,
Had something in 'em; but who's Purcel?
The devil, with his foot so cloven,
For aught I care, may take Beethoven;
And, if the bargain does not suit,
I'll throw him Weber in to boot.
There's not the splitting of a splinter
To choose 'twixt him last named, and Winter.
Of Doctor Pepusch old queen Dido
Knew just as much, God knows, as I do.
I would not go four miles to visit
Sebastian Bach (or Batch, which is it?);
No more I would for Bononcini.
As for Novello, or Rossini,
I shall not say a word to grieve 'em,
Because they're living; so I leave 'em.

T T T T

Conductors

Language can often be a problem with visiting foreign conductors. The classic 'In Chairmany ve make it other' is reputed to have come from **Erich Kleiber**, and the Swiss conductor, **Ernest Ansermet**, not having any tenses but the past, was responsible for the great outburst: 'Don't spoke! Don't spoke! If you didn't like it, you went!'

It was Ansermet again who, getting irritated by the continual atmosphere of levity at a rehearsal of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, was moved to cry out in exasperation: 'A joke then and now sometimes yes very but always by God never!'

In later years Ansermet's knowledge of the language improved:

> [He] said no more than needed to be said and in perfectly understandable English. His problem was that he prided himself on the use of idioms, which, more often than not, went wrong. In one altercation in Kingsway Hall he announced loudly, 'You think I know fuck nothing, but you are wrong, I know fuck all!' (John Culshaw, *Putting the Record Straight* 1981)

Conductors' foibles are not invariably well received by their players:

> . . . petty issues often distorted one's view of **Karajan** the musician The orchestra, for example, never forgot his instruction that they should not stand up as he passed through the departure lounge to board the plane first when they were on tour. What irked them was two-fold: his assumption that they would stand up (which, in a public lounge, would have looked at the very least odd), and his reason for not wanting them to stand up - which was no more than his consciousness of his small stature. He simply could not bear to be in the presence of tall people unless they were sitting down, or unless he could find a high stool on which to perch himself. (John Culshaw, *ibid*.)

Imogen Holst … dressed in sensible, pre-Laura Ashley fashion, she looked like a true product of the folk-song and dance movement, but her rather fey charm was powered by a will of iron. Very much Gustav's daughter, she was a thoroughly practical musician, and the following notes bring back the flavour of many concerts in churches at which she was herself the central figure.

> *Things that can go wrong on the day*. You should arrive at least half an hour before the combined rehearsal is due to begin, bringing two or three helpers with you. (This may seem over-cautious, but you can never know what will go wrong at the last minute, and on more than one occasion I have been faced with having to move a heavy brass lectern without any assistance.) The unexpected setbacks could include any of the following: the key of the organ will have disappeared (it is wise to take a screw-driver to the rehearsal); a coach-load of sightseers from the next county will arrive to look at the chancel tombs just as you were hoping to get the music stands in position; members of the Guild of Church Workers will come armed with huge vases of evergreens which they will place in front of the pulpit just where you had intended the second violins to sit; a road-drill will begin digging up the pavement outside the church porch, or a traffic diversion will cut off the access to the church car-park. . . . The lorry bringing the hired chairs will not have appeared on time, and you will have to part with one of your assistants, so that he can find out what has happened. When the chairs arrive, you should see that there are strong,

intelligent helpers to unload them and put them in position: give them copies of your seating plan, so that they know exactly what to do. (It is only incompetent organizers who insist on arranging chairs and carrying platforms while other people stand by and watch them: your job is to keep still so that you can answer the dozens of questions that everyone will want to ask you.). . . There will be chaos during the five minutes before the rehearsal. The organist's A will be greeted with groans of protest from the orchestra. (The organ should have been tuned very recently, as close to the day of the performance as possible; and the temperature in the church during the tuning should be approximately the same as the temperature during the concert. It is important that the swell-boxes should have been left open: a modern organ has a gadget which automatically opens the boxes, but on an old organ the player has to remember to do it himself.) The orchestra will have several other difficulties to contend with. Cellists' spikes will squeak as they slither across the stone floor: someone should have reminded them to bring a small mat with them. The cellists will also be finding it uncomfortable to have to sit on the extreme edge of the sort of chair that slopes backwards because it has been shaped for stacking. But if you manage to discover one or two old-fashioned wooden chairs in the vestry they will probably be so rickety with age that they will collapse under the players' weight. The leading violinist may be asking for a cushion to make his chair the right height for playing, and the only available substitute will be a hassock, which will be much too high. The borrowed folding music-stands will have come apart during their journey in the boot of a car, and no one will have thought of tying a label to each half to make it easier to put them together. When the odd bits and pieces have at last been joined, enthusiastic helpers will seize a stand without waiting to see if it has been screwed up tightly enough; they will almost certainly hold it near the top instead of near the bottom, so that the metal joints will fall apart again, to the peril of anyone within reach. It is as well to be provided with sticking-plaster on these occasions. In fact, a conductor needs to bring a good deal of equipment in case of emergencies: the list includes spare conducting sticks; any available spare copies of the music; a tuning fork or pitch pipe; pencils and rubbers; several sheets of manuscript paper; scissors; adhesive tape; and a few medium-sized squares of cardboard which can be used either as a firm backing for flimsy orchestral parts or as tightly folded wedges to prevent a platform rocking to and fro on an uneven floor.

... At the very beginning of the rehearsal your time-schedule is likely to be upset by the arrival of a photographer from the local newspaper. It is no good losing your temper with him: he has to earn his living. Ask everyone to sing and play the first note of the first piece on a fortissimo-held pause,

and bring them all in with a triumphant flourish of your stick. If the wretched man says that he also wants a close-up of the soloists, you must quickly gather them round you while you hold out your full score for them to look at: open it at random and point to a word at the top of a page as if you had only just noticed it for the first time. This never fails to satisfy a photographer and with any luck he will clear off without having wasted more than three or four precious minutes. (Imogen Holst, *Conducting a Choir - a Guide for Amateurs* 1973)

T T T T

Warum Gross- und Kleinschreibung?

Einer fragte auch schon, warum die Deutschsprechenden immer noch gross und klein schreiben:

Die Spinnen
Die spinnen

Er hat liebe Genossen.
Er hat Liebe genossen.

Wäre er doch nur Dichter!
Wäre er doch nur dichter!

Sich brüsten und anderem zuwenden.
Sich Brüsten und anderem zuwenden.

Die nackte Sucht zu quälen.
Die Nackte sucht zu quälen.

Der gefangene Floh.
Der Gefangene floh.

Darum …..

T T T T

Pass the port one more time

One day, shortly after joining the PGA tour in 1965, Lee Trevino, a professional golfer and married man, was at his home in Dallas, Texas mowing his front lawn himself, as he always did. A lady driving by in a big, shiny Cadillac stopped in front of his house, lowered the window and asked, "Excuse me, do you speak English?"

Lee responded, "Yes Ma'am, I do." The lady then asked, "What do you charge to do yard work?"

Lee said, "Well, the lady in this house lets me sleep with her." The lady hurriedly put the car into gear and sped off.

T T T T

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

Liebeslied Wie soll ich meine Seele halten, dass sie nicht an deine rührt? Wie soll ich sie hinheben über dich zu andern Dingen? Ach gerne möcht ich sie bei irgendwas Verlorenem im Dunkel unterbringen an einer fremden stillen Stelle, die nicht weiterschwingt, wenn deine Tiefen schwingen. Doch alles, was uns anrührt, dich und mich, nimmt uns zusammen wie ein Bogenstrich, der aus zwei Saiten eine Stimme zieht. Auf welches Instrument sind wir gespannt? Und welcher Spieler hat uns in der Hand? O süsses Lied.	**Love song** How can I hold back my soul so that it touches yours no more? How can I raise it up above you, reaching other things? I wish that I could find a dark and secret place where I could hide it from all outside gaze, a place where nothing resonates in sympathy with your deep counterpoint. But all that touches us, both you and me, moves us together as a bowing stroke makes but a single voice from two strings crossed. What is this instrument on which we're strung? Who is the player in whose hand we're held? Oh, sweet song.

Die Engel Sie haben alle müde Munde und helle Seelen ohne Saum. Und eine Sehnsucht (wie nach Sünde) geht ihnen manchmal durch den Traum. Fast gleichen sie einander alle; in Gottes Gärten schweigen sie, wie viele, viele Intervalle in seiner Macht und Melodie. Nur wenn sie ihre Flügel breiten, sind sie die Wecker eines Winds: als ginge Gott mit seinen weiten Bildhauerhänden durch die Seiten im dunklen Buch des Anbeginns.	**The Angels** They all have tired lips And lucid seamless souls. And a yearning (as if for sin) Sometimes passes through their dream. They almost all resemble one another; In God's garden they are silent, Like many, many intervals In His might and melody. But - when they spread their wings - They are the rousers of a wind: As if God thumbs with his broad Sculptors' hands through the pages Of the dark book of The Beginning.

Übung am Klavier Der Sommer summt. Der Nachmittag macht müde; sie atmete verwirrt ihr frisches Kleid und legte in die triftige Etüde die Ungeduld nach einer Wirklichkeit, die kommen konnte: morgen, heute abend -, die vielleicht da war, die man nur verbarg; und vor den Fenstern, hoch und alles habend, empfand sie plötzlich den verwöhnten Park. Da brach sie ab; schaute hinaus, verschränkte die Hände; wünschte sich ein langes Buch - und schob auf einmal den Jasmingeruch erzürnt zurück. Sie fand, dass er sie kränkte.	**Piano practice** The summer hums. The afternoon makes drowsy; she savoured languidly the freshness of her dress and marked in that well-defined etude her urgent need for something real that could perhaps, today, tomorrow, wait for her, or was there already, just kept hidden; and at the window, high, all-seeing, suddenly she sensed the pampered park. With that she broke off, gazed outside, and clasped her hands together; wished for a long book-- and in a burst of anger pushed away the jasmine scent. It sickened her.

Die Laute	**The Lute**
Ich bin die Laute. Willst du meinen Leib beschreiben, seine schön gewölbten Streifen: sprich so, als sprächest du von einer reifen gewölbten Feige. Übertreib	I am the lute. If you would like to talk about my body, and the beauty of its cambered ribs, use words as to describe a ripened fig. Exaggerate
das Dunkel, das du in mir siehst. Es war Tullias Dunkelheit. In ihrer Scham war nicht so viel, und ihr erhelltes Haar war wie ein heller Saal. Zuweilen nahm	the dark you see in me – Tullia's darkness; less visible between her thighs, for then the brightness of her golden hair was like a floodlit hall. From time to time
sie etwas Klang von meiner Oberfläche in ihr Gesicht und sang zu mir. Dann spannte ich mich gegen ihre Schwäche, und endlich war mein Inneres in ihr.	she plucked some sound up from my surface board into her face and sang to me. Then, at last, now taut against her softness, I placed within her all my innermost.

La Musique - *Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)*

La musique souvent me prend comme une mer!
Vers ma pâle étoile,
Sous un plafond de brume ou dans un vaste éther,
Je mets à la voile;
La poitrine en avant et les poumons gonflés
Comme de la toile
J'escalade le dos des flots amoncelés
Que la nuit me voile;
Je sens vibrer en moi toutes les passions
D'un vaisseau qui souffre;
Le bon vent, la tempête et ses convulsions
Sur l'immense gouffre
Me bercent. D'autres fois, calme plat, grand miroir
De mon désespoir!

Who wrote this fiendish Rite of Spring
What right had he to write the thing,
Against our helpless ears to fling
Its crash, clash, cling, clang, bing, bang, bing?
And then to call it Rite of Spring,
the season when on joyous wing
The birds melodious carols sing
And harmony's in everything!
He who could write the Rite of Spring,
If I be right, by right should swing!"
–anonymous review in *The Boston Herald*, 1924

The Village Choir - *Anon.*[12]

Half a bar, half a bar,
Half a bar onward!
Into an awful ditch
Choir and precentor hitch,
Into a mess of pitch,
They led the Old Hundred.
Trebles to right of them,
Tenors to left of them,
Basses in front of them,
Bellowed and thundered.
Oh, that precentor's look,
When the sopranos took
Their own time and hook
From the Old Hundred!

Screeched all the trebles here,
Boggled the tenors there,
Raising the parson's hair,
While his mind wandered;
Theirs not to reason why
This psalm was pitched too high:
Theirs but to gasp and cry
Out the Old Hundred.
Trebles to right of them,
Tenors to left of them,
Basses in front of them,
Bellowed and thundered.
Stormed they with shout and yell,
Not wise they sang nor well,
Drowning the sexton's bell,
While all the Church wondered.

Dire the precentor's glare,
Flashed his pitchfork in the air
Sounding fresh keys to bear
Out the Old Hundred.
Swiftly he turned his back,
Reached he his hat from rack,
Then from the screaming pack,

[12] The Village Choir is the Light Brigade, half a league becomes half a bar, and the brave six hundred is reflected in the hymn tune the Old One Hundredth (Anon calls it the 'Old Hundred'), to which is sung 'All people that on earth do dwell' (Psalm 100).

Himself he sundered.
Tenors to right of him,
Tenors to left of him,
Discords behind him,
Bellowed and thundered.
Oh, the wild howls they wrought:
Right to the end they fought!
Some tune they sang, but not
Not the Old Hundred.

Mélodie - *Anna de Noailles (1876-1933)*
Comme un couteau dans un fruit
Amène un glissant ravage,
La mélodie aux doux bruit
Fend le coeur et le partage
Et tendrement le détruit.
-- Et la langueur irisée
Des arpèges, des accords,
Descend, tranchante et rusée,
Dans la faiblesse du corps
Et dans l'âme divisée...

Musician - *Louise Bogan (1897-1970)*
Where have these hands been,
By what delayed,
That so long stayed
Apart from the thin

Strings which they now grace
With their lonely skill?
Music and their cool will
At last interlace.

Now with great ease, and slow,
The thumb, the finger, the strong
Delicate hand plucks the long
String it was born to know.

And, under the palm, the string
Sings as it wished to sing.

Instructions to the Player - *Karl Rakosi (1903-2004)*
Cellist,
easy on that bow.

Not too much weeping.

Remember that the soul
is easily agitated
and has a terror of shapelessness.
It will venture out
but only to a doe's eye.

Let the sound out
inner misterioso
but from a distance
like the forest at night.

And do not forget
the pause between.
That is the sweetest
and has the nature of infinity.

Peter Quince At The Clavier - *Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)*
Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

Everyone sang - *Siegfried Sassoon*
Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on--on--and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away ... O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done.

Secret Music - *Siegfried Sassoon*
I keep such music in my brain
No din this side of death can quell;
Glory exulting over pain,
And beauty, garlanded in hell.

My dreaming spirit will not heed
The roar of guns that would destroy
My life that on the gloom can read
Proud-surging melodies of joy.

To the world's end I went, and found
Death in his carnival of glare;
But in my torment I was crowned,
And music dawned above despair.

The Tomb Of Scarlatti - *Peter Porter (1929-2010)*
Average depth of graves, four feet -
the illusion of allegro in our light
is hard: that Iberian heartlessness
is still with us but not such sweetness.
What miracles for the twentieth century
among castrati, melons, and the dribbling kings!
Average length of sonata, four minutes, with repeats.

I hate the idea of Spain, yet for Domenico
I'd round each corner with its urine smell,
tickle the garden fish with a martyr's bone,
sit in the shadow of a cancered priest.
So many slaps of black! The old dust jumps
for American recordings, keyboard clatters
like cruel dominoes - E major fills the afternoon.

Santo Norberto gone: cat stalks complacent
pigeons. The old gods swim for home.
What are the conversions? Scholars' rules
and lace handkerchiefs become duennas' breasts
leaning from all top windows. A tourist bus

is draped with moonlight while the sounding notes
go past like carloads of the glittering dead.

T T T T

Have some more port

Towards the end of the Sunday service, the Minister asked, "How many of you have forgiven your enemies?" 80% held up their hands.

The Minister then repeated his question. All responded this time, except one man, an avid golfer named Walter Barnes, who attended church only when the weather was bad.

"Mr. Barnes, it's obviously not a good morning for golf. It's good to see you here today. Are you not willing to forgive your enemies?"

"I don't have any," he replied gruffly.

"Mr. Barnes, that is very unusual. How old are you?"

"Ninety-eight," he replied. The congregation stood up and clapped.

"Mr. Barnes, would you please come down in front and tell us all how a person can live ninety-eight years and not have an enemy in the world?"

The old golfer tottered down the aisle, stopped in front of the pulpit, turned around, faced the congregation, and said simply,

"I outlived the bastards."

T T T T

A Mother's Lament - *Anon.*
A mother was bathin' her baby one night
The youngest of ten, a poor little mite,
The mother was fat and the baby was thin
'Twas nawt but a skellington covered in skin.

The mother turned round for the soap from the rack;
She weren't gone a minute, but when she got back
Her baby had gone, and in anguish she cried:
"Oh, where has my baby gone?" The angels replied:

"Your baby has gorn down the plug'ole,
Your baby has gorn down the plug;
The poor little thing was so skinny and thin
He shoulda been washed in a jug.

Your baby is perfik'ly happy,
He won't need no bathin' no more;
He's workin' his way through the sewers,

Not lost, just gone on before.

Your baby has gorn down the drainpipe
And the chlorine is bad for his eyes;
He's havin' a swim, and it's healthy for him,
He needed the exercise.

Don't worry 'baht 'im, just be 'appy,
For we know he is suff'rin' no pain.
Your baby has gorn down the plug'ole,
Let's hope he don't stop up the drain.

Your baby is perfik'ly 'appy,
He won't need a bath any more;
He's muckin' abaht with the angels above:
Not lost but gone on before."

T T T T

George Bernard Shaw on Music

Before making his reputation as a playwright, Shaw (1856-1950) worked as a music and literary critic. Here are two of his gems.

There is a consensus of opinion in favour of Liszt as a player. His songs, too, have affected many musicians deeply; and though they are not generally familiar, their merit has not been at all emphatically questioned. His studies and transcriptions, if not wholly irreproachable in point of taste, show an exhaustive knowledge of the pianoforte; and, unplayable as they are to people who attack a pianoforte with stiff wrists and clenched teeth, they are not dreaded by good pianists. The brilliancy and impetuous fantasy of his Hungarian Rhapsodies are irresistible, as Herr Richter has proved again and again at St James's Hall. But his oratorios and symphonic poems - especially the latter - have not yet won the place which he claimed for them. A man can hardly be so impressionable as Liszt was and yet be sturdy enough to be original. He could conduct Lohengrin like Wagner's other self, and could play Beethoven as if the sonatas were of his own moulding; but as an original composer he was like a child, delighting in noise, speed, and stirring modulation, and indulging in such irritating excesses and repetitions of them, that decorous concert-goers find his Infernos, his battles, and his Mazeppa rides first amusing, then rather scandalous, and finally quite unbearable. A pleasanter idea of the man can be derived from the many eulogies, some of them mere schoolgirl raptures, others balanced verdicts of great composers and critics, which, whether the symphonic poems live or die, will preserve a niche for him in the history of music as a man who loved his art, despised money, attracted everybody

worth knowing in the nineteenth century, lived through the worst of it, and got away from it at last with his hands unstained. (*Pall Mall Gazette* 2 August 1886)

Shaw …., tried beyond endurance by the academic 'analyses' contained in the programme books of his day, gives his own analysis of Hamlet's soliloquy on suicide in the same style:

"Shakespeare, dispensing with the customary exordium, announces his subject at once in the infinitive, in which mood it is presently repeated after a short connecting passage in which, brief as it is, we recognize the alternative and negative forms on which so much of the significance of repetition depends. Here we reach a colon; and a pointed pository phrase, in which the accent falls decisively on the relative pronoun, brings us to the first full stop.

I break off here, because, to confess the truth, my grammar is giving out. But I want to know whether it is just that a literary critic should be forbidden to make his living in this way on pain of being interviewed by two doctors and a magistrate, and haled off to Bedlam forthwith; whilst the more a musical critic does it, the deeper the veneration he inspires." (*Music in London*, 1893)

T T T T

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep -
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to? 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep,
To sleep, perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.

T T T T

Gerard Hoffnung (1925-1959) was an artist and musician, best known for his humorous work. Born in Berlin to Jewish parents, he was sent to school in England and went on to art school, subsequently publishing a series of cartoons on musical themes. He played the tuba and performed Vaughan Williams's concerto at the Festival Hall in 1958. In

1956 he organised the first "Hoffnung Festival" in London, at which classical music was parodied for comic effect. Donald Swann revised Haydn's *Surprise* Symphony to make it considerably more surprising; and Malcolm Arnold wrote *A Grand, Grand Overture*, scored for orchestra and vacuum cleaners, and dedicated to US President Hoover.

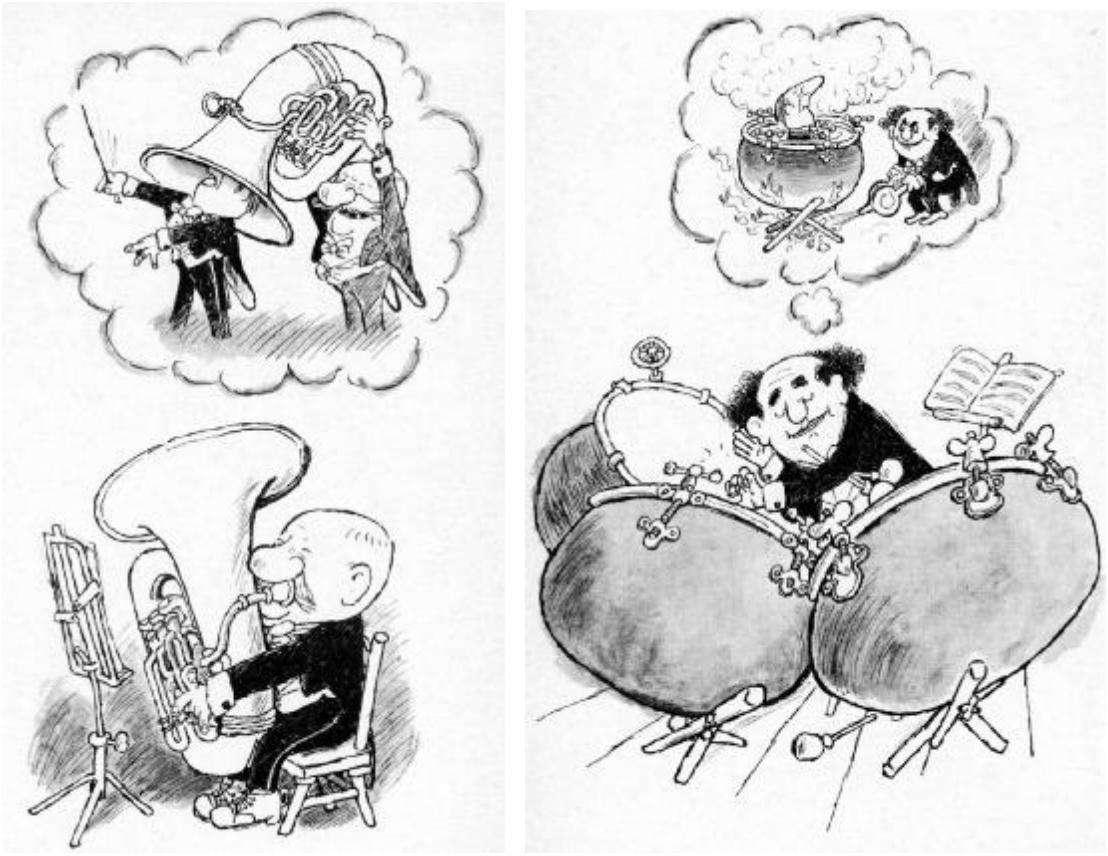
Alerto

Interruzione

Piano

Dolce

Appassionato



Orchestral thoughts

T T T T

Did you have enough port?

A man and his wife walked into a dentist's office. The man said to the dentist, "Doctor, I'm in a really big hurry. Two friends are sitting in my car waiting for us to go and play golf, so forget about the anaesthetic, I don't have time for the gums to get numb. I just want you to pull the tooth, and be done with it! We have a 10 o'clock tee-off time at the best golf course in the county and it's 9h30 already.… I don't have time to wait for the anaesthetic to work!"

The dentist thought to himself, "My goodness, this is surely a very brave man asking to have his tooth pulled without using anything to kill the pain." So he asked him, "Which tooth is it, Sir?"

The man turned to his wife and said, "Open your mouth dear, and show him...."

T T T T

When there is no word for it in English, why not just invent one?

From an article by Lauren Laverne, The Observer, 10 August 2014

When even our expansive lexicon fails me, I look beyond my mother tongue. The limits of my language mean the limits of my world and all that.

Other cultures have pinpointed human experiences which the English language has yet to name. The Japanese have forest bathing (*shinrin-yoku*), the Germans grief-bacon (*kummerspeck*). The former describes a constitution-boosting trip to the woods, the latter weight gained by emotional overeating.

A few of my other favourites: the Welsh word *hiraeth* – a quietly melancholic longing for home similar to the Portuguese *saudade* (a yearning for something that might never return). The onomatopoeic Danish *plimpplampplettere* describes skimming stones, and *zeg* is the day after tomorrow in Georgian, which I shall use until the arcane overmorrow makes a comeback.

Global Language Monitor, which documents language trends, counted 1,025,109.8 [*Ed*: wherever does the .8 come from?] active English words on 1 January and estimates that a new word is created every 98 minutes, which should take us to approximately 1,028,814.2 by the time of going to print.

The new edition of the Chambers English dictionary, released a couple of weeks ago, contains 1,000 new entries including (warning: those of a sensitive intellectual disposition may wish to look away now) yolo, bitcoin, hipster and selfie.

T T T T

Odds and Ends

I used to work as a cheesemonger, but I camembert it any longer.
Why did the cheese lose a fight with a stone? Because the roquefort back.
I had a dream last night about some cheese chasing me - I think I'm having hallouminations.

Middle-of-the-road politics: "There's nothing in the middle of the road but yellow lines and dead armadillos." Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower, quoted in *The Battle of Bretton Woods*, Benn Steil, Princeton 2013.

Dear God, please send clothes for all those poor ladies on Grandpa's computer. Amen.

Count every "F" in the following text:

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS
OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE
EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.....

- Three, four ….or more?[13]

[13] Most people count 3 or 4 - there are actually 6, but the brain has difficulty, apparently, in processing the 'f' in 'of'. Try it again….

If I were to begin life again, I would devote it to music. It is the only unpunished rapture on earth. (Sidney Smith)

A recent article in the *Kentucky Post* reported that a woman, Anne Maynard, has sued St Luke's hospital, saying that after her husband had surgery there, he lost all interest in sex. A hospital spokesman replied, 'Mr. Maynard was admitted in Ophthalmology; all we did was correct his eyesight.' (Certainly a hoax, but, again, '*Si non è vero, è ben trovato*'.)

Everything's either concave or -vex,
So whatever you dream will be something with sex. (Piet Hein)

Carambar (bis) - Here in Switzerland, the cultivated elite get their humour from - among other sources - the wrappings of their favourite caramel bar: the *Carambar*. I included a first selection in *CP2009* - here are some more in honour of my granddaughter Felicia, my main supplier:

- Quelle est la voiture préférée de Catwoman? Une 4x4 ….
- Pourquoi les Normands dorment mal? Il n'ont que des lits de Caen.
- Deux anges causent: Quel temps fera-t-il demain? Nuageux. Tant mieux, on pourra s'asseoir ….
- Pourquoi met-on le journal au frigidaire? Pour avoir des nouvelles toutes fraîches….
- Comment appelle-t-on la femelle du hamster? Hamsterdame ….
- Quelle est l'hormone la plus active à l'adolescence? Le textosterone ….
- Q. Where you go to weigh a whale? A. To the Whaleway station.
- Q. Where does a kangaroo go when it is sick? A. To the hôpital cantonal.

Finally, Confucius did **not** say:

Man who want pretty nurse, must be patient.

Lady who go camping must beware of evil intent.

Man who leap off cliff jump to conclusion.

Man run in front of car get tired. Man run behind car get exhausted.

War not determine who right, determine who left.

Man who drive like hell bound to get there.

Man who live in glass house should change clothes in basement.