

Mr Mets 10: Prof Harrison's First Symphony

Before we show this year's episode, we must begin -- yet again -- with an apology. Poor Prof Clark. Every year, the same jokes -- hitting himself on the head with a plastic bottle, hopping up and down and shouting "bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-blah", and talking about himself for long periods of time. Last year, however, we recognise that we did go too far with a story in which, as a prank, the undergraduates signed him up to popular dating app Tinder. For this, we apologise. Undergraduates -- we are very sorry and know you would never be this cruel. We also apologise to Prof Clark and would like to assure him that under no circumstances will exactly the same jokes be used in this episode because, let's face it, after nine episodes, we are starting to run out of ideas.

And now we begin this year's episode of *The Adventures of the Mr Mets!* Episode 10: Prof Harrison's First Symphony.

[Scene 0: the foyer outside the lift/toilets]

It had been a difficult year in Happy Met Land. Since the departure of Mr Gill, it seemed that things in the Land were constantly breaking. They quickly realised the problem -- without Mr Gill, no one knew what to do to get things fixed. It turned out that e-mails had been sent; however, as they had been sent to Met e-mail lists, they took five months to arrive.

[Scene 1: the Happy Met Land coffee area]

By Autumn Term, most of the problems had been sorted out in Happy Met Land.

But not everything was perfect. In the coffee room, Prof Ambaum and Prof Harrison stood, looking troubled. The panto was less than two weeks away and they had no idea what they were going to perform during the interval. Time was running out and the idea of appearing on stage with something clearly thrown together at the last minute and woefully under-rehearsed was unthinkable. All they needed was a song and some inspiration. But the Happy Met Landers were not being entirely helpful.

"Well, I am never stuck for inspiration," said Prof Shepherd. "Ideas just come thick and fast to me. I get a great idea, write a paper on it, submit it to Nature, it gets published -- e-mail round Met Abstracts -- bang! It's simple really. I assume it's the same with songs."

"I sometimes struggle with inspiration," said Prof van Leeuwen. "You see, the brain needs extra oxygen to come up ideas. But up here, the density of the air is so much lower."

Dr Frame sighed. "You don't need inspiration to come up with a good idea for a song to perform at the panto," he said. "You just need a good idea. And a song."

"Don't forget the song," said Prof Shepherd.

"Uh... thank you...?" said Prof Harrison.

"One thing you could try," said Prof Shepherd, "is to channel your inner hero and think, what would they do? Who is your hero? Mine is Canadian pop legend, Justin Bieber. ...Oops, I said that out loud, didn't I?"

"Well, for me," said Prof Harrison, "it's none other than Galileo."

"Galileo?"

"Galileo."

"Galileo?"

"Galileo."

"Galileo Figaro, Magnifico-o-o-o-o-oh..."

"No -- no inspiration," said Prof Harrison.

"Well, there are two heroes in my life," said Prof Ambaum. "Rudolf Clausius and Emile Clapeyron. The Godfathers of thermodynamics and discoverers of the greatest equation ever."

"Oh, the Clausius Clapeyron equation?" said Dr Frame. "What an overrated equation. Everyone knows that warm air can hold more moisture."

Prof Ambaum scowled. "How dare you speak about Clausius and Clapeyron like that? They are heroes in my book. Well, actually, they are the heroes in my book. Over a decade of MSc students have enjoyed reading this! I don't think I can ever let that go."

"Let it go!"

"I'll never let it go."

"Let it go!"

"Never never never let it go-o-o-o-o-oh..."

"No -- still no inspiration," said Prof Harrison. "Come on -- let's look for inspiration somewhere else."

[Scene 2: the Wilderness]

So they went outside and tried the old trick of laying on the ground and staring at the sky in the hope that inspiration would fall on them from above.

"Perhaps we need to write some lyrics about someone in Happy Met Land," mused Prof Ambaum. "A musical parody, maybe."

"Not a bad idea," said Prof Harrison. "But we need someone to write a parody about. Ooh, look -- here comes Prof Methven."

"Morning," said Prof Methven. "What are you doing out here?"

"Trying to find inspiration for our panto interval act," said Prof Ambaum. "We are trying to think what song to perform. There seems to be a cat in a trailer behind your bike."

"Cat?" said Prof Methven. "No -- that's my wife. I am dropping her off at the hairdresser on the way to work."

"No, that's definitely a cat," said Prof Harrison. "I know that your wife is not a cat."

"No, it's definitely my wife," said Prof Methven. "Unless I've made a terrible mistake. Look -- here's my task list. One -- take cat to the vet for worming. Two -- take wife to the hairdresser. How could I get that wrong? Oh, no. Not again."

"This has happened before?" asked Prof Ambaum.

"Yes," said Prof Methven. "Last summer I went on holiday with the cat by mistake and my wife spent a week in the cattery. And it's worse -- that's not even our cat!" Prof Methven cycled off at speed to resolve his predicament.

"You know what," said Prof Ambaum. "When things like that happen, I sometimes wonder if this is real life, or if it's just fantasy -- I'm caught in a landslide and losing my grip on reality."

"Well, we opened our eyes and looked up to the skies, but didn't see any ideas for the interval act," said Prof Harrison. "Come on, it's cold. Let's go inside. Let's go and find the chattiest person in Happy Met Land. Someone who could chat for hours and hours. Surely we will get some ideas from them."

[Scene 3: Prof Clark's office]

They knocked on Prof Clark's door. The other side of the door, they found Prof Clark grinning broadly. They wondered if this was another "thing", such as his previous tendencies of hitting himself on the head with a plastic bottle, or jumping up and down and shouting "Bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-blah!"

"How can I help?" said Prof Clark.

"Well, we are stuck for ideas for our panto interval act," said Prof Harrison. "But what are you grinning about? You look like an MSc student who has just finished the last lecture of Prof Ambaum's Atmospheric Physics course."

"I am grinning about everything," said Prof Clark. "I have discovered a new game that spreads a little happiness in this world."

"It's not another app, is it?" said Prof Ambaum. "We know what happened last time."

"Guess what? Yes, it is," said Prof Clark. "My undergraduate class apologised most profusely for tricking me into joining Tinder. To make amends, they introduced me to another app. This one is all about finding people and grinning at them."

"That sounds stupid to me," said Prof Ambaum, suspiciously.

"No, it's great," said Prof Clark. "Look -- it gives you a map with other players on it. The object of the game, apparently, is to go and find another player and grin at them. At least, that's what the undergraduates told me. It's brilliant. It's called Grin Doctor. Look -- G-R-I-N, D-R -- Grin Doctor."

Prof Harrison and Prof Ambaum suspected that was not the point of the app at all, but chose to say nothing. They chatted with Prof Clark for several hours. But when they left his office later that afternoon, they still had no ideas about what to do on Panto day.

Prof Harrison sighed. "Oh, well, easy come, easy go; little high, little low. Any way the wind blows."

"It doesn't really matter to me," said Prof Ambaum, "but one thing I have always wondered is -- why does Prof Clark have a heron on his sideboard?"

[Scene 4: Synoptic Lab]

Still stuck for ideas, they collected Prof Harrison's keyboard from his office and went to the Synoptic Lab to have a jamming session. Just in case they got peckish, Prof Ambaum also brought along some jam. However, they soon realised they had stumbled into a meeting of the Heads of Department -- Prof Charlton-Perez, Prof Gray and Prof Plant.

"Sorry," said Prof Ambaum. "We didn't mean to interrupt your meeting."

"No, it's fine," said Prof Gray. "Actually, it's perfect. We were just about to come and find you."

"We have a problem," said Prof Charlton-Perez, "and you two are the perfect people to help us."

"Can you help?" said Prof Plant. "If it's no trouble?"

"What's the problem?" asked Prof Harrison. "Do you need a new design of radiosonde?"

"Or a new thermodynamic quantity?" said Prof Ambaum. "I have thought about combining entropy and Helmholtz free energy into a single variable, called -- Ambaumtropy."

"No," scolded Prof Gray. "I have told you about this before. There are more than enough thermodynamic quantities out there already without you adding our name to a new one!"

“The problem is our social media,” said Prof Charlton-Perez. “Young people these days love social media. But, in Happy Met Land, our media is no longer sociable enough.”

“Last year, Prof Charlton-Perez was the biggest thing on Twitter in Happy Met Land,” said Prof Gray. “Everything he tweeted was liked and shared. His popularity rose and rose. We even promoted him and gave him a very important new title.”

“Tweetmaster General,” said Prof Charlton-Perez, proudly.

“But his title has been taken away,” said Prof Gray. “Last year, something happened in the world of climate science that shook it to its very core. A bigger tweeter came along. Prof Charlton-Perez’s social media presence plummeted, and he lost the title of Tweetmaster General. We gave him another title to make up for it, but I don’t think he likes it as much.”

“Tweety Pie,” said Prof Charlton-Perez, sadly. “Prof Hawkins, and his Climate Stripes. He now has taken the title of Tweetmaster General away to NCAS World. He has become such a big name all around the world that we cannot keep up. He has become world famous. Look -- he even has his own Wikipedia page.”

“We need to get tweeting again,” said Prof Gray.

“And this is where you two come in,” said Prof Charlton-Perez. “We know how great you two are at putting on panto interval acts. I’m sure you have loads of brilliant ideas running around in your head right now.”

“All we need is for you to put on the best Panto Interval Act ever and save Happy Met Land.”

“We video the interval act, put it on Twitter and watch it become the next big thing. Take the world by storm. Or, as we say in the stratosphere, take the world by polar vortex.”

“No pressure or anything,” said Prof Plant. “But don’t let us down!”

Pressure mounted as Prof Harrison and Prof Ambaum knew the consequences of getting on the wrong side of Prof Plant. However, a smile suddenly started to spread across Prof Harrison’s face. An idea was forming in his head. “Yes, we can,” he said. “I think I know the perfect panto interval act that will save Happy Met Land.”

“I’ve got an idea too,” said Prof Ambaum. “How about doing Bohemian Rhapsody?”

“No,” said Prof Harrison. “That would be silly. Let’s go and work on my idea. Why don’t you go and find your tambourine.”

[Scene 5: panto night]

Panto night arrived. Prof Harrison took his place at the keyboard. Prof Ambaum stood nearby with his tambourine. Prof Harrison announced the act.

“Ladies and gentlemen, for the first time ever -- not the Climate Stripes, but the Climate Notes.”

Will the Climate Notes allow Happy Met Land to claim the Tweetmaster General title back from NCAS World? Find out next year on the Mr Mets.