

From the Back Verandah

Daisy, Daisy,
Give me your answer, do.
I'm half crazy
All for the love of you!

Most of you will know those words and their tune. Perhaps like me you thought this popular music-hall ditty was called *Daisy, Daisy*. Well, the correct title is *Daisy Bell* (lyrics and music by Harry Dacre). Actually, the above words are just the chorus (or rather the first half thereof), for there are three verses as well, but these days few people will have heard them.

It would seem that the whole song may be legally sung in public without fee or licence, except in music halls!

And there was a real Daisy who inspired the song — the Countess

of Warwick, Frances Brooke, one of the most desirable women of those times, and one of the wealthiest. Daisy was her nickname. For a while she was the mistress of the Prince of Wales (subsequently Edward VII), and they say that he once gave her an ankle bracelet inscribed "Heaven's Above".

This beautiful socialite actually dared turn socialist, but whether that fact impinged on her later money troubles, when she tried selling her Prince's letters to his son George V, I can't say.

In the end, she was bought off by John Boyd Dunlop, the founder of the rubber company, who got a baronetcy in exchange.

— Fizzgig

Bikwil Addresses

Comment & contributions:
Bikwil,
18 Pembury Ave.,
NORTH ROCKS. 2151.

Email:
trogers@wr.com.au

We welcome PC disk submissions (Word 2/6/7/97, TXT formats).

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Unbalanced Music of the Spheres

Sadly, though not unexpectedly, no solutions have been forthcoming for the billiard ball problem we set in Issue 4. Mind you, it's no snack, even for people used to doing puzzles. Which explains some of the questions readers have raised, like the following:

Does the problem demand that we not know at the start if the odd ball is lighter or heavier? (afraid so)

How many should I weigh at a time — twelve, eight, six? (a crucial question, this one)

Is it all trial and error to arrive at a solution? (for me, yes — I know of no algorithm for solving such problems).

Apart from the question of how many to weigh, the solution does

require a certain amount of lateral reasoning — not cheating, just sneaky thinking.

But the most important point is to realise that all possible outcomes have to be allowed for (such as "what does it mean if the balls we happen to weigh this time balance?"). Computer programmers will know this approach — and its frustrations, because in that game you always have to cater, *in advance*, for all eventualities.

In the absence of any other, then, my own solution, in a hopefully easy to understand layout, begins on page 9.

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A Town like Abdera, Or the Republic of Fools

So, who did write that book about Abdera? In *Bikwil* January 1998 (see p.13) The Man from Abdera posed the question and declared the book immortalising the town and the foibles of its inhabitants "one of the funniest . . . written in the 19th century". That's some claim!

His question was hardly a "trivia" one. For me, a long-time enthusiast of literary sleuthing it was a challenge and an invitation. Given those tantalising clues as to period and geography — the 19th century, Germany, Abdera itself — how could I resist the temptation to investigate?

I put on my thinking cap and walking shoes, armed myself with pen and paper and headed for the library: mine first, Lane Cove several times and the State once.

On those excursions The Man from Highworth (Wiltshire, England), Nick Hidden, helped with my enquiries. And another sleuth, *Bikwil's* own editor, conversed with me by phone and also gave me a very helpful extract from J. G. Robertson's *A History of German Literature*, rev. ed.

(Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1953), which confirmed the evidence I had been gradually accumulating.

That teamwork has led to a successful outcome, a solution to the case. Time now to file a report. I'll try, though, to spare readers tedious detail about methodology. But I would like to share the sequence of discovery and just let the references unfold naturally as we go on this brief literary journey.

To get myself started, at home I consulted a very worthy book *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (revised by Ivor H. Evans from Dr. Brewer's original). Consider the entry on Abdera:

A maritime town of Thrace, mythically founded by Hercules in memory of Abderus. The *Abderites* or *Abderitans* were proverbial for stupidity, said to be caused by the air, but among them were Democritus, the laughing philosopher (hence *Abderitan laughter* = scoffing laughter, and *Abderite* = scoffer); Protagoras, the sophist; Anaxarchos, the philosopher friend of Alexander; and Hecatæus, the historian.

Like breakfast that was a good start. But I could find nothing

Musicians has an Internet site, the answer is yes — up to a point. Like other reference works that feature on the Net — the *OED* or *Britannica*, say — the full *Grove* is not there free of charge. (If that were the case, not even libraries would buy them in book form.) What you do get, however, are some incomplete sample articles for immediate viewing, and some complete ones for downloading if you register. There's no charge for registering.

For you MIDI musicians, the best place to get classical music for playing on your synthesizer or sound card is *Classical MIDI Archives*. There are literally thousands of MIDI files to download. Admittedly, a few are bloody horrible, but most are very good. The most striking of these has to be the just-about-complete MIDI performance of Scarlatti's keyboard Sonatas. Well played by John Sankey, all 525 of them, plus some "liner notes" by him. *CMA* is a site that is

improving all the time. I thoroughly recommend it

We can't leave our topic without a reference to *America's Favorite Classical Music Bloopers*, maintained by a music appreciation teacher at Clemson University.

An example or two (language errors retained):

The Haydn piece [string quartet] was nice, but not very moving or memorable. I understand that that is one characteristic of classical music.

What did Bartok do to promote the folk music heritage of his native land? He advertised on Public Television.

Define 'tempo rubato'. The tempo usually reserved for a rumbha discovered by Chopin on a swing through South America?

[The announcer's] voice was rather soothing. For some reason I had expected a pretentious and pompous male voice. She showed none of these qualities and seemed like a very real person. Being a very real person myself this lent to her credibility . . .

— TR

Internet sites referred to above:

<http://www.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Music/Genres/Classical/>
<http://www.classicalinsites.com/>
<http://www.classical.net/music/>
<http://www.classicalmus.com/composers/>
<http://www.groveartmusic.com/26506/TNGMM/>
<http://www.prs.net/midi.html>
<http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~alevin/Bloopers.html>



Web Line

Classical music on the Internet? Sure thing.

Just bear one point in mind. As the Net becomes more and more commercial, many music sites are there just to sell you something, CDs mainly, but occasionally sheet music and even T-shirts. We'll ignore those here, unless they offer something extra — i.e. free.

So, where to start, then? By logging on to the *Yahoo* search engine, natch. Luckily for us, one of *Yahoo's* sub-categories is Entertainment/Music/Genres/Classical. When we arrive there we find that, in addition to an annotated selective list of sites we can visit, our sub-category has been conveniently further subdivided for us. Some of these subsections include:

- artists
- awards and competitions
- baroque
- composers
- conducting
- early music
- medieval
- opera
- organizations
- reviews
- symphonic orchestras.

A relatively new site is *Classical Insites*. This superb site comprises, among other things:

- Hall of Fame (including a featured artists, and biographical information on the major composers, together with recommended recordings and sound samples to listen to)

- Conservatory (educational environment for students and professionals)

- Fountainside (interactive area that features recommended listings given by renowned musos)

- Performance Center (including a FM radio station for classical music).

Of special interest is the *Bernstein Studio*, the official site celebrating the rich legacy of Leonard Bernstein (photos, scores, letters, articles, audio and video clips).

Another site I like is *Classical Net*. This provides its own searchable index, plus the following:

- basic repertoire list
- classical CD buying guide
- recommended classical CDs
- composer data
- reviews & articles.

It isn't much to look at, but *Classical Music Composers* does provide some quite well-written biogs. And despite its name, there are entries for many performers also, like Beecham, Domingo, Helfgott, Kreisler and Zukerman.

In case you were wondering if the *Grove Dictionary of Music and*

more to digest in my own collection. So next stop was Lane Cove Library's reference section. There, William Rose Benet's entry on Abdera, Abderiten in *The Reader's Encyclopedia* (1965) added nothing new to what I'd already read in the *Wordsworth*. Surprisingly, too, a recently published encyclopedia on Satire had no reference at all to Abdera.

Remembering the German connection I looked up *The Oxford Companion to German Literature* (1976) and discovered on the very first page of entries under A, one on *Die Abderiten: eine sehr warscheinliche Geschichte*, a satire in five parts written between 1773 and 1779. The author was C.M. Wieland (1733-1813). The book was described as "a satire on the self-satisfied parochial life of German small towns in Wieland's day . . . the setting and disguise . . . the ancient Greek town of Abdera in Thrace, inhabitants of which (with the exception of Democritus) were noted for their narrow-mindedness".

Nine hundred odd pages later in the *Companion* there was a lengthy entry on Wieland, Christoph Martin, poet and novelist and much more besides, with critical commentary on his works and his contribution to German literature at the time of Goethe and Schiller.

I'll return to this later. There was more about *Die Abderiten* to the effect that it appeared in 1774 and was reissued in 1961, but no reference to the 19th century.

At this point I rechecked Benet's (*Reader's Encyclopedia*) briefer entry. It more or less agreed with the *Companion* as regards date of publication of the novel, 1774, but it didn't mention either the 19th century or the 1961 reissue.

Despite this hitch in the research I was thrilled to find there really is a book on Abdera and I had now both author and title in one hit. But I was troubled about this one thing, this reference to the 19th century. Was the original *Bikwil* note a misprint or mistake? Or was I missing something? Was there some further crucial detail yet to be found? Could it be tucked away in a book with different focus and emphasis? (These are the kinds of questions the sleuth must ask herself.)

So, what about other encyclopedias, for example? I tackled several, including *Britannica*, *Collins* and *World Books* — nothing more than I'd already noted. I felt I'd run out of leads, come to a dead end, a bad moment for the literary sleuth. Fortunately I hadn't run out of the steam, or whatever it is that fires one to keep on searching.

I tried one more volume: the *Lexicon Universal Encyclopedia*. Editor Henry Garland had written the entry on Wieland and here I found gold again in these few words: "*The Republic of Fools* (1774; Eng. Trans. 1861) satirising German provincialism". So there was a 19th century text after all and in English! but no clue as to the translator. I needed to know that; the case couldn't be closed without that last piece of the puzzle.

All efforts to find reference in the works I'd already checked to the title *The Republic of Fools* were fruitless. Until that one visit to the State Library. For a couple of hours Nick and I browsed among the reference shelves. It was he who finally found the *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Vol. 97: German Writers from the Enlightenment to Sturm und Drang, 1720-1764* (1990), with its very large, detailed entry in Wieland.

And there it was, the nugget I was hoping for: a mention of one Henry Christmas as the translator of *Die Abderiten*. With gratitude and great excitement I delved further into the pages on Wieland and found in the bibliography the novel's complete publication profile. I'll list the essentials of it be-

cause it shows finally all the threads of the research brought together:

Die Abderiten . . . (Weimar: Hoffmann, 1774) revised as *Geschichte der Abderiten*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Weidmann & Reich); trans. By Henry Christmas *The Republic of Fools: Being the History of the State and People of Abdera in Thrace*, 2 vols. (Lond.: Allen, 1861); German version republished, ed. By Emil Steiger (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1961)

This is one of those great moments in the life of the sleuth. Mystery solved, now the case can be closed. Satisfied, one can relax, — and the sun being over the yard-arm — open the bar, pour the wine and drink a glass or two or three! to the success of the enquiry.

On that triumphant note I could end, but I said earlier I had more to add about Wieland. As well as a novelist he was a professor of Philosophy, translator and poet. His verse romance, *Oberon* (1790), according to the *Companion* is "regarded by some as his best work". In 1773 he launched *Der teusche Merkur*, a leading periodical in German intellectual life for 37 years. He edited it from 1773 to 1789, Robertson wrote in his *History*, adding that most of Wieland's own literary works appeared in the review's pages. *Die Abderiten* did, in 1774.

A Word in Your Pink Shell-like

Today, dear logomaniacs, we explore palindromes. As you know, a palindrome is a word or line which reads the same backwards and forwards. Simple examples include words like "Anna", "Glenelg", "radar" and "wow".

Mind you, most people over the age of ten are interested in examples that are longer than one word, the most famous two being:

Madam, I'm Adam

Able was I ere I saw Elba.

If you are familiar with more palindromes than the above pair, you'll agree that far too many are unnatural and meaningless, like:

Bah! An acetate can, Ahab!

Hot new-age moderate? Bah! Plan on alphabet. A red Omega went 'Oh!'.

Before we get on to some of the more ingenious long palindromes, here are a few in other languages (French, German and Spanish):

Ésope reste ici et se repose
(= Aesop is resting here and relaxing)

Ein Neger mit Gazelle sagt im Regen nie (= A negro with a gazelle is never faint-hearted in the rain)

Anita lava la tina (= Anita washes the bathtub)

So, my English favourites? Try these for starters — though even here the concept of meaningfulness sometimes gets stretched a bit.

A man, a plan, a canal – Panama!

Are we not drawn onward, we few,
drawn onward to new era?

Diana is sure to vote Russian aid

Did I evade gas, damask laws, sorceries,
Eire crosswalks, a mad sage,
Dave? I did

Eva, can I revolt a bat-lover in a cave?

Help Max, Enid, in example "H"

Lisa Bonet ate no basil

Marge, let's use Jesus' telegram

Race fast, safe car!

Rise, oh smug gumshoe, sir!

Satan, oscillate my metallic sonatas!

Sit on a potato pan Otis!

So many dynamos

Star comedy by Democrats

Step on no pets

Sums are not set as a test on Erasmus

Tara put up a tin, Dora put up a rod,
Nita put up a rat

Ten animals I slam in a net

Tim must save vast summit

We dye no honeydew.

Some more palindromes in a later issue, perhaps.

— Harlish Goop

Where Three Ways Meet

(Judging by reader response to droll things like *Land o' Useless Facts*, *The Dead People Server*, etc., it obviously behoves *Bikwil* to run a segment of trivia oddments. Hence this new column. If you know some Latin, or your dictionary gives derivations, you'll see why it has the title it does.

Send 'em in, all those bits of trivia (any topic), wherever you find 'em — your office's bulletin board, the Net, your local rag. None need be original, of course, nor need the source be acknowledged. *WTWM*, like other columns of its ilk elsewhere, will be unblushingly plagiaristic, and therefore, no doubt, largely pseudonymous.

In all likelihood, each time we run the column there'll be pieces from more than one contributor, so if you only have one item, don't be deterred — it'll appear sometime, just as soon as we have enough to fill a page.)

The first six miscellanea today were supplied by someone called Socrates, the last two by our regular verbalist Harlish Goop.

The two longest words (12 letters each) that can be typed using only the left hand are "stewardesses" and "reverberated".

The longest word that can be typed using only the right hand is "lollipop". "Skepticisms" is the longest word that alternates hands.

A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.

The San Francisco cable cars are the only mobile US National Monuments.

The "save" icon on the standard toolbar in Microsoft products shows a floppy disk with the shutter on backwards.

The verb "cleave" is the only English word with two meanings which are antonyms of each other: *adhere* and *separate*.

The combination *ough* can be pronounced in nine different ways, as the following passage shows:

A rough-coated, dough-faced, thoughtful ploughman strode through the streets of Scarborough. After falling into a slough, he coughed and hicoughed.

The name of the Spanish city Saragossa is a corruption of the words *Caesar Augustus*.

The natives of Newcastle and Manchester are known respectively as Novocastrians and Mancunians. These words derive from the Latin forms of the city names. Fair enough. *Glaswegian* (native of Glasgow), on the other hand, was formed by analogy with *Norwegian*, while *Liverpudlian* arose when someone sometime facetiously substituted *puddle* for *pool*.

As a translator Wieland has some considerable importance in Germany. During the years 1762-1766 he translated 22 plays of Shakespeare, 21 in prose and one, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, into verse. This was the first collection of Shakespeare's plays in German translation and this is how Wieland's contemporaries, Goethe and Schiller, first met Shakespeare's work. (I haven't found out which 21 of the Bard's plays Wieland translated yet, but that's another case for later.)

A few words about Wieland's own translator won't go amiss. Remember Henry Christmas? With a name like that what could he be but Reverend? That and more, as it turned out. In his 57 years — he lived from 1811 to 1868 — he was a scholar and writer on many subjects from antiquities to capital punishment, and, like Wieland, editor of journals, church and literary. He edited *The Literary Gazette* (1859-60), and acted as editor of several works including Pegge's *Anecdotes of the English Language* (1844). He was also a numismatist of repute, coined many articles on the subject and maintained his own extensive and valuable collection. He can be found in name and fame in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Vol. IV).

What a stimulating exercise this has been! What fun! I must thank The Man from Abdera. The book of Abdera in Wieland's original German and Christmas's English translation may well be one of the funniest to have emerged to entertain 18th, 19th and 20th century readers. I have not seen either yet. I only understand the story from the outline of its five parts that I read in the *Companion*.

I like even more Robertson's description. Here's a sample:

[An] . . . entertaining episode is that of the ass's shadow . . . A dentist hires an ass to carry him to a neighbouring town. He has to cross a treeless plain, and as the day is hot, he dismounts, to rest in the shadow of the ass. The driver of the ass objects, on the ground that the ass and not its shadow has been hired. A lawsuit ensues, and the whole town is divided into two parties, the "asses" and the "shadows" ; excitement runs high, and ultimately the affair is brought to a conclusion by the slaughter of the unoffending ass.

I think I could enjoy this book about Abdera. It may be as relevant to the provincialism of our world today as it was for Wieland's time.

I'll try and locate a copy of Henry Christmas's *The Republic of Fools* before the next millennium.

—Bet Briggs

If I had the power I would insist on all oratorios being sung in the costume of the period — with the possible exception in the case of 'The Creation':
Ernest Newman

Mr. Gladstone speaks to me as if I were a public meeting.
Queen Victoria


Quintessential Quirky Quotes


Heat, ma'am? It was so dreadful here that I found there was nothing left for it but to take off my flesh and sit in my bones.
Rev. Sydney Smith


The scientific theory I like best is that the rings of Saturn are composed entirely of lost airline luggage.
Mark Russell


How beautiful it is to do nothing, and then rest afterward.
Spanish Proverb


Third Weighing


Case 1 U  N
Pans balance: Not possible
Left pan down: The odd ball is this U, and it's heavier
Left pan up: The odd ball is this U, and it's lighter

Case 2 H  H
Pans balance: The odd ball is the remaining unweighed H (heavier)
Left pan down: The odd ball is the left H (heavier)
Left pan up: The odd ball is the right H (heavier)

Case 3 L  L
Pans balance: The odd ball is the remaining unweighed L (lighter)
Left pan down: The odd ball is the right L (lighter)
Left pan up: The odd ball is left L (lighter)

Case 4 L  L
Pans balance: The odd ball is the remaining unweighed H (heavier)
Left pan down: The odd ball is the right L (lighter)
Left pan up: The odd ball is the left L (lighter)

Case 5 H  H
Pans balance: The odd ball is the remaining unweighed L (lighter)
Left pan down: The odd ball is the left H (heavier)
Left pan up: The odd ball is the right H (heavier)

Case 6 H  N
Pans balance: The odd ball is the remaining unweighed L (lighter)
Left pan down: The odd ball is this H (heavier)
Left pan up: Not possible

- First Weighing** UUUU ⚖ UUUU
- Pans balance: All these U's are now known to be N's; the odd ball is one of the remaining unweighed four (call them UUUU from now on)
Proceed to Second Weighing: Case 1
- Left pan down: One of the four balls in the left pan is heavy (call them HHHH from now on) **or** one of the four balls in the right pan is light (call them LLLL from now on)
Proceed to Second Weighing: Case 2
- Left pan up: One of the four balls in the left pan is light (call them LLLL from now on) **or** one of the four balls in the right pan is heavy (call them HHHH from now on)
Proceed to Second Weighing: Case 2

Second Weighing

- Case 1** UUU ⚖ NNN
- Pans balance: All these U's are now known to be N's; the odd ball is the remaining unweighed U, but we don't yet know if it's heavier or lighter than normal
Proceed to Third Weighing: Case 1
- Left pan down: One of these U's is heavier than normal, but we don't yet know which one (call them HHH from now on)
Proceed to Third Weighing: Case 2
- Left pan up: One of these U's is lighter than normal, but we don't yet know which one (call them LLL from now on)
Proceed to Third Weighing: Case 3

- Case 2** HHL ⚖ HLN
- Pans balance: All these H's and L's are now known to be N's; the odd ball is one of the remaining unweighed H or two L's
Proceed to Third Weighing: Case 4
- Left pan down: The odd ball is one of the left two H's or the right L
Proceed to Third Weighing: Case 5
- Left pan up: The odd ball is either the right H or the left L
Proceed to Third Weighing: Case 6

Why Me?

(This article originally appeared in the Sydney Jazz Club *Quarterly Rag*, Nos. 68-69, 4th Quarter 1993.)

My nickname is "Spotty" but I often think it should have been "Magnet". I seem to attract "certain" people on gigs. When I play in pubs and clubs, and have just played a long bracket there's usually only two things I want to do in the break, but I have to run the gauntlet on the way.

"Hey mate, come here, you play a good sax." I knew he was paying me a compliment but being a smart Alec and busting, I said, "I'm a Selmer man" (the brand name of the instrument). He replied, "I don't care if you are only the cellar-man, you still play a mean horn!"

In the hey-day of the clubs, there were times that they ran talent quests and boy, did they come out of the woodwork then. Some of the aspiring stars of tomorrow had the foresight to bring some sheet music; some did not. One lady who did not was asked what key she sang *My Way* in. She replied, "I'm not sure, but it's just a little higher than I'm talking now."

The following week, Macdonaldtown's answer to Slim Dusty was tuning his guitar to our piano.

"Hey mate, your piano is a quarter of an inch out of tune."

After a while we worked out that he had to move his capo a quarter of an inch from where it had been embedded for the last five years.

Many years ago I worked for a chain of record shops relieving when the various managers went on holidays. One day a guy came in and said, "I don't know who sings it and I don't know the name of the song, but it goes '. . . dum de dum . . . da da dum de dah'. Have you got it in stock?"

Occasionally, you can get even. Recently at the Norfolk Hotel one of our lady regulars came over as we were packing up and said, "You boys didn't play my song today!"

I replied, "Baby, I didn't know you wrote one."

But I guess if it's any comfort, I know I'm not the only muso who suffers. Dudley Moore, on one of his trips here, was cornered by a junior female reporter and asked, "How long have you been a constant penis?" (concert pianist) and "How many play in your trio?"

To the latter I think he replied, "We all do."

And they wonder why musicians drink!

— Allan English



A magnetic young Lord Spotty English at the Clifton Gardens Hotel, Sydney, during the 1965 Jazz Convention

Twelfth Man Found Wanting

Before I explain some conventions in setting out my solution to the Twelve Billiard Balls problem, here again is a statement of the task.

There are twelve billiard balls, all the same size, shape and colour. All weigh exactly the same, except that one ball is slightly different in weight, but not noticeably so in the hand. Moreover, the odd ball might be lighter or heavier than the others.

Your challenge is to discover the odd ball and whether it is lighter or heavier. You must use a beam balance only, and you are restricted to *three* weighing operations.

Conventions:

- ◇ At every weighing one of three things theoretically can happen: the pans can balance, the left pan can go down or the left pan can go up.
- ◇ It will be necessary to refer to a given ball as definitely normal (N), potentially “heavy” (H) or potentially “light” (L). Often our identification of a ball in this way will be as part of a *group* (= “This group contains a heavy/light ball”), and will depend on what we learn from a previous weighing. At the start, all balls have a status of unknown (U).
- ◇ To show at each weighing what is being placed in each pan, we represent the situation as per the following examples:

UUUU ⚖ UUUU

This means four balls in each pan, all of unknown status

H ⚖ H

This means two balls, one per pan, each from a group temporarily identified as “heavy”

UUU ⚖ NNN

This means three balls of unknown status weighed in the left pan against three balls whose status is known definitely to be normal

- ◇ It is important also to be able to imagine several separate areas on the bench where the balance is standing. One is obviously for keeping balls that have already been eliminated as normal; another is for balls that as a group are being thought of as potentially heavy; likewise there is an area for potentially light balls.