



MY MUSIC – a Music Department podcast

Podcast 5 – Mrs Catherine Nasskau

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1. *Adagio from “Spartacus”* (by Aram Khachaturian, 1903-1978)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmWv9-a1RSk>

This is a ballet that follows the story of Spartacus, the leader of the slave uprising against the Roman Republic in 70 BC. The famous *Adagio* is the love theme for Spartacus and Phrygia and depicts their escape in Act II. The music has also been used for film and TV: *The Onedin Line* (1971-80), *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994), *Caligula* (1979), *Ice Age: The Meltdown* (2006). Spartacus is perhaps best known through the 1960 film starring Kirk Douglas as the eponymous hero. In the climactic scene, the slaves are asked to identify Spartacus in exchange for leniency. Instead, they each proclaim, “I’m Spartacus!” and are thus crucified along with their leader. This was parodied at the end of Monty Python’s *Life of Brian*. In the 1990s, Kirk Douglas’s son, Eric, tried his hand at stand-up comedy. It didn’t go too well. In anger at the audience’s reaction to his routine he shouted: “You can’t do this to me, I’m Kirk Douglas’s son!” – to which an audience member stood up and responded: “No, I’m Kirk Douglas’s son!”, followed by the rest of the audience.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spartacus_\(ballet\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spartacus_(ballet))

2. *O Magnum Mysterium* (by Morten Lauridsen, 1943-)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmbXIJWGc4k>

This is based on the Gregorian chant for Christmas, depicting the nativity scene: *O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger! Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!* It is a text that has been set to music by many composers including Palestrina, Victoria and Poulenc. Lauridsen wrote this for double choir a cappella in 1994. The style is reminiscent of Gregorian choral pieces but with modern approaches to harmony and texture.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_magnum_mysterium_\(Lauridsen\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_magnum_mysterium_(Lauridsen))

3. *Have I told you lately that I love you* (by Van Morrison, 1945-)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFF1wJN75Z0>

Van Morrison wrote this for his nineteenth studio album *Avalon Sunset* in 1989. It is a beautiful ballad often played at weddings, apparently. At mine we used *God Only Knows* by the Beach Boys, one of the best love songs ever written (Paul McCartney’s favourite). Unfortunately, the music stopped just after the opening words: “I may not always love you”. Enjoy *Have I told you lately that I love you*. It is one of the great love ballads of the 20th century.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Have_I_Told_You_Lately