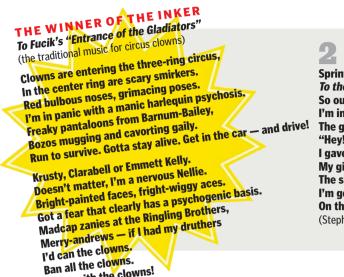
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The Style Invitational >>

REPORT FROM WEEK 825

In which we asked you to write some lyrics (on any subject) to a piece of music that didn't originally have lyrics. We got hundreds of parodies from a wide and imaginative group of sources, from symphonies to movie themes to pop instrumentals to a Nokia ring tone. The songs themselves? Well, song parodies destined to be read rather than heard are very hard to write: The natural accents of the words must match the accents of the music, precisely, or else a reader can't follow along. You can't expect the reader to figure out, "Oh, this word will be sung as 'hope-LESS,' "

The parodies on this page are set to music that we figure you have a chance of knowing. If you're still stumped, look at the online version of this column at washington post.com/style invitational, where each parody — along with several other winners and honorable mentions that appear only on the Web — will contain a link to YouTube so you can sing along (or at least read along), even with music that's new to you.



the winner of the silkworm pupae in sauce, plus the Kelp Energy Bar: **Sprint to the Finish**

To the "Chariots of Fire" theme: So out of breath running, I can't even cuss. I'm in this condition 'cause I missed the bus. The guy saw me coming; he heard me yell,

I gave him the finger as he pulled away. My girl will be standing cold outside. The show starts at 8. I'm gonna be roasted, grilled and fried, On this, our last date.

(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

IMPERFECTLY PITCHED: HONORABLE MENTIONS

To Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" No. 1 (the graduation march): Just got my diploma, It took me six years. Most days in a coma, 'Cause I majored in beers.

Down with the clowns!

(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

I'm not a go-getter, Job markets are bad. No life as jet-setter, Looks like I've been had. Wait . . . I . . . know. Till prospects are better, Sponge off Mom and Dad. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Brünnhilde's Lament To Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" I come from Valhalla, Where there's no mall, a Woe to befall a girlie like me.

My breastplates are tight, this Helmet's a fright, why Must a dead knight be My company? (My dad says I'm odd Well, he thinks he's God. I want an iPod but

He says, "No way!"

I'd trade in my snear For bling and a beer. There's nothing cool here, Just death and decay . . . (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Beethoven's Fit To Beethoven's Symphony No. 5: Having done four, I did one more

I've lost the score! I thought I'd put it in a drawer. My cleaning lady found it lying on And in a flash (a lightning bolt)

It hit the trash (should strike that I told her, "This! Means! War!"

(Stephen Gold)

To the theme from "Bewitched": When springtime hits, my nostrils start to twitch, Though as a witch, I've tried to stop that itch,

I've used pills and capsules and potions and every nasal mist,

Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style

he didn't like the tempo and

screamed at his drummer to switch

from brushes to sticks. Morrison

was close enough to the micro-

But my allergies — sniffle, sniffle, sniffle, sniff — they still persist! With every sneeze, someone gets turned to cheese. Each time I cough, the power grid shuts off.

I turned my dad into an iPod, my dachshund is now a hose, That pollen, it messed with my nose.

(Dave Zarrow, Reston) To the "Raiders of the Lost Ark" theme:

Indiana! He's our man! If he can't do it, no one ca-a-an! Indiana, he's so cool! But that fourth film . . I swear that I saw Indy drool . . . (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

And Last: My doorbell chime: (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Next Week: The Inside Word, or **Def"in"itions**



Week 829: Limerixicon 6

If it's "digital," it's about RAM Or, say, e-mail or evites or spam. It's modern and cool — Unless it's the tool

That is used in a prostate exam.

t's not enough that we make you slog for a week, in exchange for the slim possibility of receiving a piece of junk, so that we can brag about the quality of this here feature. No, we also have to farm you out to someone else's feature. As we do every August, we'll be furthering the cause of the indefatigable Chris J. Strolin of Belleville, Ill., founder of the online Omnificent English Dictionary in Limerick Form, which aims to include a limerick illustrating every word in the language. Actually, it's not just one giant limerick that has every word in it; Chris J. and his numerous contributors (including some Invitational Losers) have now passed the 55,000 mark: Last year at this time, they were only around 50,000 and had just reached the da- words — but now they're all the way up to . . . This week: Supply a humorous limerick prominently featuring any English word, name or term beginning with the letters di-, as in the diabolical example above by Chief of Proctocol Gene Weingarten of Washington. The Empress is picky about rhyme and meter for limericks; a link to her

guidelines appears on the home page of www.oedilf.com. (In a pistachio shell: The first, second and fifth lines must contain the strong meter of BAH-bum-bum BAH-bum-bum BAH, with optional bums at the beginning and end of each line; and Lines 3 and 4 must contain BAH-bum-bum BAH, also with the optional bums. And it's best to have at least one bum between two BAHs. And "bird" rhymes with "word" but not with "words.") Once we run the results Sept. 5, you may submit your entries (getting Invitational ink or not) to the Oedilfers as well.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a special gift basket (special as in invisible) of bacon-flavor dental floss, donated (unused) by Russell Beland; bacon-flavor mints, from Mike Czuhajewski; and cupcake-flavor floss, from Dave Prevar.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or Loser Mug. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 17. Put "Week 829" in the subject line of your e-mail or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published Sept 5. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate relatives are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. This week's honorable-mentions name is by Beverley Sharp; next week's revised title was submitted by both Dave Prevar and Tom Witte.

CAROLYN HAX

Adapted from a recent online discussion.

Dear Carolyn:

I have a first date this weekend. He suggested an activity that I consider both too athletic and not really first-date appropriate (minds out of the gutter, people!). I said no thanks, and suggested something

Well, he came back with how he didn't see how it was so athletic. I felt dismissed — I think I know what I'm capable of, and what activities I enjoy! Is he being thick or rude? And

should I go on the date?

First-Dater

Probably not, but I'm curious. Do you remember exactly how you turned down the [canola-oil naked Twister]? From his response, it sounds as if you said, "too athletic"; if you also said, "not really first-date appropriate," that would explain any defensiveness.

I say "probably not" for the date because you're both already defensive, and that works out better in romantic comedies than it does in real life. But details would help me answer better.

Carolyn:

Canoeing. No canola oil involved. I tried to pass it off humorously — that I'm not a human Mountain Dew ad and I'd rather go for a walk. I wound up having to spell out that if you're small and female, and don't have a lot of upper-body strength, yes, it's athletic. Plus, something I've tried and don't consider fun. Finally, I'm at high risk for skin cancer and supposed to avoid being in the sun on the water.

We're going for the walk instead. What annoys me is that if I suggest an activity, and the other person declines, I figure they have their reasons and I leave it alone. I find it uncomfortable to explain wimpy arms and fair skin before we've even gone out.

First-Dater again

He could have been pressing the issue beyond the point of courtesy, but he could also have been genuinely curious. Maybe he thought about your possible objections, came up empty, and figured he'd just ask.

Which brings us back to the other issue, whether someone with sun restrictions, who thinks "female" belongs on a list of arguments against canoeing, and who thinks canoeing isn't an appropriate firstdate activity, should even go on a date with someone who, for their first date, suggests canoeing.

Re: Canoeing:

sweet-potato pies based on an old

family recipe, and when he recalls

how one of his previous business

ventures failed and he spent "four

months living in my car," the

memory brings tears to his eyes.

But O'Leary not only isn't sympa-

thetic, he's hostile. "Don't cry

about money," he barks. "It never

Hmmm. Mean, yes, but a bit of

wisdom well articulated. Unfortu-

nately, the cleverness of the re-

mark is dissipated as the show

continues and O'Leary says both

"never laugh at money" and later, "never insult money." Now he's

not clever, just repetitious — a

earnest young woman who thinks

she's come up with a moneymak-

ing scheme based on her experi-

ences babysitting a Down syn-

drome child — a plan that is pret-

tv cold and callous when you get

right down to it — and a pair of

former frat boys who want to start

a business called College Foxes

Packing Boxes to supplement

their already successful College

The biggest jaw-dropper is a

man who thinks he has solved the

problem of personal earphones

popping out when one is exercis-

ing: a kind of amplification device

to be surgically inserted behind

your ear and then recharged at

night, so you can plug yourself

into the wall socket right after you

put your electric car to bed. Jeep-

ers creepers! With an emphasis on

In a letter to critics, producer

Burnett says his new show proves

"how alive the American Dream

really is." It sure is for him, and

he's from England. He just keeps

thinking up TV shows designed

to exploit greed, frustration and

exhibitionism and turns huge

profits. He probably didn't have

to pitch "Shark Tank" to many people besides himself; he's the

Aaron Spelling of reality trash,

though his shows, to be fair, generally have classier production

Some viewers will find "Shark

Tank" entertainingly sadistic; for others, the possibility that it might succeed (seemingly re-

mote) will be a veritable crying shame. But don't cry for television — because heaven knows it

values than his competitors do.

Hunks Hauling Junk.

"creepers."

Other contestants include an

creep with the heart of a banker.

cries for you."

Okay — as a small, pale-than-Casper, wimpy-armed female, allow me to say canoeing is not hard and the insinuation that females don't like to canoe is just outrageous.

I think canceling the date is the way to go. They seem to like different things and she turned what was, in my opinion, a unique, thoughtful first-date idea into a major drama.

The world is too small and life is too long to not try everything once. Anonymous 1

No argument here.

Re: Canoeing:

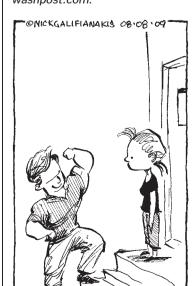
Male here. Give the guy a break he was trying to come up with something distinctive and memorable. Beats the heck out of the fallback coffee date. And I am sure he was definitely curious as to why you rejected the idea so he could come up with something equally memorable that might be a better fit.

If you're going out with him, surely you have common ground, so focus on that and maybe help him out! Anonymous 2

Thanks. Asking someone out is always a leap — worth the benefit of the doubt.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www. washingtonpost.com/ discussions.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@ washpost.com.



Van Morrison at Constitution Hall: No Hootin', but a Lot of Hollerin'

MUSIC, From Page C1

ent! An artist's supply, even. Morrison's current tour show-

cases material from "Astral Weeks," a 1968 record that got him his greatest reviews, though it wasn't a big seller and had no radio hits. It's the kind of record best listened to alone in a dark room with a mildly mind-altering substance, and clearly comes from an age long before iTunes and singles downloads. In other words, "Astral" is not an obvious choice for the sort of albumcentric tours that so many vintage artists are giving these days. But that's Van being Van. Backed by a large band with strings and horns, he reprised tunes such as "The Way Young Lovers Do" and "Slim Slow Slider" while being at once intense and mellow, hushed and swinging. "Sweet Thing" flaunted the Belfastborn Morrison's special brand of Celtic rhythm and blues.

Morrison, 63, has never been a poster boy for good living. Thursday night he looked like a bloated pallbearer in his dark suit, dark sunglasses and a black hat. But his voice was incredibly strong and clear whenever he wanted it to be. He didn't want it to be that often: For "Cyprus Avenue," he used his lyrics, scatlike, to send a rhythmic rather than verbal message.

Morrison treated his band and crew horribly. In the midst of "Fair Play," one of a handful of non-"Astral" tunes in the set, he decided

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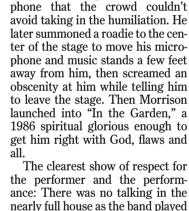
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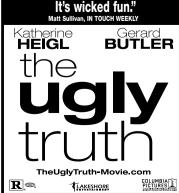


the performer and the performance: There was no talking in the nearly full house as the band played and, despite all the deep cuts, no shouted requests between songs for his hits. At night's end, Morrison touched on his singles file briefly, though it was so little and so late that it felt more like a taunt than a reward. He turned the band loose on "Gloria," a three-chord garage rocker that he wrote as a teenager and was later covered reverently by, among others, Patti Smith, Jimi Hendrix and another iconic Morrison, Jim of the Doors.

But the biggest surprise came with the opening notes of "Brown Eyed Girl." Given all that came earlier, Morrison couldn't have shocked the crowd more if he'd Tasered everybody. But, consistent to the end, Morrison performed his gem with apparent disdain. He sang the opening of the chorus —

Do you remember when we used to sing" — but turned his back to the seats to let the crowd take the 'Sha la la la la la la la la la ti da.' He knew everybody would remem-

The battle of the sexes is fought by two tough foes in this sassy, sexy screwball comedy! It's wicked fun." HEIGL BUTLER



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TV PREVIEW

'Shark Tank': ABC Is Out for Blood

By Tom Shales $Washington\ Post\ Staff\ Writer$

Unhappily implicit in "Shark Tank," the title of a new reality show from producer Mark "Survivor" Burnett, is the promise that viewers will, metaphorically speaking, see contestants gobbled up and devoured - or at least suffer public humiliation.

Embarrassment remains the indispensable ingredient of much reality television, and it is indeed part of the formula for ABC's "Shark Tank," which Burnett (who also did "The Apprentice," similar to this show in several ways) adapted from a Japanese reality-game called "Dragon's Den." But what sneaks up on you this time is the genuine poignancy of the proceedings and how deftly the show personalizes the desperation and pain experienced by vic-

tims of a broken-down economy. The premise: Contestants who seek funding for businesses they want to start or "grow" appear before a tribunal consisting of "five real-life multi-millionaires" and make their pitches. If they can convince even one rich 'un that their idea is sound, they can make a deal right there — but it's just as likely the millionaires will, one by one, say "I'm out" until the contestant is left with nothing but a week's supply of facial egg.

Then they trundle on home, via an elevator that sits at the end of a corridor flanked by huge fish tanks in which sharks — probably computer-generated — swim and swarm.

It sounds gimmicky and visually tedious, with most of the socalled action taking place in a conference room. It's all those things, but the moments of misery make it memorable, as when a man from North Carolina confesses that he has put two mortgages on his home and borrowed liberally

from his kids' college funds to finance the start-up of what sounds like a lame notion: some sort of iPod-like thing that plays informational programs and commercials to people waiting in doctors' waiting rooms.

This might be welcomed by fidgety patients who already subscribe to all the same golf magazines at home, but it doesn't sound like something that will ful-

The harshest of the judges has no patience even for tales of hardship.

fill a crying need. "Stop this madness" is how one judge reacts to the man's willingness to pour more and more money into following his "dream."

As the judges shoot the concept full of holes, we can see that dream disintegrating in the expression on the man's face, especially in his eyes, and it's devastating. Is it also cruel? Contestants know what the possibilities are when they sign up for the show, so they commit themselves to enduring whatever comes their way.

Most of the judges — especially real-estate executive Barbara Corcoran — try to soften each trouncing with a hint of mercy, but the Simon Cowell of the group, a balding tycoon named Kevin O'Leary, is brutal. He lambastes the losers before kicking them down the stairs and has no patience even for tales of hardship.

A Georgia man comes before the group seeking \$460,000 for "Mr. Tod's Pies," single-portion

THE MAGIC CONTINUES... BIGGEST WORLDWIDE OPENING EVER!

doesn't cry for you. NOW SHOWING - CHECK DIRECTORIES FOR LISTINGS Shark Tank (one hour) premieres Sunday night at 9 on ABC.