

THE COLUMNS



By Pupils; For Pupils | HSD's Newsletter: Issue 148

Photo - Ruby McNair

148 - First number after 1 to be both a heptagonal number and a centred heptagonal number.

Dammit, I forgot to write an editorial this week. Erm...I'll keep it brief. Some motivational stuff ought to do it. Good luck, have fun, don't die? No, too bleak. Shoot em all and let god sort em out? No NO definately don't do that! Monty Python ended their film The Meaning of Life with the words 'Try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and all nations' That seems pretty good.

What happened in the news? What hasn't happened. The end of the world hasn't happened, but that may not be the case for long. On that cheery note, read on!

~ Charlie, Editor

The Last Letter of Mary Queen of Scots

Maisey Lafollette

This year from January 23rd to April 26th the final letter of Mary Queen of Scots will be displayed in Perth Museum for all to see. During the February break I visited the museum and learned about the famous Queen from the exhibit and wanted to share and spread word of a fascinating part of Scotland's history.

Mary Queen of Scots was born in 1542, to James V, and she became Queen just at just a few days old after his death. When she was five, she was sent to be raised in France and eventually married the Dauphin, but he died shortly after.

Eventually she returned to Scotland but was faced with the Protestant reformation, two marriages, the death of Lord Darnley and David Rizzio and eventually the loss of her throne and imprisonment.

Queen Mary faced disputes with her cousin Queen Elizabeth I as she had a claim to be the ruler of England as well as Scotland. Mary was involved in conspiracies against her cousin such as the Babington Plot. She was tricked into supporting the plot in a letter which was discovered by Walsingham's spies which led to Mary's trial.

Mary was accused of treason despite not being an English citizen and conspiracy of assassination, and during the trial Mary had no legal defence so was found guilty and eventually sentenced to death.

This is where the letter comes in. In the letter she says, "I am to be executed like a criminal at eight in the morning." Mary wrote a letter to her brother-in-law informing him of her execution and requested for him to care for her son, aid her servants and hold a mass and funeral for her in France. Before her execution Mary was denied her final rites as a Catholic so asked him to perform them for her after her death. The letter was written in French, and the tone is matter of fact showing how Mary saw no escape from her fate.

The letter is an important part of history as it documents the final thoughts of a Queen before her death, shows us the conflict of Protestants and Catholics and the Scottish English conflict and humanises a historical figure as the last things she asks for are for someone to care for her son and servants and to ensure she has a Catholic funeral. I would highly recommend visiting the Perth Museum to see the letter for yourself whether you are a history fanatic or studying this era in lessons. The exhibit has more than just the letter it also has information on the key figures in Mary's life and explains what events led to her execution and explains the importance of this to Scottish history.

How the 1975 rose to fame

Emma Turton

There was once a time when the 1975 were four teenage boys that were messing around with instruments doing school covers in their garages in Manchester, now the band are taking over the music industry, becoming one of the most musically diverse British acts currently and having over fourteen million listeners on Spotify, so how did they do it?

Matthew Healy is now one of the most iconic, controversial frontmen of our generation, but in 2002 the lineup was much different: Healy took place as drums and Elliot was the singer, but after Elliot left claiming the band “weren’t gonna make it” Healy took over as lead singer and George Daniel replaced Matty on drums, Ross Macdonald as Bassist and Adam Hann as lead guitarist. They originally covered a wide range of punk songs at various gigs organized by a council worker. Around two years after forming the band began writing their own lyrics, and were constantly changing names, honorable mentions being: “Talkhouse”, “The Slowdown” and, notably, “Drive Like I Do”, the band created a full album under this name, but after Healy had found a note in a book called “On the Road” by Jack Kerouac, given to him by a man holiday in Majorca which read:

“1st June-the 1975”, and so on the band decided on the 1975 as they thought it sounded cool and different.

Eventually after years of struggling to find a label, the 1975 joined the “Dirty Hit” Label, a label created exclusively for them to share their music with the world. They created four LPs on this label before producing their first album “The 1975”, more commonly known as the self titled album, which gained mass recognition for its British indie pop sound across the world. The album has a monochrome aesthetic and feel to it, with Healy describing it as “teen angst and apocalyptic”. The 1975 scored their first number one with this album and were becoming a seemingly indie version of one direction, a notorious boy band.

“What qualifies a boy band, though? If it’s being a hysteria and surrounded by female fans who also surround our hotel rooms and sold out shows, then we’re a boy band”, quotes Healy, in 2014.

Although not everyone was a massive 1975 Stan in 2014. The band won the infamous NME ‘worst band’ prize, joining bands such as “Nickel-back”, “The Clown Posse”, and even, “Oasis”. This was a huge blow to the band, but one that I believe spurred them to produce a better record, and prove themselves not only to the press and fans, but to themselves. In 2015 the band posted a comic strip which hit many fans close to their hearts,

“The hardest part of any relationship is to say goodbye”, the message read. Eventually, fans discovered that this was actually the band reinventing themselves, they replaced the black and white aesthetic with a neon and red one as the band released their highly ambitious song “Love me” which signified the release of their new album “I like it when you sleep for you are so beautiful yet so unaware of it”, a confident and loud album that showed their exploration in a sound that hadn’t waned with their success. The record includes massive pop hits- see, “The Sound”- but also contains deep, melancholy songs such as – see, “Somebody Else”. The album is 75 minutes in length and critics reacted positively with the album being described as “masterpiece”, and “magnum opus” in the press. This also gave them their first record to see them join a group of exclusive British artists to reach number one in the UK and US simultaneously, a



list of just 16 that includes “The Beatles”, “Radiohead”, and “Susan Boyle”. The band went on their first headlining tour in 2017, and were high on the bill for many festivals.

However, despite this influx of fame, the 1975 continue producing new eras in each album they release, along with even bigger hits. They have since went on to create *“A brief inquiry into online relationships”*, a heavily pop filled album full of politics and the affects of the internet with hits such as *“tootitootitime”* and *“it’s not living if it’s not with you”*, another album called *“notes on a conditional form”* was released as their most experimental record yet, which mixes electronic and pop elements featuring *“if you’re too shy let me know”* and *“frail state of mind”*. Recently they have released their most critically acclaimed album to date: *“being funny in a foreign language”* which features elements of country and features the hit song *“about you”* which has set the 1975 in Stone as one of the most influential British artists in history and now fans are upset as the band are due to go on a five year break as the band wish to explore different paths. However we know after the break we will receive one of the best albums ever. Just before the break the band went on their biggest tour ever across America, Asia and the UK. The still at their very best tour which signifies the ending of the 1975 for 5 years.

Haoqi’s Mystery Riddle Thing!

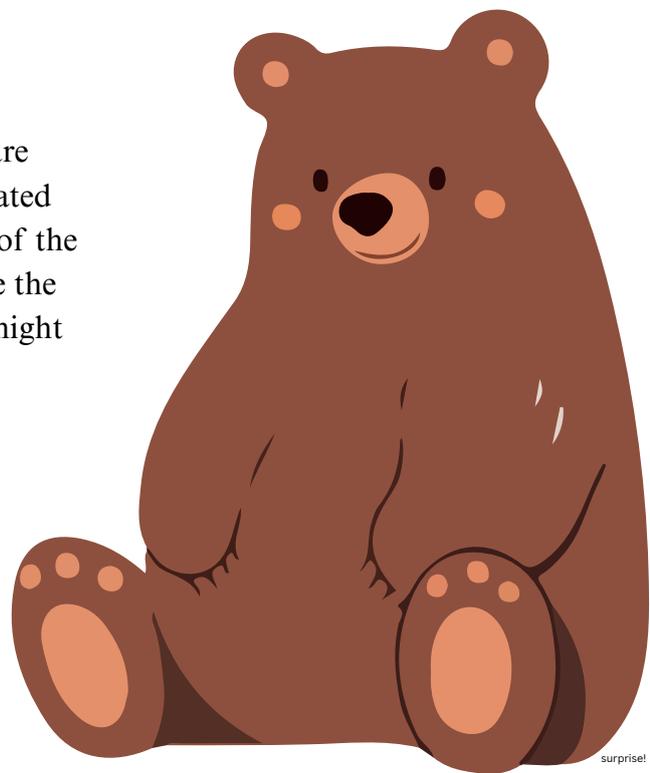


A hunter leaves his camp to shoot bears. He walks 1 mile south, where he encounters his first bear. Due to the bear’s skilfulness (or the hunter’s lack of, you decide which way round), the bear snatches his gun and destroys it. In panic, the hunter runs 1 mile west. Then he decided it had been a long and tiring day, so he headed 1 mile north and arrived back at his base camp.

What colour was the bear?



Note: these bears are coloured in an unrelated manner to the answer of the riddle. They might be the right colour or they might not



18:41 | 09.02.2100 | UST+3 | East Cairo, Middle East Jewels

The noise of the Souk was unlike anything else on earth — a living heartbeat of Cairo itself. Traders argued, their voices rising like song; metal struck metal as weights hit scales; somewhere, a child laughed, and the sound was swallowed by the murmur of thousands. The air was heavy with spice and sweat, the tang of cumin and roasted lamb mixing with the smoke of burning oil.

Layla had walked through the Grand Cairo Souk before, but never alone. This time, the colours seemed sharper — the reds of the carpets, the golds of the lamps — as if the city itself was burning too brightly, aware of its own fragility. Camels shifted lazily in a pen nearby, their low groans blending with the noise of the crowd.

And beneath it all, there was the whisper.

Not the gossip of merchants or thieves, but something colder — a whisper of the Virus, of the Icebergs. It passed between people like breath, a story no one dared to believe, a truth no one dared to speak.

Layla tightened her scarf around her head. Too much danger hides in safety, she thought. Cairo was still alive, but she could feel it trembling underneath.

After a bowl of lentil soup and a handful of coins given to secure a place among the desert navigators, Layla made her way to the waiting caravan. The leader, Mohammed Aznou, stood tall beside a dune-coloured camel, his beard threaded with silver.

“Across the Rub’ al Kali?” she asked quietly.

He nodded. “Through the night. If the winds stay kind, we reach Dubai in four days.”

Layla climbed onto the camel’s saddle. The animal rose with a groan, and Cairo began to fade behind her — its lights shrinking into a flicker on the horizon.

Above, the stars spilled endlessly across the black sky. The desert stretched before her like an ocean of silence, and for the first time in days, there was peace — fragile, thin, but real. After a meal of soup and a few coins in exchange for travelling with the desert navigators, Layla went to the large caravan. She began to speak with the host of the caravan, Mohammed Aznou. Layla queried on where to go after crossing the desert into Dubai. After that, he got onto one of the camels. In the starry night sky, there was a peace that was only found in this desert

Arbroath Music Festival

Lucy Smith

The past few days have been some of the most hectic for us HSD musicians. The Arbroath Music Festival happens this week every year, and every year we send what feels like hundreds of musicians to compete in it. This year was no exception. HSD musicians won all but 2 of each category they entered, making a total of 8 wins!



Suzie and Hannah both won their musical theatre solo competitions



Eilidh won the Disney vocal solo



Alexandra won the under 18 vocal solo



Charlotte, Lucy, and Grace won the open woodwind ensemble



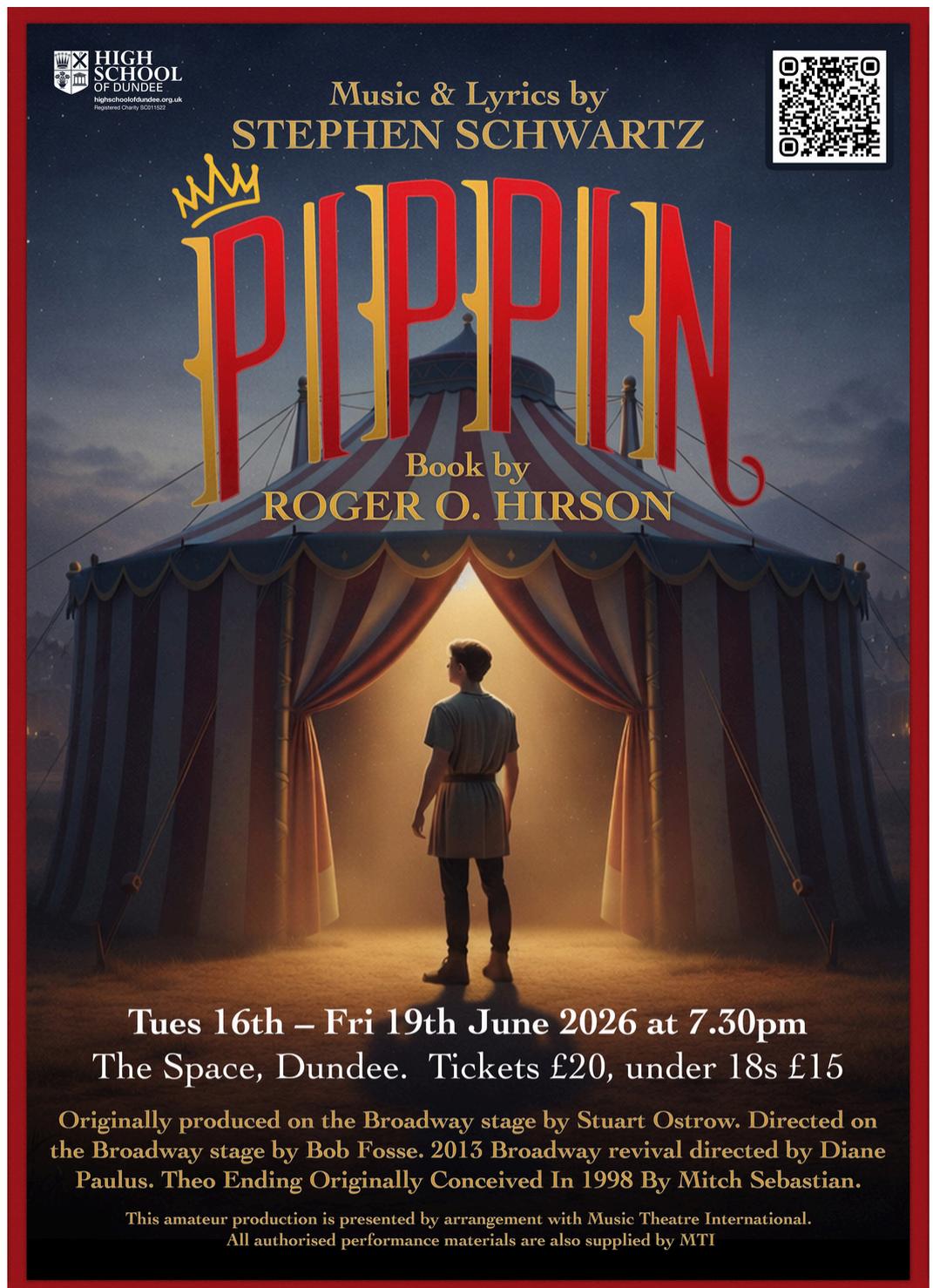
Hannah and Alexandra won the under 18 vocal duet



Alexandra, Roseanna, and Kirsty won the musical theatre trio/duet

And our group won the musical theatre vocal ensemble, but I don't have a photo

None of this would have been possible without the support and organisation of Miss McDonald who has been incredible this past week. Well done to all the winners, and all those who competed, it was a lot of fun!



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The Oscars 2026

The Oscars, officially titled the 98th academy awards, took place last Sunday evening, so without further ado, let's get into the winners. There's been lots of great movies this past year, and I've actually seen quite a few of them. Oh wait. That sentence was further ado. Ok, let's try that again. With much further ado, here's who won.

Best Picture was won by Paul Thomas Anderson's explosive 'One Battle After Another', chronicling a deadbeat ex-revolutionary's struggle to rescue his daughter from her actual father, a white supremacist army officer, played by Sean Penn who won **Best Supporting Actor**. Penn maintained a streak of absence and victory at the BAFTA's and Critics awards by not showing up to collect the award. This is his third Oscar, so I guess the excitement wears off after a while. Turns out he was in Ukraine, paying president Zelensky a visit. Ok, he had a good reason.

The film itself is a riveting portrait of current America, loosely adapted from Thomas Pynchon's novel 'Vineland', win six awards including **Best Film Editing**, and a new category, Best Casting. I've seen this one, it's really good. The three hour runtime just flies by (I'm kinda serious). Paul Thomas Anderson, a filmmaker for whom the golden statue has long proved elusive, won his first Oscar for **Best Director**. And then for good measure, another for **Best Adapted Screenplay**.

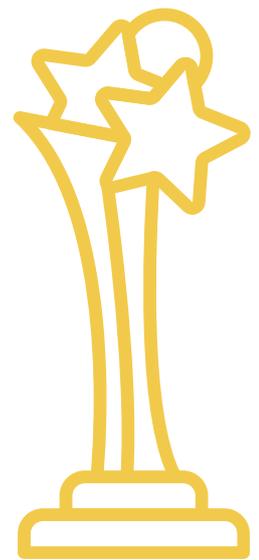
Best Actor was deservedly won by Michael B Jordan for his dual role of twins Smoke and Stack in 'Sinners'. Ryan Cooglers vampire epic also won **Best Cinematography**, **Best Original Score**, and **Best Original Screenplay**. 'Sinners' was a movie I found beautifully entertaining, with magnificent musical set-pieces and storytelling. Coogler and Jordan have worked together on every one of the formers films, including Rocky spin-off Creed and both Black Panther movies, so I am excited to see what the pair do next.

Speaking of movies about musicians fighting monsters, 'Kpop Demon Hunters' of course won **Best Animated Film**. Who hasn't seen this one? It's actually pretty good, it might be a bit over talked about, but it's simply a good, entertaining movie. But you probably already know that. 'Golden' inevitably won **Best Original Song**. Irish actress Jessie Buckley won **Best Actress** for her role as Agnes Shakespeare in Chloe Zhao's 'Hamnet'. Buckley has swept the awards season, winning a BAFTA, a Critics Choice award and a Golden Globe, so her victory was a safe bet.

Nonetheless, there were some surprises in the mix. Amy Madigan won **Best Supporting Actress** for her role as Aunt Gladys in the horror movie 'Weapons', you know the one about all the kids running away, an unusual but welcome win for a genre that the academy tends to overlook.

Another horror favourite of mine, Guillermo Del Toro's 'Frankenstein' won **Best Production Design**, **Best Make-up and Hairstyling**, and **Best Costume Design**. 'F1' won **Best Sound**, 'Avatar fire and ash' won **Best Visual Effects**. **Best Animated Short** was won by 'The girl who cried pearls', **Best Live Action Short** was a tie, won by 'The Singers' and 'Two people exchanging saliva' (sounds charming). **Best Documentary Feature** was won by 'Mr nobody agaisnt Putin'. 'Sentimental Value' took home **Best International Feature**, beating best picture rival 'The secret agent' as well as 'It was just an accident', whose director, Jafar Panahi, faces prison if he returns home to Iran after he shot the film in Tehran in secret to avoid government censorship.

And as for Timothée Chalamet, oh how the mighty have fallen. His film, 'Marty Supreme', about a self obsessed, destructive ping pong player, started awards season as one of the



major contenders, but by the end of the night, there were no Oscars for the film or for Chalamet's performance as the title character. It comes after Chalamet frankly ran the fact that he really really wanted an Oscar into the ground and then some. I have seen the film and, to be fair, it is pretty good and he captures the characters unbearable nature well. But I did think the winners were better. Ah well, there's always Dune part 3 for him to reclaim some dignity after he, in the film, got spanked by Kevin O'Leary (a famous American billionaire who's somehow gotten into Hollywood) with a ping pong bat. The things some people do for Oscar's, honestly. I'm starting to think these people take acting seriously! Rant over

The Breakdown of the Special Relationship

Jack Mitchell

In recent days, we have seen a barrage of insults directed at our Prime Minister from Donald Trump which marks a huge breakdown in relations since this time last year, when Starmer had just returned from his successful Oval Office meeting with the President.

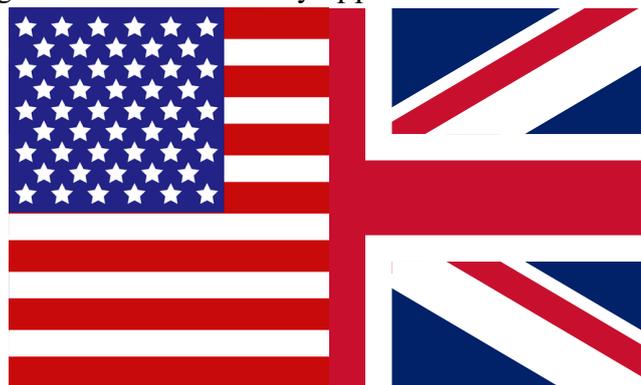
The main reason for the collapse of diplomatic relations was the United Kingdom's refusal to get involved in the United States' conflict with Iran. While the UK was far from being alone in holding this position, it is the Prime Minister who has been served a unique amount of slander from the Oval.

During a meeting with the Irish Taoiseach on Tuesday, Trump started talking about the bust of Winston Churchill he has in the Oval Office and commented that Sir Keir Starmer is 'not Winston Churchill'. This came after a near identical remark while with the German Chancellor Friedrich Merz two weeks earlier. He then went on to say that he disagrees primarily with Starmer's immigration and energy policies which he labelled 'a disaster'. The Taoiseach then unexpectedly joined the Starmer conversation and defended the Prime Minister with whom he had met on Friday in Cork at the UK-Irish summit. Somewhat infantilising Trump, he then said that he 'has the capacity to get on with' Starmer having got on with him before, perhaps suggesting he work to repair the relationship.

Trump bad-mouthing a fellow NATO leader has been seen by many as highly damaging. Even Tory leader Kemi Badenoch, self described as Starmer's 'biggest critic', said that Trump's comments have been 'childish' and that the spat 'sends the wrong signal to our opponents'. It is reminiscent of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's unforgettable shouting match meeting in the Oval Office with Trump and his Vice President JD Vance roughly a year ago when the commander-in-chief also publicly attacked the leader of an ally nation, although Vance was more at fault for the argument.

Both incidents send a message of Western division to the leaders of autocratic countries such as Xi Jinping of China, Vladimir Putin of Russia, and North Korea's recently 're-elected' supreme leader Kim Jong Un. While they may not act on this immediately, the thought of a more fragmented West certainly appeals to them. In fact, it seems that the only people benefitting from Trump's insults and rambling are these very leaders. The man who gains most is Putin, who right this moment continues to wage war against an allied country, watching on with glee as his enemies weaken before him for no real reason.

It is vital that the NATO countries – including the US – come together and prove that we can still win the war in Ukraine and counter any attack against us. Without this show of unity, who knows what the Putins of this world will try next



Seven questions for staff

Lucy Smith

Welcome back! After my recent excursions out to various departments I thought I'd find someone to interview a little closer to home. I present...Dr Smith!

- 1. Cats or dogs and why?** – Cats. Their guarded aloofness is much wiser than unconditional love. Plus Lucy will never forgive me if I don't say cats.
- 2. What did you want to be when you were younger?** – A software engineer because my father was an engineer and I liked computers. And then I was one for about twenty years – even my PhD was basically writing clever software.
- 3. What is your comfort film/TV series?** – 'The Princess Bride': it has adventure, giants, pirates, true love...and the best sword fight ever committed to screen. Plus honourable mentions to 'Blackadder' and 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy (the extended edition, of course).
- 4. What department would you like to be in?** – Music. Making music is so much fun – and I'm still annoyed that my school couldn't let me do it for GCSE. Plus I actually quite like music theory and history of music.
- 5. Who is your favourite musical artist?** – That varies so much. There are some no-brainers like Mozart or The Beatles or Queen but today I'll go for Sara Bareilles: a great pianist-song-writer with a fantastic voice.
- 6. What was your first job?** – Writing computer software for a small local company in my year out before university. I worked on various projects, including for a cat bowl that could monitor how quickly a cat ate its food.
- 7. What is your go to karaoke song?** – I don't tend to do karaoke - If I was pushed I'd prefer to do a duet, perhaps 'Something Stupid' (Frank Sinatra, and others). My daughters also tell me I'm pretty good at 'Love is an Open Door', from Frozen.

Well that was embarrassing. And I never thought I'd see Mozart and The Beatles in the same answer. But I cannot argue with his responses (as much as I'd like to) as I fear my own taste is mainly inherited from him...Until next time!

Editors' Note

Or not.

Honestly, I don't know why we still have this box here

No one knows Charlie,
no one knows

That's a false statement because I know this box exists here so that we can mess about and put stupid stuff in.

Correction: Haoqi knows.

Your Editors - Charlie, Emma, and Lucy