

THE GOON SHOW:
NAPOLEON'S PIANO

First broadcast on October 11, 1955. Script by Spike Milligan. Produced by Peter Eton. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by Paul Martin, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC Home Service.

Grams:

[Wailing]

Greenslade:

Oh, come, come, come, come, dear listeners. You know, it's not that bad.

Secombe:

Of course not! Come, Mr. Greenslade – tell them the good news!

Greenslade:

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have the extraordinary talking-type wireless Goon Show.

Grams:

[Crowd screaming and stampeding]

Secombe:

Mmm. Is the popularity waning? Hmmph.

Milligan:

Oh ho ho ho ho! Fear not, Neddy-lad! We'll jolly them up with a merry laughing type joke show. Stand prepared for the story of *Napoleon's Piano*. Ho ho ho ho!

Orchestra:

[Piano mood-setting music]

Seagoon:

Napoleon's piano. The story starts in the bad old days, back in April 1955. It was early one morning, and breakfast had just been served at Beaulieu Manor, and I was standing at the window, looking in. With the aid of a telescope I was reading the paper on the breakfast table, when... when suddenly an advertisement caught my eye. It said:

Grytpype-Thynne:

[bassy, echoey] Will pay anybody five pounds to remove piano from one room to another. Apply: The Bladders, Harpiapipe, The Quants.

Seagoon:

In needle nardle noo time I was at the address, and with the aid of a piece of iron and a lump of wood, I made this sound:

FX:

[Knocks five times on door]

Moriarty:

Sapristi knockos! When I heard that sound I ran downstairs, and with the aid of a doorknob and two hinges I made *this* sound:

FX:

[Door handle turns, door creaks open]

Seagoon:

Ah! Good morning!

Moriarty:

Good morning? Just a moment...

FX:

[Telephone picked up, dialling]

Moriarty:

Hello? Air Ministry roof? Report... yes? yes? Thank you.

FX:

[Telephone hung up]

Moriarty:

You're perfectly right: it is a good morning.

Seagoon:

Thank you.

Seagoon:

My name is Neddy Seagoon.

Moriarty:

What a memory you have!

Seagoon:

Needle nardle noo! I've, er... I've come to move the piano.

Moriarty:

[Laughs maniacally, stopping suddenly] Come in.

Seagoon:

[Laughs similarly, but longer, stopping just as suddenly] Thanks.

Moriarty:

You must excuse my filthy hands but I've just been washing my face.

Grytpype-Thynne:

[Off] Moriarty?

Moriarty:

Yes?

Grytpype-Thynne:

[Now here] Can I borrow your shoe? I want to read the paper.

Moriarty:

I'm sorry it's on...

Grytpype-Thynne:

[interrupts] Oh, we appear to have company.

Moriarty:

Ha ha ha ha ha. This gentleman has come in answer to your advertisement.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Oh, how lovely! Come in, sit down.

Seagoon:

Thank you.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Have a gorilla.

Seagoon:

No thanks... I'm trying to give them up.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Splendid for you! Now, Neddy, here's the money for moving the piano. There you are: five pounds in fivers.

Seagoon:

Five pounds for moving a piano? Ha ha! This is money for old rope.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Is it? I'd have thought you'd have bought something more useful.

Seagoon:

No, no. I have simple tastes... Now, where is this piano?

Grytpype-Thynne:

All in good time, laddy. Now first, will you sign this contract, in which you guarantee to move the piano from one room to another for five pounds.

Seagoon:

Of course I'll sign. Have you any ink?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Here's a fresh bottle.

Seagoon:

[gulp] Gad! I was thirsty.

Moriarty:

Sapristi indelible! Do you always drink ink?

Seagoon:

Only in the mating seasons.

Moriarty:

Shall we dance?

Grams:

[Waltz]

Seagoon:

You dance divinely.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Next dance please.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Now Neddy, please just sign the contract.

Seagoon:

Certainly. *[scribbles]* Neddy Seagoon. A G G

Moriarty:

What's AGG for?

Seagoon:

For the kiddies to ride on. *[blows raspberry, laughs]*

Grytpype-Thynne:

Are you sure you won't have a gorilla?

Seagoon:

No thanks, I've just put one out.

Grytpype-Thynne:

I see.

Seagoon:

Now, which room is this piano in?

Grytpype-Thynne:

It's erm... It's in the Louvre.

Seagoon:

Strange taste you have.

Grytpype-Thynne:

We refer to the Louvre Museum.

Seagoon:

What what what what what what what what what what? You mean the piano's in Paris?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes.

Seagoon:

Ahhh! I've been tricked! Yahhahh!

FX:

[Thud]

Moriarty:

For the benefit of people without television... He's fainted.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Don't waste time. Open his jacket...

Moriarty:

Right!

Grytpype-Thynne:

...And take the weight of his wallet off his chest.

Moriarty:

Aha!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Found anything?

Moriarty:

Yes. A signed photograph of Neddy Seagoon, a press cutting from the theatre, Bolton, a gramophone record of Gili mowing the lawn, and a photograph of Gili singing.

Grytpype-Thynne:

He's still out cold. See if this brings him round.

FX:

[coin dropped on floor]

Seagoon:

Thank you, lady! *[Sings]* Comrades, comrades, ever since we were boys. Sharing... *[Stops singing]* Ah oh ooh oh ooh! Where am I?

Grytpype-Thynne:

England.

Seagoon:

What number?

Grytpype-Thynne:

7A. Have a gorilla.

Seagoon:

No, they hurt my throat.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Oh, naughty gorillas.

Seagoon:

Wait! Now I remember... You've trapped me into bringing back a piano from France for only five pounds.

Grytpype-Thynne:

You signed the contract, Neddy. Now get that piano *[voice changes to Lew's]* or we sue you for breach of contract.

Seagoon:

Owww! *[exits]*

Grytpype-Thynne:

Gad, Moriarty! If he brings that piano back we shall be well in the money. That piano must be worth at least ten thousand pounds.

Moriarty:

How do you know?

Grytpype-Thynne:

I've seen its bank book. That is the very piano Napoleon played at Waterloo.

Moriarty:

No wonder we lost.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes. With all that moolah we can have a wonderful slap-up holiday.

Grytpype-Thynne and Moriarty (singing):

April in Paree, we've found a Charlie...

Greenslade:

I say! Poor Neddy must have been at his wit's end. Faced with the dilemma of having to bring Napoleon's piano back from Paris he went to the Foreign Office for advice on passports and visas.

FX:

[Knocking on door]

FX:

[Throughout this scene, pieces of metal are dropped on the floor randomly]

Bannister:

Mnaw! Oh! That must be the Prime Minister at the door.

Crun:

Yes, that must be the Prime Minister, yes.

Bannister:

Come in, Anthony. Come in.

Crun:

Yes... Tell him we're very sorry.

Bannister:

Sorry for what, Henry?

Crun:

Well.. well.. well.. make something up – anything will do.

Bannister:

We're very sorry, Anthony. Oh ohhhhh oh!

Crun:

Oh!

Bannister:

You're n.. You're not the Prime Minister.

Seagoon:

Not yet, but it's just a matter of time. My name is Neddy Seagoon.

Crun:

Do you want to buy a White Paper?

Seagoon:

No thanks. I'm trying to give them up.

Crun:

Oh. So are we.

Seagoon:

[clears throat] I want a few particulars. You see, I want to leave the country.

Crun:

He's going to Russia!

Bannister:

Stop him!

Crun:

Stop him!

Grams:

[Fighting sounds, with bugle sounding attack. Crun & Bannister yell, while Seagoon shouts "I say, I say!"]

Seagoon:

Are you threatening me?

Crun:

Now get out!

Seagoon:

I will... but not before I hear musical saboteur Max Geldray.

Max Geldray and Orchestra:

[Musical interlude: 'Ain't Misbehaving']

Greenslade:

Seagoon was confused – he's not the only one. It seems that with no more than a fiver, the cheapest way to Paris was to stow away on board a Channel steamer.

Grams:

[Ship's bell, seagulls]

Seagoon:

Down in the dark hold I lay. Alone... so I thought.

Eccles:

[Sings] I talk to the trees... that's why they put me away... *[continues singing under:]*

Seagoon:

The singer was a tall ragged idiot

Eccles:

[Sings] ...Ragged idiot...

Seagoon:

He carried a plasticene gramophone and wore a metal trilby.

Eccles:

[Sings] ...metal tril.. oh! *[stops singing]* Hello, shipmate of mine. Where are you a'goin' off?

Seagoon:

Nowhere. I think it's safer to stay in the ship until we reach Calais.

Eccles:

Yeah... Hey! You goin' to Calliss?

Seagoon:

Yes.

Eccles:

What a coincidence – that's where the ship's goin. Ain't you lucky! Everything's goin to be fine, fine, fine...

Seagoon:

Here! Have a gorilla.

Eccles:

Oh! Thanks.

Grams:

[Two gorillas fighting, or if you can't get that, lions]

Eccles:

Oww! Oww! Ooh! Oww! Hey! These gorillas are strong. Here! Have one of my monkeys – they're milder.

Seagoon:

And so for the rest of the voyage we sat quietly smoking our monkeys. At Calais I left the idiot singer. By slumming down the ship's rope (in French), I avoided detection and made for the Louvre. Late that night I checked into a French hotel. Next morning, I sat in my room eating my breakfast, when suddenly through the window a fork on the end of a long pole appeared. It tried to spear my kipper.

Bloodnok:

Oh-ho!

Seagoon:

Who the blazes are you sir?

Bloodnok:

Ah-ah-oh! I'm sorry. I was... ummm... fishing.

Seagoon:

Fishing? Fishing? This is the thirty-fourth floor.

Bloodnok:

Oh. The... ummm... river must have dropped.

Seagoon:

Who are you, sir?

Bloodnok:

I've got it on a bit of paper here. Let's have a look... oh yes! Major Dennis Bloodnok, late of the third Disgusting Fusilliers OBE, MT, MT and MT.

Seagoon:

What are all those MTs for?

Bloodnok:

I get tuppence on each of them. Ohh! I'm in condition tonight. Ohhh!

Seagoon:

You're acting suspiciously suspicious. I've a good mind to call the manager.

Bloodnok:

Call him. I am unafraid.

Seagoon:

[Considers] No. Why should I call him?

Bloodnok:

Then I will. Manager?

FX:

[Door opens]

Milligan:

[French accent] Oui, monsieur?

Bloodnok:

Throw this man out!

Seagoon:

Ahhh!

FX:

[Door slams]

Bloodnok:

Now for breakfast. Kippers? Toast? Oh yes! Wait? What's this coming through the window? Flatten me croaker and nosh me slappers! It's a fork on a pole... and it's trying to take me kipper off me plate! Ohhhhhh! *[shouting]* I say! Who is that?

Seagoon:

I'm sorry, I was just fishing.

Bloodnok:

What?! I've a good mind to call the manager.

Seagoon:

Go on then, call him.

Bloodnok:

No... no, why should I?

Seagoon:

Then I'll call him. *[aside]* Watch me turn the tables, listeners. *[end aside]* Manager?

FX:

[Door opens]

Milligan:

[French accent] Oui monsieur?

Bloodnok:

Throw this man out of my room!

Seagoon:

Ahhhh!

FX:

[Door slams]

Seagoon:

Alone in Paree... I went down to the notorious Cafe Tom, proprietor Maurice Ponk.

Grams:

[Clarinet and piano play in club environment]

Seagoon:

Inside the air was filled with gorilla smoke.

Seagoon:

I was looking for a man who might specialise in piano robberies from the Louvre.

Grams:

[Whoosh!]

German (Sellers):

Good evening. You are looking for a man who might specialise in piano robberies from ze Louvre.

Seagoon:

How do you know?

German:

I was listening on se radio and I heard you say.

Seagoon:

Good. Sit down.

German:

No thank you – I am naked.

Seagoon:

Garkon?

Throat:

Oui.

Seagoon:

Two glasses of English port-type cooking sherry.

Throat:

Oui.

Seagoon:

Now... have a gorilla.

German:

No thanks – I only smoke baboons.

Seagoon:

Good show!

German:

Yes. Babboon show!

Grams and audience:

[Riotous cheering]

German:

Thank you. Thank you, and now back to ze plot.

Seagoon:

Yes! This piano we must steal: it's the one Napoleon played at Waterloo.

German:

Steal? That will be a very sticky job.

Seagoon:

Why?

German:

It's just been varnished. Ho ho ho! Ze German joke, ja? Huh?

Seagoon:

Ha ha ha. Ze English silence.

German:

Now, Mr Sneezegroin. Meet me outside the Louvre at midnight on the stroke of two.

Seagoon:

What time?

German:

When the clock strikes twenty past twelve. Bob an' Alf veederzoin.

Seagoon:

Veederline. True to my word I was there dead on three.

German:

You are late.

Seagoon:

I'm sorry, my legs were slow.

German:

You will have to buy another pair.

German:

Zis here is my oriental assistant Yakkamoto.

Yakamoto (Geldray):

Ah! I am very honoured to meet you. Why, I don't know. Oh, boy!

Seagoon:

What does this oriental creep know about piano thieving?

German:

Nothing. He is just here to lend colour to the scene. Now Neddy, this is the map plan of the Louvre and the surrounding streets.

FX:

[Paper unfolding. Continues under following dialogue]

Seagoon:

Now... you take one end of this map... That's right... unfold it... That's the way... aha... mmm... that's right... there we go... yes... mmm hmmm... keep going... yes... It's big, isn't it?

German (far off):

Yes, it is. This bit here shows the Rue de la Pays.

Seagoon:

Good heavens, you're miles away! Walk straight up that street, take the second on the left, and I'll be waiting for you.

Grams:

[Car driving by at speed, then screeching to a stop]

German:

I took a taxi – it was too far. Now we disperse and meet again in the Hall of Mirrors, when the clock strikes twinge. At midnight we strike.

Grams:

[Big Ben striking at varying speed. (Ten times)]

German:

Shhh... is that you, Seagoon?

Seagoon:

No, it was the clock.

Seagoon:

Where's Tom Yakkamoto?

German:

He's gone to the Clochemerle.

FX:

[handbell ringing]

Maurice Ponk (Greenslade):

[French accent] Everybody out! Closing time!

Seagoon:

Quick... Quick! Hide behind this pane of glass.

German:

But you can see through it.

Seagoon:

Not if you've closed your eyes.

German:

Gefine geblungen, you are right! Are all your family clever?

Seagoon:

Only the crustaceans.

Ponk:

Everybody out, and that goes for you idiots with your eyes shut behind the sheet of glass.

Seagoon:

You fool – you can't see us.

Ponk:

Yes, I can – get out or I call the police.

German:

You anti-Bismark swine! I shoot.

Seagoon:

No, no! Not through the glass, you'll break it. First I'll make a hole in it.

German:

Gut!

FX:

[Glass breaking]

Seagoon:

There... now shoot through that.

FX:

[Gunshot]

Ponk:

Oh. You've killed me. Foutre a la porte. You will get me ze sack. Oho! Oh. Oh I die. I fall to ze ground. Oh I die.

Omnes:

[Boo and hiss him]

Seagoon:

Never mind, Walter. Swallow this tin of Lifo, guaranteed to turn you to life. Recommended by all corpses and Wilfred Pickles. Forward Ray Ellington!

Ray Ellington Quartet:

[Musical Interlude: "Don't Roll Those Bloodshot Eyes At Me"]

Orchestra:

[Theme containing snatch of Marseillaise]

Greenslade:

Part Two, in which our heroes, their purpose almost accomplished, are discovered creeping up to the piano.

German:

Shh... Neddy. There is someone under Napoleon's piano trying to lift it by himself.

Seagoon:

He must be mad.

Eccles (singing):

I dy dum dy dee.

Seagoon:

I was right! Eccles, what are you doing out after feeding time?

Eccles:

I signed a contract that fooled me – fooled *me* mark you – into taking this piano back to England.

Seagoon:

What? You must be an idiot to sign a contract like that. Heh heh. Now help me get this piano back to England. Together... lift.

Omnes:

[General straining sounds, with piano plonks]

Seagoon:

Watch the old tenor's friend... heave... No, no, no. It's too heavy. It's too heavy. Put it down.

FX:

[Thud, plonk]

Eccles:

Here... it's lighter when you let go, i'n' it?

Seagoon:

I have an idea. We'll saw the legs off. Eccles? Give me that special piano leg saw that, er, that you just happen to be carrying. Ha ha ha. Thank you... now.

Eccles:

[sings under:]

FX:

[sawing wood followed by wood dropping on floor]

FX:

[sawing wood followed by wood dropping on floor]

FX:

[sawing wood followed by wood dropping on floor]

FX:

[sawing wood followed by wood dropping on floor]

Seagoon:

There! I've sawn off all four legs.

German:

Strange.. The first time I've known of a piano with four legs.

Eccles:

Hey! I keep fallin' down.

Seagoon:

I'm terribly sorry Eccles. Eccles, here! Swallow this tin of Leggo, the wonder leg grower. Recommended by all good centipedes.

Greenslade:

They managed, by sweating and struggling, to get Napoleon's piano into the cobbled court.

Seagoon:

Which is more than Napoleon ever did.

Bloodnok:

Halt! Hand over le piano in the name of France.

Seagoon:

Bloodnok take off that kilt! We know you're not French.

Bloodnok:

One step nearer and I'll strike with this fork on the end of a pole.

Seagoon:

You do and I'll attack with this kipper.

Bloodnok:

I've a good mind to call the manager.

Seagoon:

Call the manager.

Bloodnok:

No. Why should I? I... I...

Seagoon:

Very well, I'll call him. *[aside]* I'll get him this time. *[shouts]* Manager?

FX:

[Door opens]

Milligan:

Oui, monsieur?

Seagoon:

Throw this man out. *[blows raspberry]*

FX:

[Door shuts]

Bloodnok:

Seagoon. You must let me have that piano, you see... I... I foolishly signed a contract that forces me to...

Seagoon:

Yes, yes, we know.

Bloodnok:

Oh oh, you..

Seagoon:

We're all in the same boat. We have no money, so the only way to get the piano back to England is to float it back. All together, into the English Channel.. hurl... *[heaves]*

Grams:

[Splish]

Seagoon:

All aboard HMS Piano! Cast off!

Orchestra:

[Seafaring music]

Grams:

[Waves, seagulls]

Seagoon:

The log of Napoleon's Piano. December the third... second week in English Channel. Very seasick. No food. No water. Bloodnok down with the Lurgi. Eccles up with the lark.

Bloodnok:

[Weakly] Seagoon, take over the keyboard. I can't steer any more.

Seagoon:

Eccles, take over the keyboard.

Eccles:

I can't – I haven't brought my music.

Seagoon:

You'll just have to busk for the next three miles.

Bloodnok:

Wait!

Eccles:

Ooooooh!

Bloodnok:

Great galloping crabs! Look in the sky.

Grams:

[Propeller plane]

Bloodnok:

It's a recording of a helicopter. Saved!

Seagoon:

By St George, saved! Yes! *[to audience]* For those of you who haven't got television, they're lowering a man on a rope.

Bluebottle:

Yes, it is I – Sea Ranger Bluebottle. Direct from HMS Boxer. Signals applause...

Grams:

[Wild applause]

Bluebottle:

...Cease! *[applause cuts off]* I have drunk my fill of the clapping.

Seagoon:

Little stinking admiral.

Bluebottle:

Yes!

Seagoon:

You have arrived in the nick of time.

Bluebottle:

Silencio! I must do my duty. Hurriedly runs up cardboard union jack. I now claim this island for the British Empire and Lord Beaverbrook, the British patriot. Thinks: I wonder why he lives in France. Three cheers for the Empire. Hip hip hooray. Hip hip...

Seagoon:

Have you come to save us?

Bluebottle:

...hooray. Rockall is now British. Cements in brass plate. Steps back to salute.

Grams:

[Splosh!]

Bluebottle:

Aiiioo! Help! I'm in deep dreaded drowning-type water.

Seagoon:

Here! Grab this fork on the end of a pole.

Bluebottle:

It's got a kipper on!

Seagoon:

Yes! You must keep your strength up.

Bluebottle:

But.. but, I'm drowning!

Seagoon:

There's no need to go hungry as well. Take my hand!

Bluebottle:

Why? Are you a stranger in paradise?

Seagoon:

Heeuuuueeeuuueeeuuup! For those without television, I've pulled him back on the piano.

Bluebottle:

Piano? This is not a piano. This is Rockall.

Seagoon:

This is Napoleon's piano.

Bluebottle:

No.. no, it is not.

Seagoon:

It is.

Bluebottle:

No, it isn't.

Seagoon:

It's Napoleon's piano.

Bluebottle:

No, this is Rockall. We have tooked it because it is in the area of the rocket testing range.

Seagoon:

Rocket testing range? I've never heard so much rubbish in all my...

Grams:

[Wheeeee... BOOOM!]

Greenslade:

What do you think, dear listeners? Were they standing on Rockall? Or was it Napoleon's piano? Send your suggestions to anybody but us.

Greenslade:

For those who would prefer a happy ending, here it is.

FX:

[Door opens]

Grams:

[Snatch of music]

Harry (out of breath):

Gwendoline! Gwendoline!

Peter (female voice):

John, John darling.

Harry:

Gwendoline... I've... I've found work, darling. I've got a job.

Peter:

Oh John. I'm so glad for you... What is it, darling?

Harry:

Darling, all I've got to do is to move a piano from one room to another... *[laughs madly]*

Orchestra:

[Closing tune]

Greenslade:

That was the Goon Show, a BBC Recorded programme featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan with the Ray Ellington Quartet and Max Geldray. The orchestra was conducted by Wally Stott, script by Spike Milligan, announcer Wallace Greenslade. The programme produced by Peter Eton.