

# The Griffin's Tale

for baritone and orchestra

David Blake

University of York Music Press

ISMN M-57020 077 1

THE GRIFFIN'S TALE

LEGEND FOR BARITONE AND ORCHESTRA

WORDS BY JOHN BIRTWISTLE

DAVID BLAKE

1994

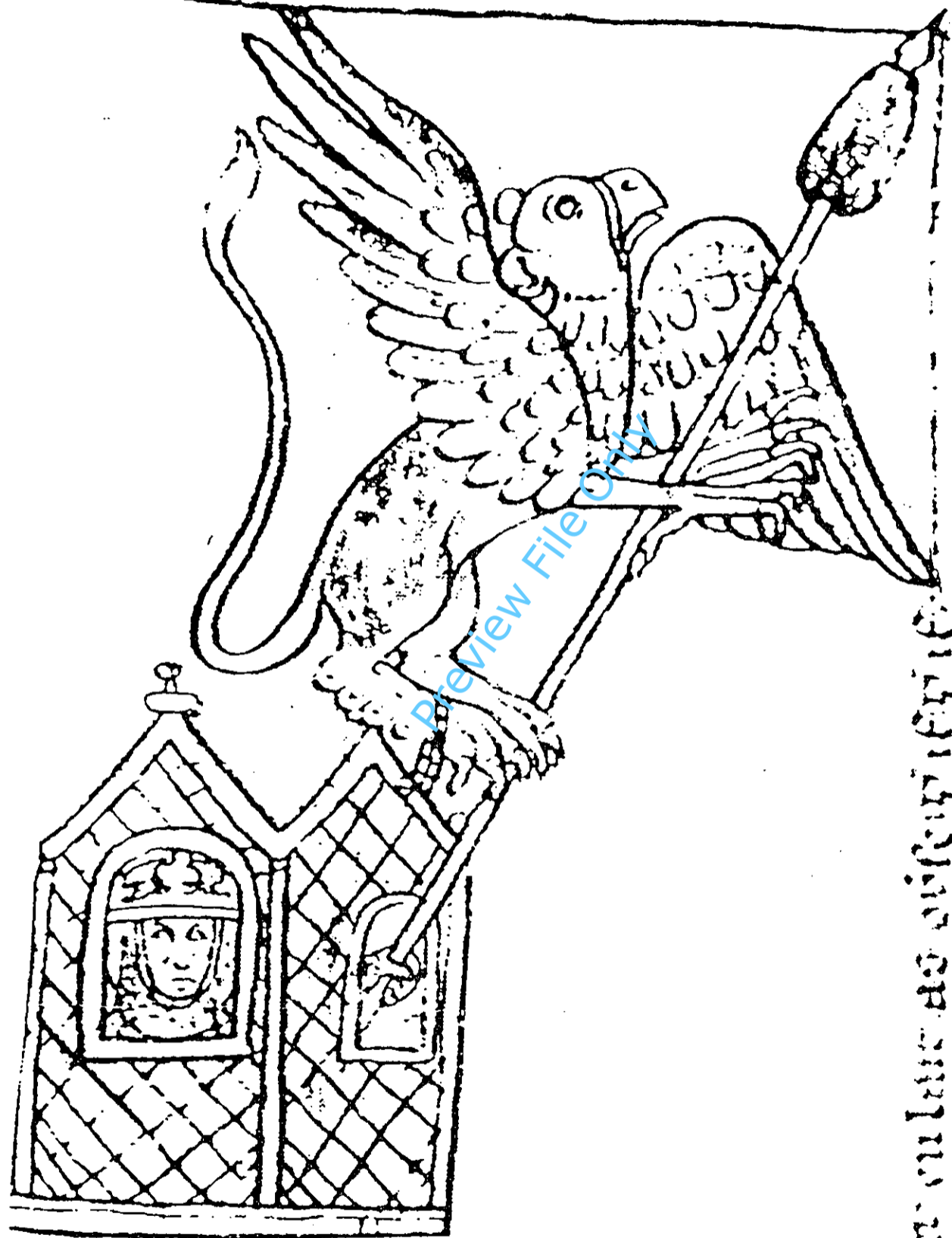
Preview File Only

THE GRIFFIN'S TALE

for  
baritone and orchestra

DAVID BLAKE

1994



Commissioned by the Northern Sinfonia

First performance by Adrian Clarke and  
the Northern Sinfonia conducted by Lionel Friend  
in the Central Hall, University of York  
on 3 February 1995

© Northern Sinfonia 1995

THE GRIFFIN'S TALE

Legend for baritone and orchestra

GRIFFIN:

It was a dismal summer, all green and quiet.  
We hovered by crossroads, hoping for carrion  
and squawked and squabbled over the helpings.

But then one day the pickings were good. Herds of brutes  
on horses clashed and bellowed as they slashed their skins.  
A rosy glut of guts was unhidden.

Peace fell. Such thew and sinew! Such spicy giblets!  
And blood as thick as dung. No time to fight - no time  
to wipe your beak! That hour was our finest.

Feasting lulled me: I was resting my head in a  
rib-cage when some ruffian clambered on my back -  
it took three or four hops to eject him.

I sank my talons into another fetlock,  
but more of the featherless bipeds flung a net:  
I fought! - lopping and chopping about me -

useless: they wrapped me in ropes. Then their beast-in-  
charge  
came to inspect - his rabble bowing, and blowing  
kisses from their claws. Here's what he boasted:

ALEXANDER:

"The sky is leaning down  
to meet the earth. The sky  
unrolls its bolt of cloth for me to step upon.  
I am the one to whom it falls  
to quell rumour and survey the field.

"Just as I bridled the wild horse  
maddened by his own shadow  
by forcing him to face the sun, so now  
I steer my own gaze to the heavens  
and ignore the oracles.

"My historians will echo:

'It was then that years of research  
into bubbles and rockets  
and scaffolds and special hills  
delivered their terrible seed.'

Therefore:

"All these entrails -  
interpret them!  
Make farthest sightings.  
Predict conquest.

"Abandon work on  
the Hills of Surveillance.  
Take ironmasters  
from the Star Staircase

"and carpenters from  
the Tower of Foresight.  
Abort the artificial wings.  
This project has priority!

"Let a carriage be built!  
Mount spears at the corners,  
and a harness on top  
to be drawn by that creature.

"His are the wings to haul  
my ship of the air!  
Let the hull be strong.  
Make a porthole for me.

"For it is my will to see  
as the eagle sees  
when he sizes up terrain  
so as to seize his prey."

GRIFFIN:

Well! They kept me awake with their saws and hammers,  
drills and chisels, and they kept me starved. Otherwise,  
I was well treated: Sir, the guards called me.

Then at dawn they breathed on bits of wood, made them glow  
and - listen to this - stuck four sweet suckling piglets  
onto spears and teased them with fire

and sizzled and scorched them under my nostrils,  
turning the dripping grease in the dangles of smoke  
that bore the squealing smells to my senses.

Then, they chained me to that botch of a chariot,  
and their overlord came back and all saluted  
him with one raucous voice:

ALL:

"A - LE- XAN- DER!!!"

GRIFFIN:

Next, this 'Alex' loaded himself in the cockpit  
and fastened his belt, and I could sniff them fixing  
those key-babs to the roof at each corner.

The stink was delicious! A hot splutter of fat  
splashed on my pecker. I could stand it no longer:  
famished, I lurched the job off its moorings -

in ravenous craving I launched it spinning in-  
to the sky, twisting around the winds of the co-  
lours of space in a lust for those piglets.

I hoisted higher, but no nearer the skewers.  
Ice formed. My quills prickled. Alex was shivering.  
The earth looked like a deep-frozen eyeball.

Hailstones flashed past me. Reeking above me,  
the meat was still crackling - and as for the cargo,  
I could hear his ribs muttering prayers:

ALEXANDER:

"Nothing, nothing like I thought.  
The black air meeting the starry poles...  
The whole world, as never before.

spinning in a dark immensity,  
our tiny world of time...

"How distant my armies,  
my splendored horse!  
How ~~small~~ <sup>vain</sup> the cities bearing my name!

How trivial  
my athletes, my engineers...

"The whole world and its islands  
passing under my view! -  
a walled town with civil gates

fringed with terraces and herds  
meeting utter wilderness;

"an oasis with its palms and fish,  
receiving trade in wine,  
resin, copper, wax and slaves

from far away across the sand  
beyond any map or hint of good rule...

"And I laugh to see  
how vastly small  
are the accounts of men -

their courtship, strut and pout:  
their petty quarrelling -

"for the liveliness is just as full  
in a seedpod snapped  
open by the sun. Or,

deep among damp leaves,  
in the green gulp of a frog.

"Above all, I can survey  
sea-road and battle-field,  
crops, enemy emplacements! Yet

it is the little fly with paper wings  
that entrances my gaze.

"and the bulrush by a stream,  
the tendrils on a vine,  
the spirals of a snail

and the day of Man,  
swift as the hawk's rapture.

"And around all this,  
the ever-encircling sea  
that slowly pulses in its coil...

The world - is a threshing floor  
surrounded by a snake!

"But there! - there is a river meandering  
for thousands of marches  
through ramparts of mountains!

And there a continent  
I could break with a mile of canal!

"There, a plain of tameable horse;  
there, timber for hundreds of ships;  
there a precipice, but at its foot

the lakeland, the tract of pasture,  
the vital source of supplies!

"There is a mountain spurting fire;  
there an impassable glacier,  
a forest surging with rain -

but there  
is the crucial pass, the way into Persia!"

GRIFFIN:

At this, a man-like shape with skinny wings and legs  
nothing to peck at - popped up from behind a cloud  
and (all Greek to me) started announcing:

ANGEL:

"Yes! There it lies,  
a threshing-floor  
where many flails  
thresh and thrash  
to nourish the kingdoms -

"a threshing-floor,  
coiled about by its  
blue-green snake.  
You see it there  
just as you wished.

"You pitch your tent  
on the field of the world  
and it yields to you.  
The world is your city.  
Earth is Alexandria.

"But keep in mind,  
you are of earthly  
woman born. Raise not  
your head too high.  
After day, night.

"Now you see it all  
and know its boundaries.  
Know then your own.  
Turn back your spears.  
Avoid the gods.

"You run the world -  
you, a glob of spit  
that runs about hot iron  
and makes a fuss  
and, hissing, disappears.

"You wear a helmet.  
You wear a crown.  
You will be told the truth  
by a naked old man  
who lives in a barrel!"

GRIFFIN:

So! There I was. Desperate for a slice of pork,  
chained up to a wooden crate in the stratosphere,  
icicles hanging off-of me gnasher,

with some kind of general who was embarking  
on a Greek dialogue with an angel! Food for  
thought's the one thing I just cannot stomach.

So I clawed back the situation. I hurled us  
into a giddy dive, peered in at the pilot's  
personal porthole, gave him a beakful:

"Angel-face has got a point, you know. May not have  
much lard on him, but his guts are in the right place.  
Let's get home, eh? Thin air's not for eating.

"Think of all the flocks of the world throwing back  
their throats for your fangs. Think of the armies -  
all that flesh gone to waste, such a pity!

"Or if innards don't tempt you, think of the kingdoms.  
You could have a bit of clout down there, I reckon!  
Let's make a survey, won't take a moment."

But his highness was still aloft in his raving:

ALEXANDER:

"... Now I see it all  
and know my place. The narrow

"sphere of the Earth  
must limit my conquest..."

GRIFFIN:

So I tried on a spot of the old soothsaying:

"Where is the profit in these islands of the sky?  
You shall gain Persia; think of the glory!"

That did the trick. He steered down his piglets and crash-  
landed seven days from camp, breaking his ankle  
and my harness. I flapped away smartish

into a sunshine that seemed paler than before.  
Well - do you know? - that was the last anyone heard  
of the animal called Alexander.

## ORCHESTRA

2 Flutes (2. doubling Piccolo)

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb (doubling Clar. in A)

Bass Clarinet in Bb


Bassoon

2 Horns in F

Trumpet in Bb

Trombone

2 Percussion

1. Timpani, Bass Drum, small suspended Cymbal, Clashed Cymbals, Tam tam, Tambourine, Whip.
2. Side Drum (with snares), Bass Drum (with pedal), small susp. Cymbal, large susp. Cymbal, clashed Cymbals, Tam tam, medium Wood Block, medium Triangle, Claves, Crotales in C , Tambourine  
Saw.

Piano (doubling Hammer, Whip)

[ all percussion is shared: no duplications necessary ]

Strings 6 6 4 4 2 (at least one bass with low C)

Conductor (doubling referee's whistle)

Score in C

Duration approx. 32 minutes

The saw is a normal, large, joiner's saw. It is suggested that a block of softwood be placed in the vice of a portable work-bench and the saw be ready in the initial cut. Amplification is desirable not only for reasons of balance but for the (grotesque) *ff* of the *cedenza*.

The pianist's hammer is also a normal joinery tool, quite large. A block of wood should be prepared with a few nails to hit.

# THE GRIFFIN'S TALE

Legend for baritone and orchestra

Words by John Rirtwhistle

Music by David Blake  
1994

Flutes 2

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Horns 1 & 2

Trumpet

Trombone

Timpani

Percussion (Side Drum)

Piano

Baritone

Violins 1 & 2

Violas

Cellos

Basses

Allegro  $\text{♩} = 138$

mf

Side Drum

mf

div

Preview File Only

Handwritten musical score for a symphony orchestra, page 2. The score includes staves for Flute 2, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horns 1 & 2, Trumpet, Trombone, Timpani, Piano, and Violins 1 & 2. The music is in 6/8 time, marked *rit.* (ritardando) at the beginning of the page. A blue watermark "Preview File Only" is visible across the center of the page.

Key annotations and markings include:

- Flute 2:** *rit.* at the start.
- Piano:** *Tam tam* marking above the staff.
- Piano:** *col Ped* marking below the staff.
- Violins 1 & 2:** *vais* marking above the staff.
- Violins 1 & 2:** *poco esitendo* marking above the staff.
- Violins 1 & 2:** *Desf 1* marking above the staff.
- Tempo/Performance:** *♩ = 69* and *flessibile* markings.

The score features various musical notations such as rests, notes, stems, and dynamic markings like *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo).



Fl. I

Clar.

B. Cl.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

DB.

2

3 Calmo ♩ = 84

Fl. 16

Clar.

B. Cl.

Hr. 1

2

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

DB.

23 *meno rit*  $\frac{4}{4}$  *a tempo*  $\frac{3}{4}$

Fl. I

Clar.

B. Cl.

Baritone

GRIFIN *p*

It was a dismal summer, all green and

*meno rit*  $\frac{4}{4}$  *a tempo*  $\frac{3}{4}$

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

DB.

29 *Meno*  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

Fl. I

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hrn. I

Baritone

*quiet.*

*Meno*  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

DB.

Preview File Only

4

7/8

3/4

35

Musical notation for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Clar.), Bassoon (B. C.), and Bassoon (Bcn.).

Musical notation for Horn 2 (Hrn 2) and Trumpet (Tr.).

Musical notation for Piano.

Baritone vocal line with lyrics: "We hovered by crossroads, hoping for carrion — and squabbled and squabbled — over the helpings."

Musical notation for Violin (Vc.) and Double Bass (DB.).

Preview file only

4

7/8

3/4

41

5 Più Mosso ♩ = 84

4/4

3/4

7/8

Musical notation for Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Clar.), Bassoon (B. C.), and Bassoon (Bcn.).

Baritone vocal line with lyrics: "But then one day the pickings were good. Herds of brutes on horses clashed and bellowed — as they started their..."

Musical notation for Violin (Vc.) and Double Bass (DB.).

6

47

Fl

Ob.

Clar

B.A.

Bsn

Hrn.

Small  
Sup. Cym.

with  $\Delta$  beater

damp

Piano

Bassoon

skins.

to-sy glut of guts

1  
2

Vla.

Va.

Vc.

Db.

pizz.

div pizz

arco

appassionato

calmo

528 7/8 3/4 Bass Drum Poco lento ♩ = 69

Piano *p una corda*

Baritone *rit.* *fz.* *p* *liberamente* *mp*  
was un-hi - ddaw. Peace fell. Such thaw and sinew!

1. Vln. *rit.* *fz.* *Poco lento ♩ = 69* *a3* *gliss.* *unis.* *colla Vocer*  
2. Vln. *pp* *a3* *gliss.* *unis.*  
Va. *rit.* *fz.* *pp* *gliss.* *unis.*  
Vc. *pp* *gliss.* *unis.*  
Cb. *pp* *gliss.* *unis.*

58 4/4 3/4 *a tempo calmo* ♩ = 84

Clarinet

B. Clarinet

Baritone *a tempo calmo* *p* *mp* *Lirico*  
Such spicy giblets! And blood — as thick — as dung.

1. Vln. *a tempo ♩ = 84* *pp*  
2. Vln. *pp*  
Va. *pp*  
Vc. *pp*  
Cb. *pp*

64

Fl. 2

Clar.

B. Cl.

Hrn. 1

Baritone

No time to fight - no time - to wipe your beak! That hour

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

DB.

70

Fl. 2

Clar.

B. Cl.

Hrn. 2

Baritone

— was our fi - nest.

con rubato, sensuale

accel.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

DB.

Fl. 2 *nt* 9  $\text{♩} = 96$

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr. I  $\text{♩} = 96$

Baritone *liberamente*  $\text{♩} = 96$

Fea - sting — lullad me: —

Vln. 1 *nt.* 9  $\text{♩} = 96$

Vln. 2

Va. *div.* *unr.*

Vc.

bb

83

Fl. 1

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr. 1

Piano

Baritone

Vc.

*mp* *cresc.* *f*

I was resting my head in a rib-cage when Smeruffian clambered on my back -

*mp* *f*

it took three or four hops to eject him.

2/4 3/4 2/4

87

Fl.

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr. 1

Piano

Bar.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

*Mosso*  $\text{♩} = 84$

*Agitato*  $\text{♩} = 126$

*p* *f* *f*

I sank my talons - into another fetlock,

but more of the featherless bipeds

flung a net:

*div* *mp* *p* *av*

3/4 2/4 3/4



Tutti  
Toccante

Handwritten musical score for a symphony orchestra and vocal soloist. The score is divided into several systems of staves.

- Woodwinds:** Flute 1 & 2 (Fl. 1, 2), Oboe (ob.), Clarinet (clar.), Bassoon (B. A.), and Bassoon (BSN).
- Strings:** Violin 1 & 2 (Vln. 1, 2), Viola (Va.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Cb.).
- Percussion:** Timpani (Tm.).
- Piano:** Piano (Piano).
- Vocal Soloist:** Baritone (Baritone).

The Baritone part includes the lyrics: "I fought! - lopping and chopping a - bout me -".

Handwritten annotations include "pizz div" (pizzicato diviso) and "arco div" (arco diviso) for the strings, and "f" (forte) for dynamics. There are also various musical markings such as slurs, accents, and articulation marks.



Fl. *Lento*  $\text{♩} = 44$

Cl. *quasi di lontano*

B. Cl. *pp*

Bsn. *pp*

Hr. *pp con sord.*

Tr. *pp con sord.*

Tbn. *pp*

Timp. *mf*

B. Dr. *p*

Piano *f*

Baritone *P ossia use — less ;* *Lento*

(1) *rit* *Lento*  $\text{♩} = 44$

Va. 1 *var. etc.*

Va. 2 *div.*

Vc. *pp*

Bb. *pp*

101  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\text{♩} = 66$

Fl. 1

Ob.

Clar.

B.A.

Bsn

Hrn.

Tr.

Trom.

(c.s.)

Temp.

Piano

Baritone

*liberamente*

*mf*

$\frac{4}{4}$

they wrapped me in ropes. Then their beast-in-charge came to inspect - his stabby bo-ning, and blowing kisses from their claws.

1

2

Vla.

Va.

Vc.

Bs.

$\frac{4}{4}$   $\text{♩} = 66$

sub part.

trcn

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

trcn

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

12

♩ = 76

*poco accel*

*al tempo*

105

Fl. 1

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr. 1

Hr. 2

Tr.

Tom.

*poco accel*

*Seize sword.*

*al tempo*

Timp.

Piano

*mf*

*poco accel*

*al tempo*

Pair of Cymbals

Baritone

*poco accel*

*al tempo*

ALEXANDER

*molto rit. (self-consciously)*

Here's what he boasted:

The sky is

12

♩ = 76

*poco accel.*

*ord. div.*

*al tempo*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Va.

Vc.

DB.

*ord.*

*div.*

*f*

110

Fl.

Ob.

Clar.

Bu.

Bsn.

1

2

Tr.

Tron.

Timp.

Cym.

Piano

Baritone

lea-ning down to meet the earth. ——— The sky un-rolls its bolt of cloth ——— for

1

2

Vln.

Va.

Vc.

Vb.

17

Fl. 1

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Tr.

Trm.

Timp.

Piano

Baritone

1. Vln.

2. Vln.

Va.

Vc.

DB.

13

me to step u-pov. I am the one to whom it falls to quell tu-mour

con sord.

soft stick

mp

cresc.

Tutti pizz

arco

pizz

arco

pizz

arco

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

21.

22.

23.

24.

25.

26.

27.

28.

29.

30.

31.

32.

33.

34.

35.

36.

37.

38.

39.

40.

41.

42.

43.

44.

45.

46.

47.

48.

49.

50.

51.

52.

53.

54.

55.

56.

57.

58.

59.

60.

61.

62.

63.

64.

65.

66.

67.

68.

69.

70.

71.

72.

73.

74.

75.

76.

77.

78.

79.

80.

81.

82.

83.

84.

85.

86.

87.

88.

89.

90.

91.

92.

93.

94.

95.

96.

97.

98.

99.

100.

Più Mosso ♩ = 84

124

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bass

Tromb.

Piano

Bass

— and survey the field. — — — — —

Just as I bridled the wild horse

14

Più Mosso ♩ = 84

130

Va.

Vc.

CB

arco

pizz

arco

pizz

14

Più Mosso ♩ = 84

130

Fl. I.

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bass

Bass

Cresc. — mf — f —

maddened by its own shadow — by forcing him to face the sun, — — — — — so now I — — — — — steer my own gaze — — — — — to the heavens

1

2

Vln. I

Vln. II

Va.

Vc.

130

15

135

Fl.

Ob.

Clar.

B.C.

Bsn.

Meno mosso

Mosso  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\text{♩} = 144$

1

2

Tr.

Tom.

Con sord.

pp

$\frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{6}{8}$

Perc.

Med. Wd. Bk.

pp

$\frac{2}{4}$

$\frac{6}{8}$

Baritone

preliberamente

Meno mosso

mp

Mosso thin voice

— and ignore the oracles.

my hi-storia will e-cho: — 'It was then that years of re-research into bubbles and

1

2

Vln. a

Vln. b

Vc.

Vc.

bb.

Solo s.p.

solo s.p.

solo s.p.

solo s.p.

pp

$\text{♩} = 144$  Tutti col legno

P Tutti c.b.

Tutti c.b.

Tutti c.l.

pp



Fl. I  
Ob.  
Clar.  
B. C.  
Bsn.

4/4

mp

p

1  
2  
Tr.  
Tbn.

4/4

mp

f

Timp.  
Wd. Bk.

4/4

p

(1 = 72)

Bassoon

4/4

normal f

rockets and scaffolds and special hills delivered their terrible seed. Therefore:

1  
2  
Vln.  
Va.  
Vc.  
Cb.

4/4

arco

p

f

22

20 [16] Allegro  $\text{♩} = 144$

Ob.  $\text{3/4}$   $\text{p}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$

Clar.  $\text{p}$

Baritone  $\text{3/4}$   $\text{f}$  *marcato*  $\text{b}^{\flat}$

[16] All these entrails - in-terpret them! Make far-thest sigh-ings.

$\text{3/4}$  Allegro  $\text{♩} = 144$

Vla. 1  $\text{ord.}$

Vla. 2  $\text{ord.}$   $\text{pp}$

Vc.  $\text{pp}$

Vc.

DB.

Fl.  $\text{150}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{2/4}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$   $\text{2/4}$   $\text{unio.}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{4}$   $\text{2/4}$

Ob.  $\text{f}$

Clar.  $\text{f}$

B. Cl.  $\text{p}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$   $\text{f}$

Bsn  $\text{f}$

Hrn I *senza sord.*  $\text{f}$

Piano  $\text{p}$   $\text{f}$

Baritone  $\text{3/4}$   $\text{3/4}$   $\text{3/4}$   $\text{3/4}$   $\text{3/4}$   $\text{2/4}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{b}^{\flat}$

Pre-dict con-quest. A-bandon work on the hills of Sur-

Vla. 1  $\text{ord.}$   $\text{pp}$

Vla. 2  $\text{pp}$

Vc.  $\text{pp}$

Vc.

DB.  $\text{p}$

156

Fl. 1 & 2

Ob.

Clar.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr. 1 & 2

Tr.

Trom.

Piano

Baritone

Vln. 1 & 2

Va.

Vc.

Db.

2. take Piccolo

Wd. BIK.

P

-voillance. Take iron masters — from the Star Staircase and carpenters from the Tower of Fore-sight.

Preview File Only

162 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> 18

Picc. Fl. I Cl. Clar. B. Cl. Bass

Hrn. 1 2 Tr. Trom.

Piano

Baritone

Vln. 1 2 Va. Vc. Db.

About the artificial wings. — This project — has pri-o-ri-ty! —

167  $\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{3}{4}$

Picc. Fl. Ob. Clar. B. Cl. Bsn.

Hr. 1 Hr. 2 Tr. Tom.

Timp. Md. Bk.

Piano

Bardane

stout

Let a carriage be built! Mount spears at the corners, and a harness on top

Vln. 1 Vln. 2 Va. Vc. Db.

Preview File Only