

Janet Oates
2019

!

**A gallery of ne'er-do-wells in 7 portraits,
With one personage deliberately not invited**

For mixed vocal ensemble (open score)

Duration c.6 minutes

- 1.A most irksome hobbadehoy
- 2.Of less than pleasing countenance
- 3.A questionable lady
- 4.A wandought, no doubt
- 5.An unnecessary letter of a gentleman
- 6.A tiresome companion
- 7.Backfriend to us all

Texts compiled by Janet Oates from archaic insults.
Choir version written for and premiered by the CoMA Singers.
This is a re-working of a piece for mezzo-soprano and piano.
Some of the same words have also been used for a set of songs for student singer with piano.



1. A most irksome hobbadehoy (40 seconds)

You scobberlotching raggabrush, stampcrabbing scallywag, you cream-faced loon. You rank spoony ninnyhammer, chuckle-headed sponger, you skin-wasting cumberworld, you cow-handed whiffle-whaffle, dew-beating dalcop, galumphing quisby, loiter-sacking lubberwort.

This unreliable young man is a large, clumsy chap who does little work, has little intelligence, and does not pay his own way through life.

2. Of less than pleasing countenance (20 seconds)

Furfuraceous fustylugs.

This unappetising soul is corpulent and lazy, and suffers from an unappetising appearance.

3. A questionable lady (35 seconds)

Pediculous draggle-draggle

A louse-infested lady of uncertain morals.

4. A wandought, no doubt. (2 1/2 minutes)

A drate-poking gnash-gab mumblecrust Crambazzled stingbum, am I?
A seek-sorrowful smelfungus, am I? Bobolynobolyiferous whoreson zed (Bespawling gobermouch), am I?
Gabber... manikin...

An aging hypochondriac, with negativity emanating from every oozing, dozing pore.

5. An unnecessary letter of a gentleman (c. 1 1/4 minutes)

Why, he's a fribbling sneaksby! He's a bed-swerving fop-doodle!
I concur, such a baffle-gabbing, word-grubbing snout-band!
My, what a rake-fire, a roiderbanks, a trip-taking gillie-wet-foot, a clack-box! All hat and no cattle.

A gentleman of no honour, whose words are more copious than his coins, and whose thoughts are emptier than his purse, but who believes himself important and a charmer.

6. A tiresome companion (c. 1/2 minute)

Jackanapes

A saucy upstart.

7. Backfriend to us all (c. 1 minute)

Horn-swogdling scalawag, jollocking mammothrept,
Shabbaroon grundiguts, scape grace, maw-worm,
Leasing-monger.

We understand this person to be a fat hypocrite, a morally corrupt liar – and yet he remained in power...

Performance notes

The six movements of ! may be performed in any order as one continuous song with no breaks between them, or using the suggested linkages below.

One or two of the characters may be omitted as unwelcome. The performers may choose how to – or whether to – disclose this to the audience.

Alternatively, ! may be separated into separate portraits to be interspersed (in any order) between different items on a recital programme – in which case, any or all of the seven portraits may be included, perhaps overlapping with other items using the suggested (or similar) linkages.

Leading into song i, a most irksome hobbledehoy:

- Sing the first glissando gesture, slowly, with the gaps between entries quite long; keep entering in turn, getting louder each time. Start the song 'proper' with the words.

Leaving song i:

- Keep repeating bars 11 and 12 disdainfully.

Leading into song ii, a woman of less-than-pleasing countenance:

- One singer exhale on 'ffff'. If more time needed, a different singer copies. Begin song 'proper' together as written.

Leaving song ii:

- All singers take up and continue the 'tktkt' vocalising, perhaps with the odd 'sss' thrown in for good measure.

Leading into song iii, a questionable lady:

- All singers, beginning together, repeat bar 1, a tempo, as long as you like, with breath-gaps ad.lib; segue into the song 'proper'

Leaving song iii:

- Silence (unless quasi-spitting were acceptable, in which case, gob away)

Leading into song iv, a wandought no doubt:

- Groups 1 and 2: continuous slow, free glissandos up and down of a minor third E to G to E, (foreshadowing the end of bar 3). These can overlap the song 'proper', begun by groups 3 and 4.

Leaving song iv:

- Gentle slow 'ssh' noises, fairly sparse.

Leading into song v, an unnecessary letter of a gentleman:

- Begin the first 10" noises gradually, extending it, building up into starting the song 'proper' together at 'Why'.

Leaving song v:

- Continue the 'hmgh's of the final bar, allowing yourselves to drift out of time with each other, gradually diminishing in frequency.

Leading into song vi, a tiresome companion:

- Begin the quiet 'punching', one at a time.

Leaving song vi:

- Continue the loud punching and hisses.

Leading into song vii, Backfriend to us all:

- Any or all of the singers begin the bottom part's first bar. Set up the 5/4 pulse.

Leaving song vii:

- Any or all singers repeat the spoken 'leasing-monger' (uncoordinated).

!

i: a most irksome hobbadehoy

normal noteheads - a sung tone, or sing-song; cross noteheads - spoken / shouted.

Words and music: Janet Oates

right in his face: a very personal attack.

$\text{♩} = \text{c.55}$

1 ohh... you scob-ber-lot-ching rag - ga- brash! you
2 ohh... you scob-ber-lot-ching rag - ga- brash! you
3 ohh... you scob-ber-lot-ching rag - ga- brash! you
4 pp ohh... you scob-ber-lot-ching rag - ga- brash! you

5 scob-ber-lot-ching rag-ga-brash! rag - ga-brash! Stamp - crab-bing scal-ly-wag, You
scob-ber-lot-ching rag-ga-brash! rag - ga-brash! Stamp - crab-bing scal-ly-wag, You
scob-ber-lot-ching rag-ga-brash! rag - ga-brash! Stamp - crab-bing scal-ly-wag,
scob-ber-lot-ching rag-ga-brash! rag - ga-brash! Stamp - crab-bing scal-ly-wag,

2

A

9

cream-faced loon, you rank spoo-ny nin-ny-ham-mer, nin-ny - ham-mer,
 cream-faced loon, you rank spoo-ny nin-ny-ham-mer, nin-ny - ham-mer,
 cream-faced loon, you rank spoo-ny nin-ny-ham-mer, nin-ny - ham-mer,
 hey! hey! hey! hey! nin-ny - ham-mer,
 hey! hey! hey! hey! nin-ny - ham-mer,

Più mosso

13

f

chuc-kle-head-ed spon- ger! You skin-was-ting cum-ber-world, you cow-han-ded
 (like a shout)

oh! ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha you
 (like a shout)

oh! You skin-was-ting cum-ber-world, you you you
 (like a shout)

oh! ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha

accel.

17

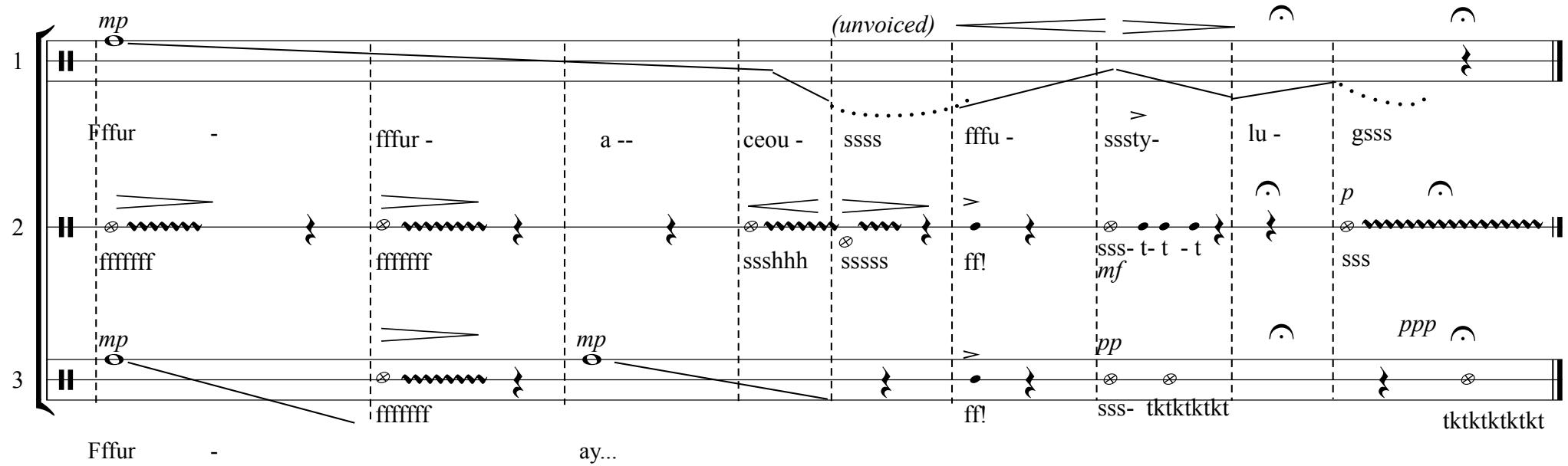
ff

whif - fle whaf- fle, dew-beat-ing dal-cop, gal-umph - ing quis-by, loit-er sack-ing lub ber-wort.
 cow-han-ded whif- fle whaf - fle, ha ha loit-er sack-ing lub ber-wort.
 you whif- fle whaf - fle, ha ha loit-er sack-ing lub ber-wort.
 you dew-beat-ing dal-cop, gal-umph - ing quis-by, loit-er sack-ing lub ber-wort.

ff

!

ii: a woman of less-than-pleasing countenance

Musically; with growing realisation.*Slightly nasal; (as if) one continuous breath. Some sounds could be made on an inhale.*

!

iii: a questionable lady

completely outraged.

poco a poco accel...

♩ = 66
(spoken)

1 Puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, di-cu- lous. Puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, di-cu- lous. Puh, puh, puh, puh,
(spoken)

2 Puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, di-cu- lous. Puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, puh, di-cu- lous. Puh, puh, puh,

♩ = 100

6 puh, puh, di-cu- lous. Di-cu- lous, di-cu- lous. Di-cu- lous, di-cu- lous. Di di di di, di di di di,
2 puh, puh, di-cu- lous. Di-cu- lous, di-cu- lous. Di-cu- lous, di-cu- lous. Di di di di, di di di di,

10 > > > >

1 Di di di di, di di di di, > Duuuh - rig-gle-ig-gle ig-gle ig-gle ig-gle Duuuh -
2 Di di di di, di di di di, H! sharp intake of breath

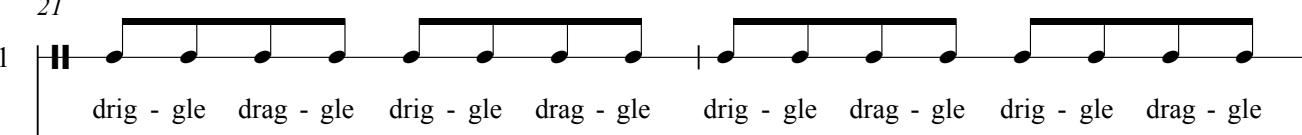
14 > > > >

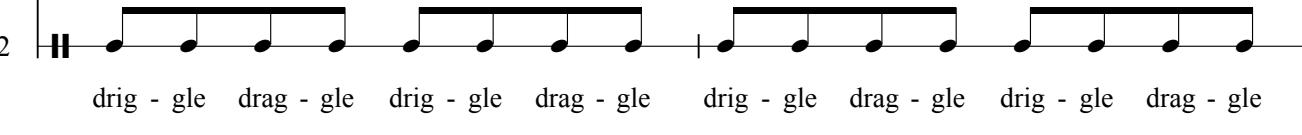
1 rag-gle - ag-gle ag-gle ag-gle Drihh hah hah hah hah hah Drah hah hah
2 ig-gle Duuuh - rag-gle-ag-gle ag-gle ag-gle H! H!

18 poco a poco accel.

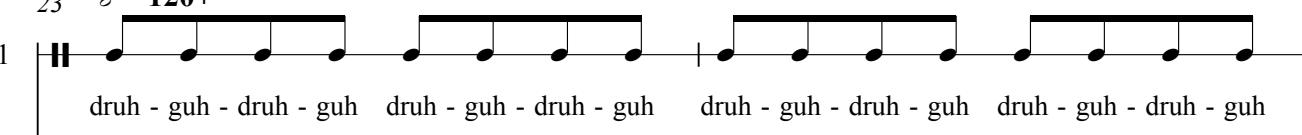
1 hah hah hah hah drig-gle drag-gle drig-gle drag-gle drig-gle drag-gle drig-gle drag-gle
2 hah hah hah hah drig-gle drag-gle drig-gle drag-gle drig-gle drag-gle drig-gle drag-gle

21

1  drig - gle drag - gle drig - gle drag - gle drig - gle drag - gle drig - gle drag - gle

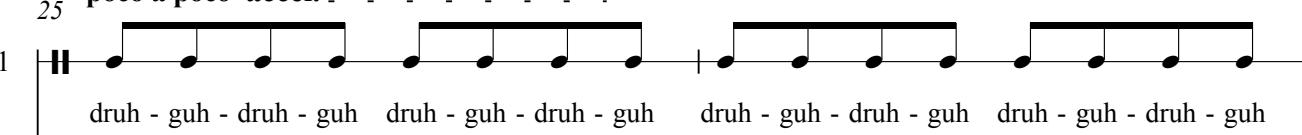
2  drig - gle drag - gle drig - gle drag - gle drig - gle drag - gle drig - gle drag - gle

23 $\text{♩} = 120+$

1  druh - guh - druh - guh druh - guh - druh - guh druh - guh - druh - guh druh - guh - druh - guh

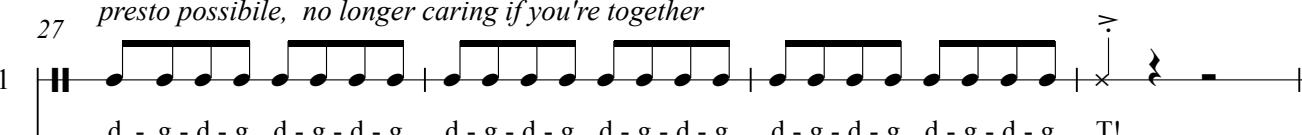
2 *SUNG (group 2 stagger entries)*
gliss.
 Oh....

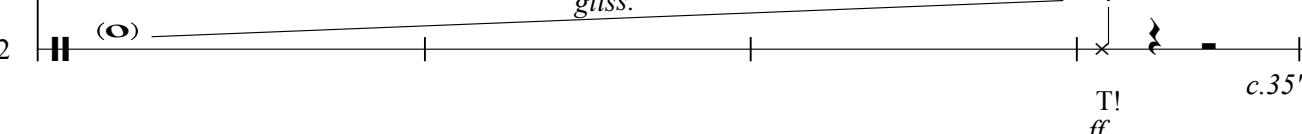
25 **poco a poco accel.**

1  druh - guh - druh - guh druh - guh - druh - guh druh - guh - druh - guh druh - guh - druh - guh

2 **poco a poco**
gliss.

27 *presto possibile, no longer caring if you're together*

1  d - g - d - g d - g - d - g d - g - d - g d - g - d - g T! ff
gliss.

2 *(O)*  T! ff c.35"

(like a spitting gesture)

!

iv: a wandought, no doubt.

*Approximately even distribution of singers to parts; voice parts in any octave (even within one part)
 All singers **independent**; stagger entries in random order of starting; choose own tempo,
 except begin together at bar 20 (thereafter in own tempo)
 Cross-head notes indicate approximate pitches.*

Barely aware.

sloqly; very freely

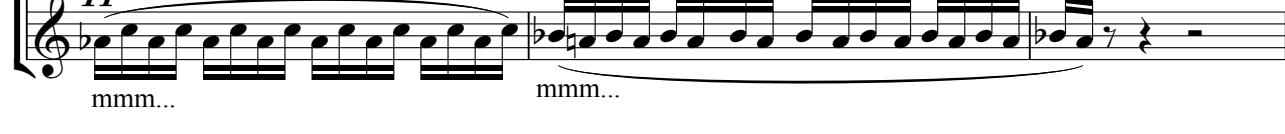
rit...

5

1 

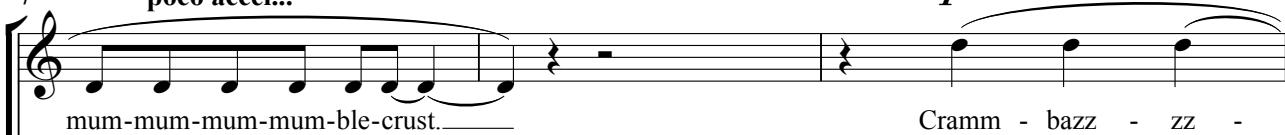
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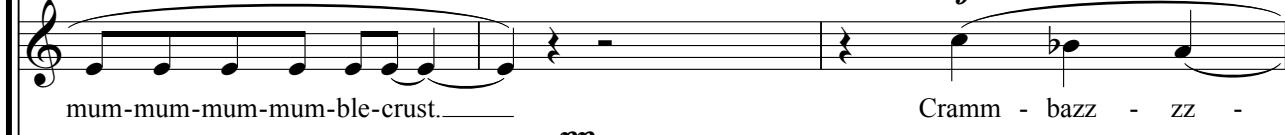
3 

4 

4 *poco accel...*

p

1 

2 

3 

4 

7

1 *gliss.* **p** mmm am I? a

2 zzled sting - bum - bum - bum-mmm am I? a

3. *low in your voice*
mmmm *gliss.*

4. *low in your voice*
mmmm *gliss.*

10

1 seek - sor - row - ful smel - - fun - gus am

2 seek - sor - row - ful smel - - fun - gus am

3. loo loo loo loo *sim.* loo

4. loo loo loo loo *sim.* loo

12

I?

SOLO (wait for silence before beginning)

I?

Bo - bo - ly - no - bo - ly - if - fer - ous whore - son zed

low in your voice

3.

4.

low in your voice

gliss.

mmmm

mmmm

15 Pitchless whisper. begin in own time.

be-spaw-ling go-ber-mouch shh

NOT SOLO

zed zed zzz am

Pitchless whisper. begin in own time.

be-spaw-ling go-ber-mouch shh shh mm...

Pitchless whisper. begin in own time.

be-spaw-ling go-ber-mouch shh shh mm... rit.

rit.

(after the initial G, pitches here are approx - instead it could be a steady descent from F to C)

18 *low in your voice*

1 zzzz.... gliss. gliss.

2 I? am I?

3 rit..... 3 3 3 3

4 3 3 3 3

p rit... mmm_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber
p rit... mmm_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber
p rit... mmm_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber
p rit... mmm_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber

21

1 gab-ber-gab-ber

2 gab-ber-gab-ber

3 SOLO rit... mi - ni - kin - nnn

4 gab-ber-gab-ber

c. 2'30

!

v: an unnecessary letter of a gentleman

Performance notes:

- 1) ad lib repeat bars. Whenever you (individually) arrive at a bar or partial bar marked by repeats, this may be performed as many times as you wish (including just once). Try to decide on the fly rather than in advance. Performers will therefore be un-coordinated from 'bed-swer-ving fopdoodle' onwards.
- 2) The steady minim pulse must be maintained throughout, though voice part 2 goes temporarily awry in bar 8 and part 1 in bars 12-14.
- 3) dynamics: the whole song should be loud and over-confident, while allowing the words to be heard.
- 4) cross-headed notes indicate free-pitch.

gleeful pots and kettles in a clubhouse.

c.20"

$\text{♩} = 60$

1 a chaos of 'hmm', 'fof fof', 'harrumph', 'muuh' noises, like the sounds in a parliamentary meeting.

2 Why, _____ he's a frib-bl-ing sneaks- by!

gleeful pots and kettles in a clubhouse.

1 Why, _____ he's a frib-bl-ing sneaks- by!

5 *smug little parliamentary-style grunts of approval (any low pitch)*

1 He's a bed-swer-ving fop doo- dle! hmgh! hah! I con- cur! such a

2 He's a bed-swer-ving fop doo- dle! hmgh! hah! hah!

8

1 baf fle-gab-bing word-grub-bing snout- band! My, _____ what a rake fire, a

this bar (voice part 2 only) does not have to be a tempo at all.

back to the pulse, a tempo

2 hmgh! I con- cur! hah!

10

10

roi - der - banks, a trip - tak - ing gil - lie - wet - foot,

My, *gliss.*

what a rake - fire, a

*these bars (12-14, voice part I only)
do not have to be a tempo at all;
create parliamentary noise as
at the beginning.*

11

clack - box!

hah!

hmgh!

hoh!

roi-der-banks, a trip - tak-ing gil - lie - wet- foot, a clack - box! hah!

*back to the pulse,
free time a tempo*

13

muuh!

hmgh!

hoh!

hmgh!

*repeat at first freely
and then come together until
you finish all together in time.*

All hat, and no cat - tle. hmgh!

!

vi: a tiresome companion

A round, or alternatively a free canon, for as many singers as there are.
As a round, each entry begins after one bar.

As a free canon, entries begin ad lib after each other, though keeping to the pulse. In this version, notes do not have to be of exact length.
Sing in any octave.

Throughout (from when the first singer begins), ALL singers punch one fist into the other palm lightly.
'Punching' continues until all singers have finished - stop 'punching' on the last singer's final quaver of their 'sss' bar.
Feel free to add random 'ss' hisses when you've finished, until you finish altogether with the last singer.

To the world in general.

$\downarrow = \text{c.}60$

(this noise may be
made inward, thus
sneaking a breath!)

mp

Punch one fist
into other palm

All continue 'punching' until
last singer has finished.
CRESCENDO punches until
you all finish together on final
quaver of final singer's 'ss'.

vii: backfriend to us all !

1

f

Ah! gliss. Ah!

2

f

Ah Ah Ah

3

f

Ah Ah Ah

4

f

Ah Ah Ah

5

1

childishly

na na na na na

2

Horn - swog - gling sca - la - wag, joll - o - cking mam-mo-thrept,

3

Horn - swog - gling sca - la - wag, joll - o - cking mam-mo-thrept,

4

Horn - swog - gling sca - la - wag, joll - o - cking mam-mo-thrept,

7

f

mf *gliss.*

f

1 ha!_ Ha! grun-di-guts!

2 Shab-ba-roon grun-di-guts, scape - grace, maw - worm, grun-di-guts!

3 Shab-ba-roon grun-di-guts, scape - grace, maw - worm, grun-di-guts!

4 Shab-ba-roon grun-di-guts, scape - grace, maw - worm, grun-di-guts!

11

p

rit.

1
scape - grace, maw - worm,

2
scape - grace, maw - worm,

3
scape - grace, maw - worm, mm_____

4
scape - grace, maw - worm, mm_____

14 *p sneering*

1

Leas - sing mong - er.

2 *p sneering*

2

Leas - ing mong - er.

3 *p sneering*

3

Leas - sing mong - er.

SPOKEN, free time (not coordinated if more than one speaker)

4

f Leasing-monger.