

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 raggabrash, 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-swoggling 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 'tktk' 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.

*right in his face: a very personal attack.*

Words and music: Janet Oates

$\text{♩} = \text{c.55}$

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,

**A**

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

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

*♩ = ♩*

17

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.

*♩ = ♩*

!

ii: a woman of less-than-pleasing countenance

*Musingly; with growing realisation.*

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

The musical score consists of three staves, numbered 1, 2, and 3. Staff 1 is a vocal line with a melodic line and lyrics. Staff 2 and 3 contain sound effects and dynamics. The score is divided into sections by vertical dashed lines.

**Staff 1 (Vocal):**

- Starts with a half note *mp* (mezzo-piano).
- Lyrics: *Fffur -*, *fffur -*, *a --*, *ceou -*, *ssss* (unvoiced), *fffu -*, *sssty-*, *lu -*, *gsss*.
- Ends with a half note.

**Staff 2 (Sound Effects):**

- Starts with a half note *fffff* (fortissimo).
- Lyrics: *ssshhh*, *sssss*, *ff!* (fortissimo), *sss- t- t - t* (*mf*), *sss*.
- Ends with a half note *sss*.

**Staff 3 (Sound Effects):**

- Starts with a half note *mp* (mezzo-piano).
- Lyrics: *ay...*, *ff!* (fortissimo), *sss- tktktkt* (*pp*), *tktktktkt* (*ppp*).
- Ends with a half note *tktktktkt*.

**Staff 1 (Melody):**

- Starts with a half note *mp*.
- Ends with a half note.



## iii: a questionable lady

*completely outraged.*

$\text{♩} = 66$   
(spoken) **poco a poco accel...**

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, puh,

6  $\text{♩} = 100$

1 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! Duuuh - rig-gle - ig-gle ig-gle ig-gle  
*sharp intake of breath*

14

1 rag-gle - ag-gle ag-gle ag-gle Drihh hah hah hah hah hah hah Drahh 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)*  
Oh... *gliss.*

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* (like a spitting gesture)

1 d - g - d - g d - g - d - g d - g - d - g d - g - d - g d - g - d - g d - g - d - g T! *ff*

2 *gliss.* T! *ff* c.35"





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* **mp** a drate - pok-ing gnash - gab-gab-gab-gab-gab **rit...** 5 mm -

*slowly; very freely* **mp** a drate - pok-ing gnash - gab-gab-gab-gab-gab **rit...** 5 mm -

*very steadily; legato.* **pp** mmm... mmm...

*very steadily; legato.* **pp** mmm... mmm...

4 *poco accel...* **p** mum-mum-mum-mum-ble-crust. Cramm - bazz - zz -

*poco accel...* **mf** mum-mum-mum-mum-ble-crust. Cramm - bazz - zz -

*gliss.* **pp** ah ah

*gliss.* **pp** ah ah

7

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

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

3 *low in your voice*  
mmmm

4 *low in your voice*  
mmmm

10

1 *gliss.*  
seek - sor - row - ful smel - - - fun - gus am

2 *gliss.*  
seek - sor - row - ful smel - - - fun - gus am

3 *sim.* loo loo loo loo loo

4 *sim.* loo loo loo loo loo

12

1. I? SOLO (wait for silence before beginning)

2. I? Bo - bo - ly - no-bo - ly - if - fer - ous whore-son zed\_

3. *low in your voice*  
gliss.  
mmmm

4. *low in your voice*  
gliss.  
mmmm

15 **Pitchless whisper. begin in own time.**

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

2. zed zed zzz am NOT SOLO

3. **Pitchless whisper. begin in own time.**  
be-spaw-ling go-ber-mouch shh shh mm... accel. rit.

4. **Pitchless whisper. begin in own time.**  
be-spaw-ling go-ber-mouch shh shh mm... accel. 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 *gliss.* *ZZZZ.....* *gliss.* *p rit...* *mmm\_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber*

2 *I? rit....* *am I?* *gliss.* *p rit...* *mmm\_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber*

3 *rit....* *3 3 3 3* *p rit...* *mmm\_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber*

4 *rit....* *3 3 3 3* *p rit...* *mmm\_ gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber-gab-ber*

21

1 *gab-ber-gab-ber*

2 *gab-ber-gab-ber*

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

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-swerving 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.*

♩ = 60

The score consists of two staves, 1 and 2. Above the first staff, a bracket labeled 'c.20"' spans the first two measures. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 60. The music is in common time (C). The first staff has lyrics: 'a chaos of 'hmm', 'fof fof', 'harrumph', 'muuh' noises, like the sounds in a parliamentary meeting.' followed by 'Why, \_\_\_\_\_ he's a frib-bl-ing sneaks-by!'. The second staff has lyrics: 'Why, \_\_\_\_\_ he's a frib-bl-ing sneaks-by!'. Both staves feature a dynamic marking of *f* and a glissando marking *gliss.* over the first note of the second measure. The title *gleeful pots and kettles in a clubhouse.* is written below the second staff.

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

The score consists of two staves, 1 and 2. The first staff has lyrics: 'He's a bed-swer-ving fop doo-dle! hmgh! hah! I con-cur! such a'. The second staff has lyrics: 'He's a bed-swer-ving fop doo-dle! hmgh! hah! hah!'. The music features triplet markings (3) over the first three notes of the first measure on both staves. The notes 'hmgh!' and 'hah!' are marked with an asterisk (\*) to indicate free-pitch.

The score consists of two staves, 1 and 2. The first staff has lyrics: 'baf fle-gab-bing word-grub-bing snout-band! My, \_\_\_\_\_ what a rake fire, a'. The second staff has lyrics: 'hmgh! I con-cur! hah!'. The first staff has a glissando marking *gliss.* over the first note of the second measure. A note in the second staff is marked with an asterisk (\*). A note in the second staff is marked with an asterisk (\*) and has the instruction *this bar (voice part 2 only) does not have to be a tempo at all.* written below it. The instruction *back to the pulse, a tempo* is written above the second staff.

10

1  
roi - der - banks, a trip - tak - ing gil - lie - wet - foot, a

2  
My, \_\_\_\_\_ what a rake - fire, a

*gliss.*

*these bars (12-14, voice part 1 only) do not have to be a tempo at all; create parliamentary noise as at the beginning.*

11

1  
clack - box! hah! hmgh! hoh!

2  
roi-der-banks, a trip-tak-ing gil-lie-wet-foot, a clack-box! hah!

*gliss.*

free time *back to the pulse, a tempo*

13

1  
muuh! hmgh! hoh! hmgh!

2  
*ff*  
All hat, and no cat-tle. hmgh!

*gliss.*

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

!

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.

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

$\text{♩} = \text{c.60}$

**f**

Ja - - - - ckckckck - a - - - nnn - - - a p(e)sssssss

**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

$\text{♩} = 84$

*f* Ah! *gliss.* Ah! *gliss.*

Ah! Ah!

*f* Ah Ah Ah

*f* Ah Ah Ah

*f* Ah Ah Ah

5 *childishly*

na na na na na

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

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

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* *p* *p* *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* *p* *sneering* *p* *sneering*

1 Leas - sing mong-er.

2 Leas - ing mong - er.

3 Leas - sing mong - er.

4 *f* Leasing-monger.

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