

CLARINET IN B-FLAT

Jessica Rudman

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# A Curious Incident with the Queen

*for SATB Chorus and Chamber Ensemble*

**with Text by Edith Nesbit**

2017

ca. 10:00

## Program Notes

*A Curious Incident with the Queen* is based Edith Nesbit's *The Story of the Amulet*. Written in 1906, the novel concludes a trilogy chronicling the fantastical adventures of four siblings while their parents are abroad. In this book, the children find one half of a two-part amulet that promises to give them their greatest desire—the safe return of their parents—and they undertake a quest to find the second half. The amulet has the power to transport people through time, so the children travel to times and places where the second half of the amulet might be found. In the company of a wish-granting creature called the Psammead, the siblings visit a utopian future as well as past civilizations including Egypt, Atlantis, and Babylon. While in Babylon, one of the children reveals to its Queen that the Psammead grants wishes. She wishes to see the children's country and is transported to London circa 1900, where the children show her the city.

This composition dramatizes a small scene from that tour, where the Queen sees the poor people of the city and mistakes them for slaves. The children naively respond that they are not slaves because they have “votes.” The interaction, while brief and of no particular consequence in the plot of the story, struck me as particularly relevant to contemporary circumstances, which I was commissioned by The Astoria Choir in 2016.

I selected the text shortly after the American presidential election, seeing in Nesbit's words an expression of both the disparity between the highest and lowest echelons of our economy and also the feeling of political powerlessness many people felt as a result of the election. To me, what seems like a fanciful, even humorous scene in fact brings up a number of serious issues. It calls to attention the question of how or even whether a society that condones economic oppression is any better than one that practices slavery. It also asks us to consider what it means to have a voice in government if it does not seem to make a difference in one's quality of life. These profound undercurrents are what stayed with me after reading Nesbit's story, and I hope that her words will make a similarly lasting impression on audiences hearing this piece.

## Composer Contact Information

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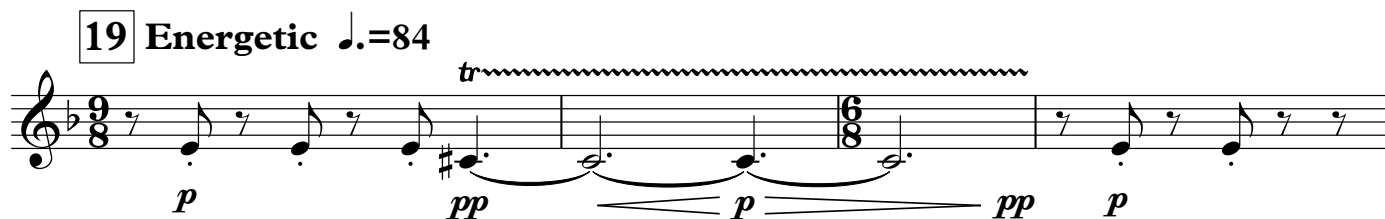
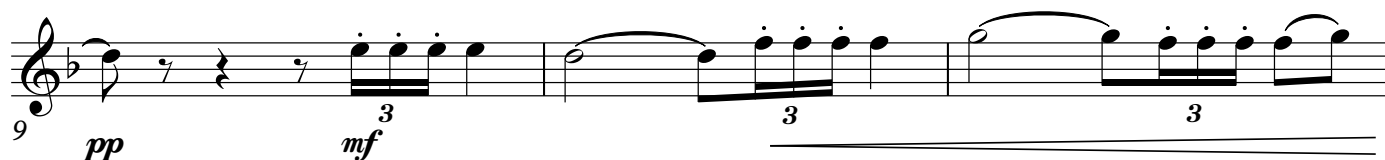
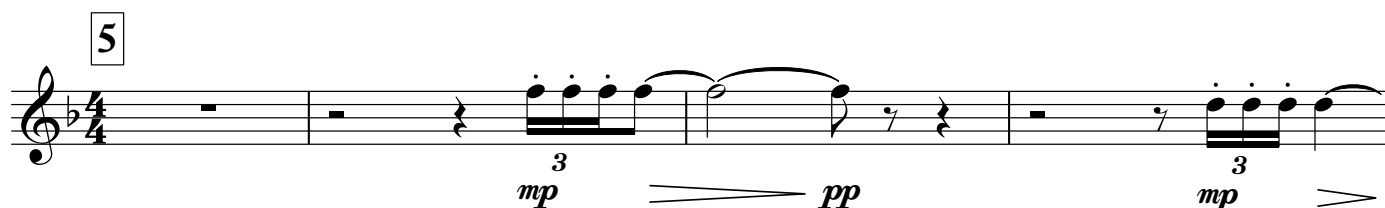
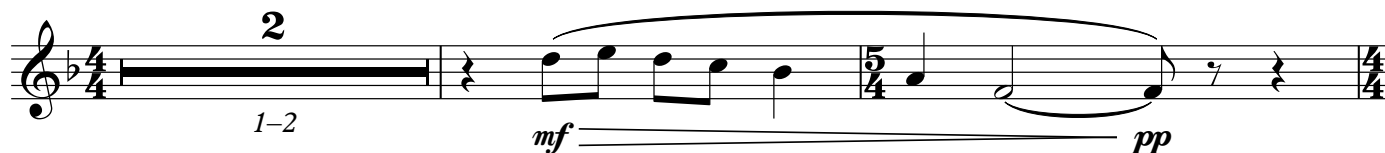
Commissioned by The Astoria Choir, Adam Eggleston, Director

# A Curious Incident with the Queen

Edith Nesbit (1858-1924)

Jessica Rudman (b. 1982)

**Majestic** ♩=84



Clarinet in B $\flat$

27

4

23-26

7/8

6/8

7/8

*p*

*pp*

The first system of the musical score is written on a single staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the time signature is 3/8. The first measure contains a quarter note G4, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second measure contains a quarter note A4, marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The third measure contains a quarter note B-flat4, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The system concludes with a double bar line.

**36 With Quick Changes of Mood** ♩=60 **molto accel.**

35 36–37 38–39 39–41

**42 Suddenly Broad** ♩=72 **molto accel.**

**4** Altos

42-45

Of course they're work-ing. That's what

49 Suddenly Gentle ♩=60

48

6

*p* *ff*

50–53

Altos

54

Why don't their mas- ters see that they're bet- ter *mp*

poco rit. 61 Freely ♩=48 **6**  
 59 *ff* 62–67

**68 Moving Forward**  $\text{♩}=60$ 

6 Altos

69-74

e - ven\_\_\_\_\_ if you un - der stand it,

**78**

76 *mp* *mf* *f*

**molto accel.**

80 *n* 83-84 **2**

**85 Suddenly Broad**  $\text{♩}=72$ 
**94 accel.**

89-90 91-92 94-96 **3**

 $\text{♩}=90$ 

Altos &amp; Tenors

97

Can it make things,\_\_\_\_\_ buy things,\_\_\_\_\_ fix things?

**rit.**

100 *p* *ff*

**104 Moving Forward**  $\text{♩}=72$ **112**

7

104-110

Sopranos

Well, \_\_\_\_\_ I

**accel.**

113

wish that all these slaves may

*p*

117

*mf* *pp* *mp* *f*

5 6

**120**  $\text{♩}=84$ 

3 3 3

*pp* *p*

**125**

123

*mp*

126

*pp* *p*

5 6

128

*f* *p* *n*

7 6 5

**131 poco accel.**

130 131-132 *pp* *p*

135 *mp* *mf* *ppp* *f*

**137 a tempo (♩=84) molto accel.**

138-143 *pp* *f*

**146 Suddenly Broad ♩=84**

145 *f*

148 *ppp* *ff*

**153**

152 *p*

156 *fp* *f*

161

