

# A SHOE FULL OF STARS

A one act chamber opera for teenagers and  
professional ensemble

Duration 53 minutes

Suitable for ages 10 - 18

Libretto

and

Vocal Score

Words by Ed Harris

Music by Omar Shahryar

Made in consultation and collaboration with students and teachers  
from North Huddersfield Trust School

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### **Project Partners**

The Active Change Foundation, London.

Lydia Wilson, research fellow at the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict, University of Oxford.

### **Special thanks to**

All of the co-creators from North Huddersfield Trust School, including the cast and Chelsea, Gavain, Grace, Hafsa, Keon and Palwasha. You are Generation Hope.

### **Libretto**

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ed.john.harris@gmail.com

### **Score**

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## CAST

*in order of appearance, with performer type and the names of the singers at the first performance:*

Narrator.....	Speaking role.....	Hayley
Hero / Icky's Dad.....	Speaking role .....	Tom
Splodge .....	Young singer (unisex).....	Dany
Icky .....	Young female voice .....	Zoe
Mum / Ra-Ra / Watchman 1 .....	Soprano .....	Lizzie Holmes
Dad / La-La / Watchman 2 .....	Baritone .....	Neil Balfour
Watchman Captain .....	Speaking role .....	Saima
Siri .....	Speaking role .....	Tom
Daniel Host .....	Young male voice .....	Dennis
Minister for Mindfulness ..	Speaking role .....	Dom
Chorus .....	Young singers .....	Ashleigh, Neha, Vina, Portia, Belinda

assuming the roles of: Chorus, Watchmen, Cousins, Online Articles, “Us” and “Them”

## FIRST PRODUCTION

*20<sup>th</sup> March 2018*

*North Huddersfield Trust School*

*Director: Ruth Mariner*

*Conductor: Christopher Leedham*

*Instrumental Ensemble: Dark Inventions*

*Production design: Emma Williams*

*Lighting design: Tom Mowat*

*Sound Design: Ben Eyes*

*An Opera Schmopera – Gestalt Arts Coproduction*

## INSTRUMENTATION

Flute / Piccolo

Clarinet in Bb / Bass Clarinet in Bb

Electronic Drum Kit / Vibraphone

Violin

Violoncello

Piano / Electric Keyboard

Digital sound effects

Score in C

## SYNOPSIS

Scene 1: Hero, who is superhuman, is not in this story, so exits stage right. Instead we meet Splodge, a teenager who had never really done anything. After seeing a news broadcast on TV about a terrorist attack, Splodge is in an anxious state. His parents – a teacher and a social worker – enter talking over each other in an argument over how to deal with the threat of extremism. Splodge feels unable to talk to them and goes off to bed. However, instead of arriving in his bedroom, he seems to have got lost in some kind of portal.

Scene 2: Splodge finds himself on the shoreline of an island, watching a girl scoop water with her shoe. Startled, the girl threatens to call the Watchmen but quickly realises Splodge is no threat, introducing herself as Icky. They make their way back to Icky's house, avoiding being caught by the Watchmen who would be extremely suspicious of a stranger like Splodge. Over a tannoy, the Watchmen issue the order for a curfew.

Scene 3: Back at her house, Icky tries to sneak Splodge past her cousins La-la and Ra-ra. As she hides Splodge in a cupboard, she receives a news update on her phone saying a shoe has been found by the Watchmen on the beach. Meanwhile, La-la and Ra-ra start arguing about politics and what to do about “Them” on the other side of the island. Icky begs them to stop arguing and answer her questions about the situation honestly, but they are incapable of understanding what she is trying to ask. Instead, they lock her into a chair in front of the TV, where Daniel Host assures everyone that nothing bad can happen as long as you watch TV. Eventually, he climbs out of the TV and leads Icky to bed. As Host tucks her in, Icky tries to formulate a question about the political situation and the terrorist threat but once again, Host is incapable of understanding what she is trying to ask. He sends instead for the Minister of Mindfulness who will simplify all Icky's questions and arguments for her. Terrified, she turns off the TV, as Splodge sneaks into her room. He awkwardly tries to console her but in her frustration, she exits out of her bedroom window, determined to go back to the beach.

Scene 4: With Watchmen all around, Icky is scooping the water on the beach with her boot, looking for magic pearls that are lost somewhere around there. She tells an increasingly nervous Splodge about her father, who was tricked by a finger-pointing conman into blaming others for their community's problems, but when the conman eventually took control of the country, the finger pointed at him and he was sent to jail. The magic pearls were the key to freeing Icky and her society but just as she finds them, Watchmen suddenly appear and bundle them away.

Scene 5: In a prison cell, Splodge and Icky begin to panic, fighting with each other. Splodge is desperate to get back to his world, while Icky is furious that Splodge doesn't believe in the reality of her problems. However, the two discover that they both share the feeling that they are ignored and unheard. For the first time, in a very small way, they feel heard. Icky's magic pearls appear in her hand and she drops one in a bucket, opening a portal back to Splodge's world. With nothing resolved, Splodge sadly says goodbye but Icky shares her new-found confidence that if one person could hear her, like Splodge had, others could too. Splodge jumps into the portal.

Scene 6: Splodge is in his bed, as Dad walks through the door, asking if Splodge is alright. Dad apologises for arguing with Mum, adding that he is happy to listen to whatever Splodge has to say. As Splodge remains quiet, Dad makes to leave, but just as he reaches the door Splodge speaks up, asking that both he and Mum listen to each other. “In a world where everyone wants to talk over each other, it's the listeners who have the power to change everything.” As Splodge falls asleep, Mum, who is also at the door, finds a magic pearl in her pocket and tucks it into Splodge's hand.

# LIBRETTO

## A SHOE FULL OF STARS

*An opera*

by Ed Harris

### Author's Notes

Punctuation is sometimes used to indicate delivery, not only to conform to the rules of grammar.

A stroke ( / ) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.

Words in square brackets [ ] are not spoken, but have been included in the text to clarify meaning.

### 1.

**HERO** comes onstage. **HERO** is a cut-and-paste superhero with a touch of the tropishly operatic. A Viking helmet with horns, for example. **NARRATOR** is written as one entity for simplicity of reading, but can be played by any number of performers, accompanied by chorus when appropriate.

**NARRATOR:** This is Hero.  
Here is hero.  
Mighty hero.  
Hero, hero... hero.

Hero fears nothing.  
Hero is mighty.  
When the going gets tough,  
Hero gets fighty.

**CHORUS** swells with awe.

**NARRATOR:** Hero, who once saved a whole planet from being consumed by plughole hair.

**CHORUS:** Hair from the plughole!

**NARRATOR:** Hero, who twice stopped sharks from overthrowing the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain!

**CHORUS:** Number 10 shark-infested fish bowl!

**NARRATOR:** Hero, who thrice saved baby kittens from the stomachs of mutated

robotic mutants, called Steve, from the Prison Planet of Prisonon!

**CHORUS:** Steves on parole!

**NARRATOR:** Hero, who isn't in this opera.

*Reveal **SPLODGE**, who is watching **HERO** on television. Reveal **SPLODGE**, a boy or girl (written here as male). **SPLODGE** is a kind of down-at-heel 'everyman' character; messy and unkempt, with no discernible talents. **SPLODGE** is watching TV. **SPLODGE** checks around, realises he's alone, and starts popping spots, somewhat grotesquely.*

**NARRATOR:** This is Splodge.

**CHORUS:** Splodge!

*The word 'Splodge' is sung with awe, and sustained longer than is necessary... or even enjoyable, and **NARRATOR** waits impatiently for it to end.*

**NARRATOR:** Splodge has never really done anything.

**CHORUS:** Couch potato!

**NARRATOR:** Splodge once saw someone being mugged... so he ran home!

**CHORUS:** Later, alligator!

**NARRATOR:** If school had taught Splodge anything, it's that he wasn't popular.

**CHORUS:** Bitchy narrator!

**NARRATOR:** Splodge preferred staying in with his own private thoughts.

**CHORUS:** Master-mind!

***SPLODGE** starts changing channels on the TV, bored. Each channel makes a lot of noise: gunfights, audiences laughing, game show music, etc. He flicks to a channel that we, the audience, can't hear – all we hear is a heartbeat. **SPLODGE** watches and listens closely. It completely consumes him, frightens him.*

**NARRATOR:** The news always seemed to come from a faraway place. Terrible things would happen, but very far away in a town called "Not Here", or the city of "Bloomin' Miles Away".

*Possibly, a newscaster points to a map of the country/region (as a weatherman would), which has a clearly marked "Here" and also clearly marked "One Town Over", "Not Here" and "Bloomin' Miles Away" ... We can't hear him/her talk, but s/he is clearly talking about a serious event happening in "One Town Over". **SPLODGE** checks his phone, compares it with the news on TV. We hear the same heartbeat, though possibly slightly higher, from his mobile.*

**NARRATOR:** This was the first time the news had come from... well, not "here"

exactly, but from one town over. Splodge had only one important question.

**SPLODGE** One town over  
I don't care where it started  
One town over,  
Is it coming here?  
Crawling like a curse  
Like mist on the moors,  
Until crows peck  
Under my door.

One town over...  
Shadows spill like ink  
Into the floors  
As the world's nightmare  
Creeps blackly towards  
me.

**NARRATOR:** Splodge's One Important Question was: If it's *now* happening one town over, does that mean it's getting closer? Could something happen... *to him*?

*Sudden rumble of thunder.*

**SPLODGE:** Mum? Dad?

**NARRATOR:** The rain fell like Double-A batteries  
Leaving dents in the garden fence  
Knocking birds plain out of the trees  
And annoying Splodge's parents.

**MUM** enters, followed by **DAD**, both arguing – they both close umbrellas that have holes punched through them from the rain. They argue, but we can't hear their words.

**MUM:** - so obviously it goes from bad to worse; and I'm talking to these two poor kids – saying, I can help you, but you have to trust me. But they'd rather spend a night, Michael – *a night, Michael* – in a prison cell, than trust someone from Social Services. And frankly I despair...

**DAD:** ...and it was just, y'know. After *all* her hard work, and – and I've really tried to push her this term – she's made such improvement, *and not just in Maths!* - her mum says the same. History. French. Art. And she's just, y'know, wasting it because of some 'fad', it's just...

*Their argument gives way to mute silence, as they stare at the TV.*

**DAD:** One town over.

**MUM:** Near.



**DAD:** One town over.

**MUM:** Nearly...

**MUM & DAD:** ...here.

**MUM and DAD** start talking – at first reasonably, but very quickly they start disagreeing and then outright arguing.

**NARRATOR:** The news had an unexpected effect on his parents. In the past, they'd argue about everything, but, in the end, always "agreed to disagree". Recently, however, they'd found a subject neither could "agree to disagree" on: And this was it. Splodge could have screamed: *Stop arguing! Help me understand what's happening!* But the argument took root, and grew thorns. Splodge went to bed.

**MUM** spots him slinking off.

**MUM:** I'm sorry, Splodge-darling.  
Did you want to say something?

**SPLODGE:** I'm just feeling a bit... y'know (*Gestures towards the TV.*) a bit funny<sup>1</sup>, I guess...

*Long silence while they stare at him. Possibly, we hear a clock tick deafeningly emphasizing the bizarre gulf between them. Suddenly, DAD "gets it".*

**DAD:** Oh, I understand! (*Beat.*) Are you being picked on at school?

**SPLODGE** stalks off with a very teenaged huff or sigh, and **MUM** and **DAD** start arguing again. As he climbs the stairs to bed, possibly images – like shadow puppets – appear on the walls around him... figures arguing and fighting, some holding guns, possibly sounds of gunfire and explosions.

**NARRATOR:** The house creaked, as did the floor,  
The once-white walls were now thrice-grey,  
Strangely, he'd never been this way before  
In his tiny flat, he'd gone astray...

**SPLODGE** tries a succession of doors and directions, shouting for his parents. The doors begin working together and bullying him, crowding him into a chair. The doors circle him in one direction, while the chair spins in the other. Then one door in particular bears down on him. It opens and swallows him.

**SPLODGE:** What's happening?! Save me!  
Someone! Anyone! Please!

*We're left with an image of SPLODGE'S flat – without him - his parents still arguing.*

*End of scene.*

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<sup>1</sup> Here, Splodge definitely means "scared".

1½.

**HERO** enters, stands stage centre and shakes his head in a kind of “bunch of rookies” way. After a dramatic pause:

**HERO:** If I were the hero,  
If I were the hero,  
If I were the hero,  
Of this opera...  
  
I would have won by now.

**HERO** exits.

*End of scene.*

2.

**SPLODGE** is on the shoreline of an island. It is evening.

**SPLODGE:** Hello?

**SPLODGE** pushes his way through some reeds or urban debris, and sees **ICKY** (written here as female). **ICKY** furtively approaches the shoreline, taking care to hide from the Watchmen. She is watching the reflections of the stars in the water. **ICKY** wears a distinctive hat, possibly a sou'wester.

**ICKY:** Can you see the glint,  
The gleam, the glitter,  
Glistening in the gloop-  
Dark, cold and bitter?

*Having tried to ‘scoop’ the reflections of the stars up in her palm, ICKY tries using her shoe – possibly lying on her front and reaching out ahead of her, or by wading out.*

Dancing like pearls,  
I grab at each glare,  
But each time I try,  
My hands come back bare.

*Suddenly, she hears SPLODGE.*

**ICKY:** I'm warning you -  
Keep Your Distance!  
I don't want you  
On my conscience.  
Stay back! I'll yell,  
Then you'll be in danger.  
I'll tell the Watchmen

“I've caught a stranger!”

*Either a giant spotlight crosses the beach, like an eye, sweeping for curfew-breakers; or two WATCHMEN begin their patrol across the beach. Either way, ICKY is aware of the threat – SPLODGE, less so. The WATCHMEN haven't seen ICKY or SPLODGE, but they are heading their way.*

**ICKY:** Tell me who you are.

**SPLODGE:** No. You tell me

**ICKY** sees **WATCHMEN** are getting closer.

**ICKY:** Are you one of “them”?

**SPLODGE:** Who's them??

**ICKY:** You must know who “they” are!

**SPLODGE:** Oh ‘must’ I? I’ll have you know I can know as little as I like.

**ICKY:** You’re an idiot.

**ICKY** covers **SPLODGE’S** mouth. She pulls him out of the **WATCHMEN’S** view – just in time **SPLODGE** struggles, but **ICKY** keeps her hand firmly over his mouth. Eventually, when the **WATCHMEN** are beginning to head away - she releases him. Throughout, **ICKY** keeps her eyes open for **WATCHMEN**:

**SPLODGE:** Oi! I'm not an idiot. I'm Splodge.

**ICKY:** That’s a stupid name.

**SPLODGE:** So? (*Pause.*) What’s yours?

**ICKY:** My name’s Icky.

**SPLODGE:** What’s it short for?

**ICKY:** Ickmerelda.

**SPLODGE:** That’s a stupid name.

**ICKY:** I didn’t choose it. (*She looks about.*)  
Okay. (*She gets ready to make a run for town.*)

**SPLODGE:** Okay what?

**ICKY:** When I say go, go!  
Like a commando.

**SPLODGE:** Where?

**ICKY:** Head low, stay down,  
Quiet as shadows  
On the ground.

**SPLODGE:** I can't! I need to get home!  
My dog is probably all alone.  
And my family will miss me  
...eventually.

**ICKY:** Splodge, I don't know where your home is,  
Or how you got here,  
But if you stay in this spot  
The Watchmen will find you.

**SPLODGE:** What are the Watchmen?

**ICKY:** They keep us safe.

**SPLODGE:** Wicked! Well, - (*He tries to flag them down.*) Excuse me! Watchmen!

**ICKY** *stops him urgently.*

**ICKY:** No. "Us" means "us". Not you. You're not "us".

**SPLODGE:** What am I?

*Pause.*

**ICKY:** (*Looks at him. Thinks.*) That's what I haven't worked out. Go!

**ICKY** *ducks and dives her way along the coat, and up into town – avoiding the WATCHMEN.*

**NARRATOR:** Although Icky sounded pretty certain, Splodge felt that if he could just explain to the Watchmen that he came from the Real World, and that he only wanted to go home, the Watchmen would *have* to help. After all, Splodge thought, this world... well, it was okay, but it was a bit silly, and wasn't *quite* as real as his own. And the Watchmen would understand that.

**SPLODGE** *is about to approach the WATCHMEN when the WATCHMAN CAPTAIN appears to announce:*

**CAPTAIN:** Full curfew will commence  
In thirty seconds,  
Bolt the door  
Don't twitch at curtains.  
All street lights  
Will be blackened.

Anyone caught  
Will be cautioned.

And possibly shot.

*The WATCHMEN laugh. SPLODGE runs to find ICKY. Neither notice ICKY has left her shoe behind.*

*End of scene.*

### 3.

**ICKY'S home.**

**NARRATOR:** So Icky took Splodge back to the place she shared with his cousins, Ra-Ra:

*Introduce RA-RA<sup>2</sup>.*

**NARRATOR:** And La-La:

*Introduce LA-LA.*

**ICKY and SPLODGE sneak into the house, unseen by the cousins.**

**ICKY:** Keep quiet, and keep hidden. If Ra-Ra and La-La see you they'll think you're one of "them".

**SPLODGE:** Who's "them"?

*One of the cousins gets close, and ICKY hides SPLODGE quickly and roughly (with comic effect). Perhaps sticking a coat over his head, or pushing him into a cupboard.*

**ICKY smiles at the cousin until the coast is clear. Then SPLODGE emerges.**

**ICKY:** (*Whispered.*) "Them" are the ones who live in the North. They want to scare us off the island, forever. That's why we have the Watchmen now, to keep us safe.

**ICKY suddenly has to hide SPLODGE again. SIRI suddenly emerges by RA-RA.**

**SIRI:** Breaking!

**SPLODGE:** What's that?

**ICKY:** Don't you have smartphones where you're from?

---

<sup>2</sup> Ra-Ra and La-La are currently written as two individuals, but there's no reason the parts can't be shared between four cousins, or six.

**SIRI:** Breaking!

**RA-RA:** What's up?

**SIRI:** Unidentified shoe left on beach. Click for more details.

**RA-RA:** (*Clicks fingers.*)

**SIRI:** At 7pm island-time,  
A shoe was discovered,  
Its wearer may have escaped  
Undercover.  
Islanders advised "lock your doors,  
And hide in a cupboard."

**LA-LA:** You shouldn't read that crap. It's just a shoe.

**RA-RA:** It's evidence. And it's here.  
It's simple, La-La; they're spreading fear.

**SIRI runs to LA-LA.**

**SIRI:** Oh look, what's that?  
It's me! I'm back again  
A ping, a ding,  
Please don't look so irritated  
I'm trying to keep you informed.  
A brand new story,  
This time about a certain Tory!  
Click for more!

*With the mention of the Tories, LA-LA goes from bored to fascinated. LA-LA clicks and SIRI pulls out a bunch of papers from his/her breast pocket.*

**LA-LA:** You can't fight fire with fire,  
You can't punish tit with tat,  
Revenge breeds revenge:

**RA-RA:** If only it were so complicated,  
If someone hits you,  
You give them a smack back!

**LA-LA:** That's Bull.....dog spirit  
The *bigger man* steps back from it.

**RA-RA:** Nya nya, you want to give them cuddles.

**ICKY:** Hey, what's for dinner?

**LA-LA:** Have you read any history?

Have you even read the news, just look?

**LA-LA** finds an article on her phone, perhaps 'zapping' it at **RA-RA** like a gun. Like **SIRI**, online 'article's emerge in human form.

**RA-RA:** But we're not talking about some Bloggers  
With fewer facts than views. Read this.

**RA-RA** and **LA-LA** start fighting. **ICKY** tries to interrupt with little (unsuccessful) distractions about dinner.

**LA-LA:** You're an idiot.

**RA-RA:** Coward.

**LA-LA:** Meathead.

**RA-RA:** Snowflake.  
You're too sappy.

**LA-LA:** Angry.

**RA-RA:** Ideological.

**LA-LA:** Fruitcake.

You can't fight fire with fire,  
You can't punish tit with tat,  
Revenge breeds revenge:  
And that's no way to react.

**RA-RA:** If only it were so complicated,  
Let me be exact:  
If someone hits you,  
You give them a smack back!  
Thwack. (Chorus: Thwack!) Crack. (Crack!)  
Bite, attack, chase them back,  
It's the only language they understand!  
You have to be the stronger man.

**LA-LA:** Bull.....headed!  
You think you're a roadman? Forget it!  
You just sound more and more extreme,  
You support our island like a football team.  
It's all your heart or nothing,

**RA-RA:** (All my heart or nothing.)

**LA-LA:** Flag-waving from the stands,

**RA-RA:** (Flag-waving from the stands.)

**LA-LA:** Spread your bull.... dog spirit,

**RA-RA:** (I love my bulldog spirit.)

**LA-LA:** When you should be the better man!

**RA-RA:** (I am the stronger man!)  
You want to give them cuddles,

**LA-LA:** (I want to give them cuddles.)

**RA-RA:** Put ointment on their bruise

**LA-LA:** (Put ointment on their bruise)

**RA-RA:** Just so they can come here

**LA-LA:** (Just so they can come here.)

**RA-RA:** And kill us when we snooze

**ICKY:** (*Sadly, with some desperation.*)  
Please stop arguing.  
You're doing my head in.  
Please stop arguing.  
You're doing my head in.

**LA-LA:** Do you care *why* they're angry? Read the news,

**RA-RA:** The problem with your mind is  
You think everyone's like you,  
Soppy, soft and skipping -

**LA-LA:** Now that simply isn't true.  
The problem with your point is  
You think everyone's like you,  
Ready to bite yer legs off!

**RA-RA:** You haven't got a clue!

**LA-LA & RA-RA:** Look!

**RA-RA** *'zaps' an article at LA-LA, and similarly, another 'article' emerges in human form – emerging from a sofa or climbing in through the window. In this way, LA-LA and RA-RA continue to assemble larger and larger "armies" of articles/singers against one another.*

**RA-RA** "We Must Tighten Our Security Laws."



**LA-LA** "Watchmen Say We Go To War!"

**RA-RA** "Videos Claim Townsfolk Should Die."

**LA-LA** "Race Attacks At An All Time High."

**RA-RA** "Crime, corruption, degradation."

**LA-LA** "Hatred, violence, alienation"

**RA-RA** Our island's a mess, you know that's true

**LA-LA:** Well... not everybody thinks like you.

**CHORUS** Y'know, not everybody thinks like you!  
Y'know, not everybody thinks like you!

**LA-LA:** There are innocent people –

**RA-RA:** There are dangerous people –

**LA-LA:** And if we stand strong,

**RA-RA:** And if we show a bit of grit

**LA-LA:** We can walk away in peace,

**RA-RA:** Before we're blown to pieces,

**RA-RA & LA-LA:** I think you're talking sh-

**ICKY:** Shut up!!!

*The song ends. They look at her, dumbfounded. Unbeknownst to **ICKY**, even **SPLODGE** pokes his head out to look. They walk away, including the two 'armies' of articles/singers, who file out of the home.*

***ICKY** tries to talk to her cousins, but they're both busy with domestic tasks (such as tidying the home after all the emerging articles), so the conversation is split between them, alternately.*

**ICKY:** Can I ask something?

**RA-RA:** Course, mate.

**ICKY:** It's serious.

**RA-RA:** Okay.

**ICKY:** Do you ever get scared?

**RA-RA:** Only by your face.

**ICKY:** No, I mean, do you ever get scared about “them”?

**RA-RA:** It’s La-La who should be scared, not me.

**RA-RA** *heads off. LA-LA enters.*

**ICKY:** La-La! Y'know how every day you two and Ra-Ra argue about the same thing? Thing is, it's making me kinda on edge.

**LA-LA:** We don't argue every day, mate.

**ICKY:** You do!

**LA-LA:** Ra-Ra and I just get heated – it'll blow over eventually.

**ICKY:** But that's not what I'm asking! I'm asking -

**LA-LA** *is gone. RA-RA has returned.*

**RA-RA:** You’re not still on about “them” are you, mate?

**ICKY:** Yes! I don’t want to be doomed. It sounds painful.

**RA-RA:** You’re not doomed. No-one’s “doomed”.

**ICKY:** No?

**RA-RA:** No! If anything - *they’re* doomed!

**ICKY:** But – that sounds like it could backfire. What if –

**RA-RA** *is gone. LA-LA is back.*

**LA-LA:** What if what, mate?

**SPLODGE:** I wish you guys would stop doing that! I’m trying to talk to you!

**RA-RA** *returns.*

**RA-RA:** Doing what?

**LA-LA:** Yeah! What are we doing?

**SPLODGE:** You’re doing my head in! You’re shouting at him about how we’re doomed if we do what *he says* – and you’re shouting at her about how we’re doomed if we do what *she* said!

**BOTH:** Yes?

**SPLODGE:** I don't want anyone to be doomed! I don't care who's right, I just don't want to be scared all the time anymore!

**RA-RA and LA-LA stop.**

**RA-RA:** (*'Realising'.*) Oh.

**LA-LA:** (*'Realising'.*) Oh.

**ICKY:** "Oh"?

**RA-RA:** (*Sympathetically.*) I get it now, kid.

**ICKY:** Do you?

**RA-RA:** Are you being bullied at school?

**ICKY:** Flippin' eggs! Agh!

**LA-LA:** I know what'll help.

**RA-RA:** You need to chill

*Together, they sit ICKY down and lock her into the chair with a cushion in her lap and a drink in her hand, and put the television on. As LA-LA and RA-RA settle down in the glow from the television, HOST enters via front door, to cheers and applause. He is a slick individual.*

*Chat show music.*

**VOICE OVER:** It's time to set your chat to stun.  
For the man who needs no introduction:  
Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Daniel Host!

*During the following, HOST acts almost like a 'domestic fairy godmother'; he serves up meals from the microwave to the family (who all watch TV, not him); tidies a little (perhaps wearing a pinny); gives them all fizzy drinks with straws; and eventually, in the last verse, puts ICKY to bed.*

**HOST:** Nothing bad happens when you watch TV,  
You're warm in its glow. Warm in its glow.  
Nothing bad happens when you watch TV,  
You were born in its glow. Born in its glow.

Time to tune into who you love the most,  
No it's not your family, it's Daniel Host!  
Nothing bad happens when you watch TV,  
So on with the show. On with the show.

**HOST settles ICKY and her cousins on the sofa so that they look like a lovely family unit. The chorus "ooos" in the background.**

**CHORUS:** You can just flop, chillax and unwind,  
You don't need a single thought to cross your mind,  
'Cos nothing bad happens when you watch TV,  
So on with the show. On with the show.

**HOST:** Now you know everything will be alright,  
With me – Daniel Host – to tuck you in at night.  
No nothing bad happens while you watch TV,  
So to sleep you go. To sleep you go.

*End of scene.*

**4.**

**ICKY'S** bedroom. **HOST** is putting **ICKY** to bed.

**ICKY:** I was thinking...

**HOST:** What's that?

**ICKY:** Do you ever get scared? Like you were just straight born that way?

**HOST:** Do you want some TV?

**ICKY:** No, like. Like there's something hot in your stomach that's black and goeey –

**HOST:** I know. Definitely. You want “Embarrassing Bodies”.

**ICKY:** No. Scared, like. Deep down, cold, where you can't see?

**HOST:** “Blue Planet?”

**ICKY:** – but in your stomach.

**HOST:** “Celebrity Bake-off?”

**HOST** tucks him in or turns the light off, thinks the conversation is concluded, and is about to sneak out.

**ICKY:** And when La-La and Ra-Ra fight... I can feel it. Do they fight cos they're scared? I don't want anything bad to happen to them.

**HOST:** Nothing's going to happen to anyone. Goodnight now, Icky.

**ICKY:** Then why are they fighting?

**HOST:** They're not fighting.

**ICKY:** They were fighting, there was a whole song about it... someone came out of the sofa, didn't you see?

**HOST:** Nothing bad's going to happen. Your cousins weren't fighting. You're not scared - you're being hysterical.

**ICKY:** (*Hysterically.*) I'm not being hysterical!

**HOST:** You sound like you're being hysterical! Okay. One question, then lights out. But that's it.

**ICKY:** Okay. And you'll definitely answer it?

**HOST:** I promise.

*Pause.*

**HOST:** So?

**ICKY:** I'm thinking.

*Pause.*

**ICKY:** Everyone's says if we do *this* we're doomed, or if we do *that* we're doomed –

**HOST:** Right.

**ICKY:** And I don't care *what* we do so long as we're not doomed!

**HOST:** Okay.

**ICKY:** So. I guess my question is –

**HOST:** It's okay. I know.

**ICKY:** You do?

**HOST:** I understand.

**ICKY:** You do?!

**HOST:** It's about fear, isn't it?

**ICKY:** Yes!

**HOST:** You want to speak to the Minister for Mindfulness.

**HOST** *tucks her in and grabs the TV remote.*

**ICKY:** No. No, I don't.

**HOST:** Now... what channel was he on...?

**HOST** *is swapped for the* **MINISTER FOR MINDFULNESS.**

**MINISTER:** It's a complicated world, but thanks to the Ministry for Mindfulness, you don't need to worry about that! We'll take all those complicated details and turn them into a big, ready-to-eat cake of simplicity! A vote for the Ministry for Mindfulness is a vote for peace of mind! Safety! Security! And above all, Simplicity! Now, doesn't your family deserve that?!

Each penny of your taxes is a brick in the wall between us and the North. Each penny is a sparkly new button on a brave new Watchman's uniform. But above all else – but above all else – each penny is a bullet.

**ICKY:** Off! Turn it off! Off-off-off!

The **MINISTER** disappears. *There is a little knock. SPLODGE pokes his head out of a drawer or cupboard or pipe, or wherever he's been hiding.*

**SPLODGE:** Are you okay?

**ICKY:** No! Everyone goes on about “them”, like it's a problem the size of the sun – But when Icky wants to talk about it, oh no, it's “go to bed, Icky” (*Beat.*) So! Go on then.

**SPLODGE:** Go on what?

**ICKY:** Tell me to chill out, tell me to go to bed, tell me I'm being silly.

*Intimidated, SPLODGE falls silent. ICKY is getting ready to sneak out.*

**ICKY:** Exactly. No-one understands.

**SPLODGE** *builds up some confidence.*

**SPLODGE:** My folks are kinda smart people... give or take. But it's like they never thought I'd grow up and, y'know, “Just maybe wanna talk to them like adults sometimes”?! They don't listen. Either they turn it into a joke, or... it's like here. That's what this is. This island's what life'd be like if no-one ever listened to each other.

*ICKY is now ready to depart – she opens the window.*

**SPLODGE:** Where are you going?

**ICKY:** Back.

**SPLODGE:** Back where?

**ICKY:** Back to where I was and what I was doing before you came along.

**SPLODGE:** But I -

**ICKY:** I like this island!

*She exits.*

**SPLODGE:** Icky! Don't go! Please!

I'm scared.

*End of scene.*

## 5.

*The beach. WATCHMEN positioned in one or two spots. By another spot, out of sight of the WATCHMEN, ICKY sees the reflection of stars in the sea and descends into the water, thinking they are her pearls. ICKY spots SPLODGE approaching, covertly.*

**ICKY:** Can you see the glint,  
The gleam, the glitter,  
Glistening in the gloop-  
Dark, cold and bitter?  
These are the lost pearls,  
My daddy gave to me,  
I grasp at each glimmer,  
With handfuls of sea,  
Clothes full of water,  
I grab at each glare,  
But each time I try  
My hands come back bare.

**SPLODGE:** Quickly, quickly!

*ICKY takes her boots off, and tries – gently, gently – to scoop up the stars into it from the water, like prospectors panning for gold. SPLODGE runs in, panting.*

**ICKY:** I've nearly got them. See. My pearls, they're in a purse.

**SPLODGE:** I can't see any pearls, Icky.  
I can't see anything *definitely*.

**ICKY'S** story is performed as she explains it. Not by her, who remains in the water, trying to catch the reflections of the stars, and not by **SPLODGE**, who stays, listening and fretting. The performers emerge out of nowhere as very clear characters: **DAD**, **BABY ICKY**, **CONMAN** (the **MINISTER**), **"US"**, **"THEM"**.

**ICKY:** My father brought me up here,  
A lovely little place.  
Full of fruit and hillsides,  
And an annual sack-race.  
Our neighbours they were... jealous,  
They saw we had it nice,  
So sometimes there were fights,  
And we sometimes paid the price.

*During the above: Two actors unravel a long scroll across the stage, bit by bit. First section to be revealed: a simple depiction of a quaint village; unravel more for hills and fauna; unravel more for a sack race (as the sack race emerges on the scroll, it also emerges on stage – and the illustration on the scroll becomes the backdrop for the action of the race); they unravel it further, to include the neighbours' village, full of jealous-looking, mean-spirited people – also depicted in the flesh. The sack race romps uncaringly through the neighbours' village. (This part of the story isn't emphasised in **ICKY'S** account, but should be in the depiction.) The sack race ends with the winner breaking through the scroll like through the ribbon at the finishing line – and finding themselves surrounded unexpectedly in the neighbouring village, surrounded by “The Neighbours”, who – it's implied - set on him/her.*

**SPLODGE** Uh, that's lovely Icky, but I don't know what that has to do with anything...

**ICKY** One day, though, a conman,  
Came from far away -  
It's embarrassing to admit to,  
It's kind of a cliché -  
He told us *all* our problems,  
Were *all* our neighbours' fault,  
Every crime statistic,  
From robbery to assault.

*The conman looks slightly like a charming American 'snake-oil salesman'. **CONMAN** addresses a small group, including **DAD** (who is holding a doll or sock puppet that's clearly supposed to be a baby **ICKY** – ridiculously, it has the same hat and coat, for example) and other villagers.*

**ICKY:** He said all he wanted,  
Was commitment in return.  
A bonded band of brothers,  
If they were keen to learn;  
He would teach them something  
More solid than a vault,  
If you point your finger first  
Then nothing is your fault!”

**SPLODGE:** Hey that's a clever point! Like a thunderbolt!

*The villagers form a small militia, with sticks as rifles. The finger-pointing referred to is illustrated by the militia pointing rifles. There is a person doing the sack race, but the militia (including **DAD**) surround him or her, and “escort” him or her into the neighbouring village. Once inside, they form*



*a tight circle around the sack race winner.*

**ICKY:** “But,” my daddy told me,  
“In the long run it got worse,  
Everyone blamed everyone,  
The answer was a curse.”

Dad said:

*(like a roll call)* “For each complicated question:”

**CHORUS:** “There's a very simple answer!”

**ICKY:** “For each complicated question:”

**CHORUS:** “There's a very simple answer!”

**ICKY:** *(bluntly)* And it's wrong.

We gave the conman everything,  
Our future and our friends,  
Because he swore without him,  
Our peaceful ways would end.  
So he launched the Ministry  
And Watchmen without fail,  
When my dad expressed concern  
They sent my dad to jail.

*We see CONMAN dictating to the group. DAD puts his hand up – expresses his opinion. CONMAN nods, thoughtfully; DAD is pleased, then his heart drops when he realises he's being arrested. Everyone is pointing at DAD. They imprison him. He says goodbye to BABY ICKY and smuggles her the pearls.*

**SPLODGE:** I'm really sorry, Ick. I'm sorry about the conman and your dad and everything. But – do you have to do this now?

**ICKY:** My dad gave me five pearls  
With ‘Special qualities’.  
He said, “If you ever need my help,  
They will set you free.”  
But, Splodge, I'm such an idiot,  
It's here I dropped my purse.  
You have to help me find it...

*ICKY takes off her shoe/boot and tries to catch the stars' reflections in the water.*

**SPLODGE:** Okay, I get why you came down here, but... Look, I didn't want to say this, Icky, and you're not gonna like it – but I come from the Real World and... and I'm sorry, but you're not *quite* as real as I am. (ICKY is fishing, not listening.) Did you hear me? I'm really sorry, Ick, but

your problems here aren't as real as mine at home. So if we can prioritise them accordingly – Icky? (*Loudly*) Icky!

*The WATCHMEN enter in the background and catch each other's eye. One of them signs to the other, and they spread out across the beach looking for trespassers.*

**ICKY:** Stop getting yourself so anxious,  
Don't go on overdrive,  
I need a moment...

*She catches the reflections in her boot.*

**ICKY:** One, two, three, four... five!  
Finally!

*She turns to show SPLODGE her full purse, with a proud smile. The WATCHMEN emerge from behind him. On their walkie-talkies:*

**WATCHMAN 1:** Come in. Two suspects found,  
South Beach, run aground.

**WATCHMAN 2:** Accomplices nowhere in sight,  
Possibly have taken flight.  
(*Pause. Either spoken, awkwardly – or sung, delicious*) Over.

*End of scene.*

## 6.

*ICKY and SPLODGE are thrown in a prison cell. They are each panicking.*

**SPLODGE:** Oh flippin' eggs! I just need to be at home!

**ICKY:** Locked up! I must speak to my cousins!

**WATCHMAN 1:** They will be notified of your arrest

**ICKY:** But -

**WATCHMEN** *exit.*

**ICKY:** It's worse than ever. We're in prison, Splodge – what if they find me guilty, what if they never trust me here again?

**SPLODGE:** I'm sure it won't be that bad for you.

**ICKY:** For me? Oh yeah. Of course. Because I'm “slightly less real” than you and your world.

**SPLODGE:** I know it might sound a bit complicated to you.

**ICKY:** I used to think what happened on this island wasn't *quite* as real or important as what happened on mine. Sad things weren't *quite* as sad. Problems weren't *quite* as problematic.

**SPLODGE:** Can I stop you there?

**ICKY:** The families we saw on TV were real families, but just not *quite* as real as we were.

**SPLODGE:** That's not what I'm saying.

**ICKY:** (*Angry*) So it doesn't sound 'complicated', Splodge – it sounds like Dr Stupid, twelve-time winner of the Mr. Stupid Competition, putting on his stupidest trousers and saying something so dumb, so basic, so primitive – even the stupid judges disqualify him for lack of imagination!

**SPLODGE:** (*Snapping*) Well, I'm sorry! But I don't have a lot of people I can talk to about this stuff!

*They face away from each other.*

**ICKY:** (*Beat. Sad.*)  
It feels like a hole.  
Closing at the top.  
And everyone who should be helping.  
Is, I guess, not.

*We can see SPLODGE listening more and more carefully, as ICKY extrapolates to herself.*

**SPLODGE:** It feels like they can't hear me  
Or that I don't make sense.  
And I don't know if I'm paranoid,  
Or if it's their pretence:

**ICKY:** But when I try to ask them  
What they're arguing about  
They tell me they weren't arguing,  
"Go to bed now, don't pout"

*Silence.*

**SPLODGE:** I'm listening.

**ICKY:** That's it.

**SPLODGE:** Are you still scared?

**ICKY:** Of course I am!

**SPLODGE:** Then you're not finished. What are you scared of?

**ICKY:** I don't know. I've never been asked exactly.

I'm scared that Ra-Ra's right,  
And compassion is all wrong,  
I'm scared that La-La's right,  
And Ra-Ra's too headstrong.  
I'm scared that in order to win,  
We have to be sadistic,  
I'm scared that violence stopping  
Violence, isn't realistic!  
I'm scared of trying to explain  
Exactly why I'm scared,  
And being told not to worry  
And sent away instead.

**SPLODGE:** Alright! Alright! I get it.

**ICKY:** So, just like everyone else,  
Tell me to forget it.

**SPLODGE:** Adults are like washing machines.  
When you give them something big,  
They all go through the same routine.  
They clunk and glug and swig,  
But it all comes back way too small -  
They think they're being nice,  
Your fear comes back like a little doll  
From a kind of shrinking device!  
Except, of course, this monster's not  
Staying shrunk and small and cute and squat,  
It grows again, but twice its size,  
Now you can't look it in the eyes!

*ICKY is playing the 'monster', SPLODGE is avoiding eye-contact, 'in character' but also slightly for real.*

**ICKY:** Don't be embarrassed.

**SPLODGE:** Sorry. I'm not used to people listening.  
And I'm sorry, none of this is helping.

**ICKY:** No. It does. A bit.  
The door is open now, you see,  
I'd bolted it with lock and key,  
And now the fears that frightened me  
Don't have to be my enemy.

If you can bear what I might share  
And hold its gaze heroically,  
Then so can I. Or at least, I'll try.  
It's a possibility.

**ICKY** *takes off her shoe. She takes the pearls out of it.*

**SPLODGE:** You got them! I thought they were just the reflections of the stars!

**ICKY:** They're special.

*She pops them in the bucket of water; and stars appear on the ceiling above her, as if the stars on the ceiling are the reflections of the pearls in the water.*

Can you see the glint,  
The gleam, the glitter,

**SPLODGE:** Flippin' eggs!

**ICKY:** Glistening in the gloop-  
Dark, cold and bitter?

**SPLODGE:** I can see the stars shining. Like reflections on the ceiling from the water.

**ICKY:** These are the pearls my dad gave to me.

**ICKY &  
SPLODGE:** You/I grasped at each glimmer  
With handfuls of sea  
A shoe full of stars  
In an ocean of fear  
Riding through the storm  
And landing here.

**SPLODGE:** *(Puts up his collar.)* It's letting the cold in. The night is filling up the cell with stars.

**ICKY:** Can you see? *(She points to the ceiling/sky.)* Can you see your home?

**SPLODGE** *spots it.*

**SPLODGE:** There! Look, Icky! This means we can escape! You can come with me.

**ICKY:** I can't go.

**SPLODGE:** What?

**ICKY:** My place is here.

**SPLODGE:** But you said yourself no-one listens! And what about “them”?

**ICKY:** Running away won’t help. I’ll go from one bunch of people who don’t really listen... to another bunch of people who don’t really listen. This island and my family could be great, but I have to stay and work at what I care about. I have to make them listen.

**SPLODGE:** Not me. If somewhere’s getting crazy – I run!

**ICKY:** I respect that too.

*Little pause.*

**SPLODGE:** I think I was hoping for a happier ending than this.

**ICKY:** You think it's the end,  
The final curtain?

**SPLODGE:** Feels like it.

**ICKY:** I think it's the start,  
Don't be so certain.  
We're not like the others,  
If we disagree -

**SPLODGE:** It can be the beginning  
If we want it to be

**ICKY:** Be curious 'bout the world,  
You don't have to be right.

**SPLODGE:** But – it’s sad.

**ICKY:** Blessed are the cracked  
For they let in a little light.

*The stars start shining brightly.*

**ICKY** Bye, Splodge.

**SPLODGE** See ya.

**SPLODGE** *disappears from* **ICKY’S** *world. She collects the pearls from the bucket of water.*

*End of scene.*

7.

**SPLODGE** *returns to his own world (falling out of a cupboard, skidding in through a door).*

**NARRATOR:** The house creaked, ordinarily. His bedroom sat in the mess it was always in, ordinarily. And the sounds of dogs and police cars, ordinarily, wafted in through the window. Mum and dad's argument, downstairs, had finished and, to his surprise, Splodge could hear a quiet -

*There is a knock at his door.*

**NARRATOR:** - at his door.

**SPLODGE'S DAD** *pokes his head in.*

**DAD:** Hey, buddy. Did you want to ask us something?

**NARRATOR:** Splodge looked out his window at the night sky. Stars sparkled.

**SPLODGE:** No, I'm okay.

**DAD:** Sorry if we were a bit *y'know*, before. We've both got a lot on at the moment, at work. It's just one of those things we never agree on.

**SPLODGE:** Yeah.

**DAD:** I've got half an hour's good listening waiting in my ears just for you, if you want it? (*Musses his hair.*) Goodnight then. (*He leaves the room*)

*Without SPLODGE seeing, MUM appears in the doorway to his room.*

**SPLODGE:** Dad? It's okay if you disagree with mum, it's okay if you disagree about everything – you love each other. But you should listen to her. And she should listen to you. In a world where everyone's desperate to talk over each other, it's the listeners who have the power to change everything.

**SPLODGE** *can be heard snoring.*

**NARRATOR:** Splodge wasn't sure when the door of his room closed, if it was before or after he'd finished, or whether his dad had listened to a word he'd said, because he'd fallen asleep. And if he was curious if his dad had taken his advice, or his mum, all he'd have to do is keep his ears open in the morning.

*To her surprise, MUM finds a pearl in her pocket. She shows DAD. DAD shrugs, baffled. They put it in SPLODGE's hand/pocket and exit.*

*End*

## COMPOSER'S NOTE

When it comes to introducing a new art form to an audience, I do not believe that any musical form can speak for itself. The context of the work must be introduced in clear and simple terms, either through a programme note or, ideally, a brief presentation. With this piece being intended for an audience unfamiliar with opera, establishing context is crucial. Producers of this opera are encouraged to welcome and acknowledge the audience as they enter, set expectations about what they are about to see, invite them to reflect on their experience afterward, highlight the contribution of the child participants and generally 'warm up' the crowd so they are confident enough to enthusiastically applaud their peers.

Furthermore, this opera is designed with expert advice from The Active Change Foundation and Lydia Wilson (research fellow at the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict, University of Oxford) to provide an opportunity to learn about and discuss the subject of fear, terror and our reactions to violent extremism. The performance should, therefore, be immediately followed by a Question and Answer panel. In the school performances, this could be expanded into several workshops with students. Recommended reading includes the UK Government's *Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales*<sup>3</sup> and also *Preventing and Countering Extremism and Terrorist Recruitment* by Hanif Qadir.<sup>4</sup>

Co-composition of specific numbers were made with the participants from North Huddersfield Trust School: the opening Chorus' number with the Narrator in scene 1, Splodge's 'One town over' aria (figure D), La-la and Ra-ra's rap (figure Q), Daniel Host's 'Nothing bad happens when you watch TV' (figure X) and Icky's History Song (figure FF).

The main characters should be played by young people (NB: Splodge is a unisex role that can be transposed down an octave for broken male voices), with professional singers taking the main supporting roles that have multiple characters. In future productions, stage and music directors may distribute rapped lines in figure Q to young chorus members, who would assume the role of extra cousins or emanations of La-La and Ra-Ra.

Text is set in three ways in the opera:

- set to specific rhythms/melodies, where text should follow the music (unless otherwise indicated);
- appearing with no note values but in specific bars of music, indicating that text is spoken and that text and music follow each other flexibly;
- boxed with a dotted arrow indicating a long-spoken passage or several lines from different characters to be underscored by a section of music.

In figure V, instruments are cued *colla parte* but can play freely until otherwise indicated; similarly at figure AA, instruments play independently once cued, only repeating if necessary, stopping when cued.

In the full score, the Clarinet and Bass Clarinet parts are written at sounding pitch, whilst the instrumental part is transposed.

<sup>3</sup> Home Office, "Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales," GOV.UK, updated April 10 2019, accessed Mar 30, 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales>

<sup>4</sup> Hanif Qadir, *Preventing and Countering Extremism and Terrorist Recruitment* (Woodbridge: John Catt Publication Ltd., 2016)



## MISE EN SCENE

*A Shoe Full of Stars* necessitates several scene changes into fantastically different worlds. In the likely absence of resources for flashy high-tech stage tricks, a highly successful alternative is a 'poor theatre' approach using techniques including Jerry Grotowski's object transformation and physical theatre. The Chorus should, therefore, be used as much as possible to animate the set, create tableaux with their bodies and even move set around, ensuring all participants are engaged and responding to the action at all times.

The set included a series of frames of varying sizes, representing both doors and screens in relation to the central theme of the show — the proliferation the media and its impact on young people. Other set included a doorframe on wheels, a bench and a large square for the TV. The frames were used to represent what was being reported e.g. terrorist acts on the news, as well as broadcasts from political figures, and mind-numbing TV shows. In transition sequences the frames came alive 'sucking' characters through them and into alternative worlds where shocking images on the news were much closer to home than we think. It is highly encouraged that future productions should collaborate on production design with the young performers/participants.





**A**

13

♩=78

Voice

Hero, who once saved a whole planet from being consumed by plughole hair.      Hero, who twice stopped sharks from overthrowing the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.      Hero, who thrice saved baby kittens from the stomachs of mutated robotic robot mutants called Steve, from the Prison Planet of Prisonon!      Hero, who isn't in this opera..

S.

Bar.

Chorus

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



Reveal **SPLODGE**, who is watching **HERO** on television.  
**SPLODGE** checks around, realises he's alone and starts  
 popping spots, somewhat grotesquely.

**B**

♩=90

24

Voice

Vc.

Pno.

NARRATOR waits impatiently for the chorus to finish.

Narrator

32

Voice: This is Splodge. *with a sense of awe* **fp** Ahem! Splodge has never

S. Splodge! *with a sense of awe* **fp**

Bar. Splodge! *with a sense of awe* **fp**

Chorus: Splodge! *with a sense of awe* **fp**

Fl. *p*

Cl. *p*

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

38

Voice: really done anything. Splodge once saw someone being mugged... so he ran home!

S. Couch po - ta - ter!

Bar. Couch po - ta - ter!

Chorus: Couch po - ta - ter!

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

44

Voice: If school had taught Splodge anything, it's that he wasn't popular.

S. Lat-er al-li-ga-tor! Bitch-y nar-ra-tor!

Bar. Lat-er al-li-ga-tor! Bitch-y nar-ra-tor!

Chorus Lat-er al-li-ga-tor! Bitch-y nar-ra-tor!

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



SPLUDGE changes channels on the TV, bored.  
 Each channel makes a lot of noise. TV SFX

50

Voice: Splodge preferred staying in with his own private thoughts.

S. Mas-ter-mind! Mas-ter-mind! Mas-ter-mind!

Bar. Mas-ter-mind! Mas-ter-mind! Mas-ter-mind!

Chorus Mas-ter-mind! Mas-ter-mind! Mas-ter-mind!

Fl.

Cl. arco

Vln.

Vc. p

Pno. rit. f

A newscaster points to a map of the country/region (as a weatherman would) which has a clearly marked "Here" and also clearly marked "One Town Over", "Not Here" and "Bloomin' Miles Away". We can't hear them talk, but they are clearly talking about a serious event happening in One Town Over. **SPLODGE** checks his phone - we hear the same heart-beat though possibly slightly higher from his mobile.

**D**  $\text{♩} = 72$

**Splodge**

Voice: The news always seemed to come from a faraway place. Terrible things would happen, but very faraway in a town called "Not Here", or the city of "Bloomin' Miles Away". This was the first time the news had come from... well, not "here" exactly, but from one town over. One important question started to form in Splodge's mind.

Chorus: Sung in free canon  
One town ov er...

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno. hold down  $\text{F}\text{e}\text{d}$

Voice: One town o ver... Is it com-ing here? Crawl-ing like a curse, like mist on the Moors,

Chorus: / / / / / /

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Voice: Un - til crows peck un-der my door. One town o- ver...

Fl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.  $8^{\text{va}}$

84

Voice: Sha-dows spill like ink in to the floors As the world's night-mare creeps black - ly to -

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

release *Red.* 8<sup>th</sup>

91

Voice: wards... ...me

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

97

**E**

*Rumble of thunder.*

**THUNDER SFX**  $\text{♩} = 42$

**Narrator** **Splodge** **Narrator:**

Voice: Splodge's One Important Question was: If it's *now* happening one town over, does that mean it's getting closer? Could something happen... to him? Mum? Dad? The rain fell like Double-A batteries, Knocking birds plain out of the trees, Leaving dents in the garden fence, And annoying Splodge's parents.

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



MUM enters with shopping bags talking to DAD. Neither realise the other isn't listening.

104 **Freely**

S. *f* So ob - vi - ous - ly it goes from bad to worse; and I'm talk - ing to these two poor kids, say - ing, "I can help you, but you have

Bar. *f* and it's just... y' - know. Af - ter all her hard work, and... and I've real - ly tried to push her this

Fl. *ad lib. imitating (and over-emphasising) the sound of the Soprano*

Cl. *ad lib. imitating (and over-emphasising) the sound of the Baritone*

Vln.

Vc.



106

S. to trust me." But they'd rath - er spend a night, Mich ael - a night, Mich - ael - in a pris - on cell, than trust some - one from So - cial Ser - vic - es. And frank - ly I des -

Bar. term - she's made such im - prove - ment, and not just in Maths! her mum says the same. Hist - ry. French. Art. And she's just y' - know wast - ing it be cause

Fl.

Cl.



**F** MUM and DAD fall silent when they see what's on TV.

109 =86 VAMP until Baritone line ends

S. pair... Near

Bar. of some "fad"... it's just... One town ov - er...

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

114

S. *Near - ly... here.*

Bar. *One town ov - er. Here.*

Fl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



*The silence of the TV is loud - we don't hear MUM and DAD when they start commenting, bickering and then arguing over what they've seen on TV.*

119 **Narrator**

Voice

The news had an unexpected effect on his parents. In the past, they'd argue about everything, but, in the end, always "agree to disagree". Recently, however, they'd found a subject neither could "agree to disagree" on: And this was it. Splodge could have screamed: *Stop arguing!* Help me understand what's happening! But the argument took root, and grew thorns. Splodge went to bed.

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.



123

Voice

Fl.

Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

MUM spots SPLODGE slinking off.

127 **G** **Meno mosso** **Splodge**

Voice: *I'm just feeling a bit... y'know\* (Gestures towards TV) a bit... funny, I guess.*

S. *gently, speech-like*  
I'm sor-ry, Splodge, dar-ling. Did you want to say some-thing?

Fl. *reticent*  
*p*

Vln. *pizz.*  
*mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno.

A long silence while they stare at him. Possibly, we hear a clock tick deafeningly, emphasising the gulf between them. Suddenly, DAD "gets it".

With a very teenaged huff or sigh, SPLODGE stalks off. MUM and DAD start arguing again.

133 **f**

Bar. Oh I un-der-stand! Are you be-ing picked on at school?

Fl.

Vln. *pizz.*  
*mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *f*

As he climbs the stairs to bed, images - like shadow puppets, appear on the walls around him... figures arguing and fighting, some holding guns, possibly sounds of gunfire and explosions.

SPLODGE tries a succession of doors and directions, shouting for his parents.

139 **H** **♩=78 Portal opening** **accel.**

Voice: The house creaked, as did the floor, the once-white walls were now thrice-grey, Strangely, he'd never been this way before, in his tiny flat, he'd gone astray...

Vln. *arco, play slightly out of tempo*  
*p*

Vc. *arco, play slightly out of tempo*  
*p*

Pno. *accel.*  
*p*

\* He means scared.

The doors begin working together and bullying him, crowding him into a chair. The doors circle him in one direction, while the chairs spin in the other.

10

147 Splodge ad lib.

Voice: What's happening?! Save me! Someone! Anyone! Please!

Vln. sul A seagull effect *f* gliss.

Vc. sul A seagull effect *f* gliss.

Pno. *f*



155 I = 240

Voice: repeat bracketed pattern as fast as possible ad lib. until next pattern specified

Fl. *p* repeat bracketed pattern as fast as possible ad lib. until next pattern specified *f*

Cl. *f* repeat bracketed pattern as fast as possible ad lib. until next pattern specified

Pno. *p* *f*



160

Fl. *f*

Cl. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. gliss. *p*

The door opens and swallows him.

SPLODGE disappears from his flat, his parents still arguing.

HERO enters, stands stage centre and shakes his head in a "bunch of rookies" way. After a dramatic pause he continues.

Hero

170  $\text{♩} = 108$  JETPLANE WHOOSH SFX *rall.* If I were the hero... If I were the hero... If I were the hero of this opera

Voice:  $\text{♩} = 108$  JETPLANE WHOOSH SFX *rall.* If I were the hero... If I were the hero... If I were the hero of this opera

Fl. *f* 3

Cl. *f* 3

Vln. *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp*

Vc. *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp*

Pno. *f* 3 *rall.* 3 3 3

176  $\text{♩} = 108$  I would have won by now! JETPLANE WHOOSH SFX

HERO exits.

Voice: I would have won by now! JETPLANE WHOOSH SFX

Fl. *f* 3

Cl. *f* 3

Vln. *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *f* *fp* *f* *fp* *f*

Pno. *f* 3 3 3 3 3

182

Fl. *p* 3 *f*

Cl. *p* 3 *f*

Vln. *mf* 6 *f* 6

Vc. *p* 6 *f* 6

Pno. *p* 3 *f* 3

# Scene 2

**SPLODGE** is on the shoreline of an island. It is evening.

**SPLODGE** pushes his way through some reeds or urban debris and sees **ICKY**. She furtively approaches the shoreline, taking care to hide from the Watchmen. She is watching reflections of the stars in the water.

185  $\text{♩} = 48$  **Splodge** GENTLE WAVES SFX

Voice: Hello? Narrator: Splodge stood alone on a beach he didn't recognise, before a sea he'd never seen. A town loomed over the island.

Vibraphone, l.v. slow vibrato *pp*

Piano: *p*

188 **Icky**

Voice: Can you see the glint, the gleam, the glit - ter, \_\_\_\_\_

Clarinets: *p*

Vibraphone: *p*

Violins: *p*

Violas: *p*

Piano: *p*

Having tried to 'scoop' the reflections of the stars up in her pal, **ICKY** tries using her shoe - possibly lying on her front and reaching out ahead of her, or by wading out.

190

Voice: Glist-ning in the gloop - dark, cold and bit- ter? \_\_\_\_\_ Danc-ing like pearls, I grab at each glare, But each time I try, My

Clarinets: *p*

Vibraphone: *p*

Violins: *p*

Violas: *p*

Piano: *p*

Suddenly, she hears **SPLODGE**.

Slight rubato, quasi-recitative

193

Voice: hands come back bare. I'm warn-ing you\_ to keep your dis tance,

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

*fp*

Slight rubato, quasi-recitative

197

Voice: I don't want\_ you on my consc ience. Stay back! I'll yell, Then you'll be in dan - ger. I'll tell the Watch-men "I've caught a stran -

Vln.

Vc.

*fp*

**AIR RAID SIREN SFX**

**K** Two **WATCHMEN** begin their patrol across the beach. They haven't seen **ICKY** or **SPLODGE**, but they are heading their way.

200  $\text{♩} = 54$

Voice: **Icky Splodge Icky Splodge Icky Splodge Icky**  
ger"! Tell me who you are. No. You tell me. Are you one of "them"? Who's "them"? You must know who "they are"! Oh 'must' I? I'll have you know I can know as little as I like. You're an idiot.

Vib. l.v. fast vibrato

Vln. sul E seagull effect *f* gliss.

Vc. gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss.

[ng]

**AIR RAID SIREN SFX FADE TO STOP**

204  $\text{♩} = 54$

Vib. **ICKY** covers **SPLODGE**'s mouth. She pulls him out of the **WATCHMEN**'s view - just in time! **SPLODGE** struggles, but **ICKY** keeps her hand firmly over his mouth. Eventually, when the **WATCHMEN** are beginning to head away - she releases him.

Vln. *f* *pp*

Vc. *f* *pp*

14 **L**  $\text{♩} = 90$   
**Splodge** **Icky:** **Splodge:** **Icky:** **Splodge:** **Icky:** **Splodge:** **Icky:** *She looks about.*

Voice: Oi! I'm not an idiot! I'm Splodge. That's a stupid name. So? What's yours? My name's Icky. What's it short for? Ickmerelda. That's a stupid name. I didn't choose it.

Vln. *colla parte*

Vc. *colla parte*

Pno. *p* *mf* *p*

217 **Icky:** **Splodge:** **Icky:** **Splodge:** **Icky:** **Splodge:**

Voice: OK. OK what? When I say go, go! Like a commando. Where? Head low, stay down, quiet as shadows on the ground. I

Vln. *colla parte*

Vc. *colla parte*

Pno. *p*

220 **Icky:**

Voice: can't! I need to get home! My dog is probably all lone. And my family will miss me... Eventually... Splodge, I don't know where your home is, or how you

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. *3*

Vc. *3*

225 **Splodge:** **Icky:** **Splodge:** *He tries to flag them down.*

Voice: got here, but if you stay in this spot, the Watch-men will find you. What are the Watch-men? They keep us safe. Wicked. Well...

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. *3*

Vc. *3*



229  $\text{♩} = 66$

**Icky:** *Stops him urgently.* **Splooge:** *She looks at him and thinks.* **Icky:**

Voice: Excuse me! Watchmen! No! "Us" means us. Not you. You're not "us". What am I? That's what I haven't figured out. Go!

Vib. *l.v. fast vibrato* dampen

Vln. *arco* *f* *6*

Vc. *arco* *f* *6*

**M** AIR RAID SIREN SFX

AIR RAID SIREN SFX FADE TO STOP

ICKY ducks and dives her way up into town - avoiding the WATCHMEN.

VAMP [jump to figure N at conductor's cue]

232  $\text{♩} = 72$

Voice: **Narrator**

Although Icky sounded pretty certain, Splooge felt that if he could explain to the Watchmen that he was from the Real World, and that he only wanted to go home, the Watchmen would *have* to help. After all, Splooge thought, this world was... it was okay, but it was a bit silly, and wasn't *quite* as real as his own. And the Watchmen would understand that.

Vib. *l.v.* *p*

Vln. *f* *sul E seagull effect* *gliss.*

Vc. *Sul A, air-raid sirening freely* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

[ng]

**N** SPLUDGE is about to approach the WATCHMEN when a speaker comes on (or their supervisor turns up). **Recitative, molto rubato**

**Watchmen Captain** (Option: this can be spoken)

244

Voice: Full cur-few will com-mence in thir-ty sec-onds. Bolt the door, don't twitch at cur-tains. All street lights will be black-en'd. An-y-one caught will be... cau-tioned.

Vib.

Vln. *f* *6* *3* *6*

Vc. *f* *6* *3* *6*

Pno. **Recitative, molto rubato**

16

The WATCHMEN laugh. SPLODGE runs to find ICKY. Neither notice ICKY has left her shoe behind.

248 spoken  $\text{♩} = 60$

Voice: And possibly shot!

B. Cl.  $f$

Vib. tremolo rit  $p$  l.v. slow vibrato  $f$   $pp$

Vln.  $f$   $fp$

Vc.  $f$   $fp$

Pno.  $\text{♩} = 60$   $f$

## Scene 3

In ICKY's home.  $\text{♩} = 60$

255 **Narrator:** Introduce RA-RA. Introduce LA-LA.

Voice: So Icky took Splodge back to the place she shared with her cousins: Ra-ra and La-la

S.  $f$

Bar.  $f$

Fl. Switch to Piccolo  $f$  flutter tonguing  $f$

B. Cl. Switch to Bass Clarinet  $fp$  flutter tonguing  $f$

258

ICKY and SPLODGE sneak into the house, unseen by the cousins. SIRI suddenly emerges by RA-RA.

Voice: Siri Splodge Icky Siri Ra-Ra Splodge RA-RA clicks fingers.

ICKY: Keep quiet, and keep hidden. If Ra-Ra and La-La see you they'll think you're one of Them.

SPLODGE: Who's "them"?

One of the cousins gets close, and ICKY hides SPLODGE roughly (with comic effect). Perhaps sticking a coat over his head or pushing him into a cupboard.

ICKY: "Them" are the ones who live in the North. They want to scare us off the island, forever. That's why we have the Watchmen now, to keep us safe.

Breaking! What's that? Don't you have smartphones where you're from? Breaking! What's up? Unidentified shoe left on beach. Click for more details.

Vib. no ped.  $p$   $f$

VAMP [repeat until Siri finishes line]

SIRI runs to LA-LA.

261  $\text{♩} = 120$  **Siri**  $\text{♩} = 132$  17

Voice: At 7pm Island-Time a shoe was discovered,  
Its wearer may have escaped, undercover.  
Islanders advised, "lock your doors, and hide in a cupboard". Oh

S.: It's evidence. And it's here. It's simple, La-La; they're spreading fear

Bar.: You shouldn't read that crap. It's just a shoe

Vib.: *f* *pp* *f*

Vln.: *p*

Vc.: *p*

267 **O**

Voice: look, what's that? It's me! I'm back a-gain. A ping, a ding, Please don't look so ir-ri-ta-ted I'm trying to keep you in-for-mat-ed, A brand new sto-ry, This time a-bout a cer-tain To-ry!

Vib.: *f*

With the mention of Tories, LA-LA goes from bored/irritated to fascinated. LA-LA clicks and SIRI pulls out a bunch of papers from his inner/breast pocket.

Recitative, molto rubato

274 **P**

Voice: Click for more!

S.: If on-ly it were so com-pli-ca-ted.

Bar.: You can't fight fire with fire, You can't pun-ish tit with tat, Re-venge just breeds re-venge...

Vib.: *l.v.* immediately dampen each accented note *f*

Vln.: *p*

Vc.: *p*

280 **Icky** spoken, distractingly

Voice: Hey what's for

S.: If some-one hits you, you give them a smack back! Nyah nyah nyah, you want to give them cud-dles!

Bar.: That's bull... dog spir-it, The big-ger man steps back from it.

Vib.: *f*

Vln.: *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Vc.: *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

286

Voice

S. dinner?

Bar. Have you read an-y his't ry, Have you ev-en read the news, just look!

Vib. dampen To Elcetric Drum Kit

Vln. p *f* p *f* arco *fp*

Vc. p *f* p *f* arco *fp*

*LA-LA finds an article on his phone, 'zapping' it at RA-RA like a gun. Like SIRI, an online 'article' emerges in human form.*

**Q** RA-RA snatches the papers out of LA-LA's hands and they start fighting. ICKY triest to interrupt them with little (unsuccessful) distractions about dinner.

292

S. blog-gers with few-er facts than views... Read this! Electric Drum Kit

Vib.

Vln. *fp*

Vc. *fp*

Pno. Electric Keyboard

*9* *♩=126*

300

S. spoken Coward. Snowflake. You're too soppy.

Bar. spoken You're an idiot. Meathead. Bitter.

Fl. *mf*

B. Cl. *f*

Dr. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno.

307

S. Ideological.

Bar. Fruitcake! You can't fight fire with fire, you can't pun-ish tit with tat, Re-venge just breeds re

Fl.

B. Cl. dubstep "wawa" bass effect *mf*

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



313

S. If on-ly it were so com - pli ca - ted, let me be ex-act, If some-one hits you, you give them a smack back!

Bar. venge and that's no way to re-act.

Chorus Smack!

Fl.

B. Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

318

S. Whack! Crack! Bite, at-tack, chase them back, it's the on-ly language they un-der-stand. You have to be the strong-er man.

Bar. Bull.... head-ed! You

Chorus Whack! Crack! Chase them back!

Fl.

B. Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



S

323

S. all my heart or no-thing.

Bar. think you're a road-man? For-get it! You just sound more and more ex-treme, you sup-port our is-land like a foot ball team. It's all your heart or no-thing. Flag

Fl.

B. Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

328

S. Flag wa-ving from the stands. I love my bull-dog spi-rit. I am the bet-ter man You

Bar. wa-ving from the stands. Spread your bull... dog spi-rit when you should be the bet- ter... man...

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



334

S. want to give them cud-dles, Put oint-ment on their bruise, Just so they can come here And

Bar. I want to give them cud-dles? Put oint-ment on their bruise? Just so they can come here...

Fl. *p*

Dr.

Pno.



340

S. kill us while we snooze? Humph!

Bar. Humph!

Fl. *mf*

B. Cl. *f*

Dr.

Vln.

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

**T**

347

S. *The prob-lem with your mind is you think ev-ry-one's like you, sop-py, soft and skip-ping.*

Bar. *Now, that*

Fl.

B. Cl.

Dr. *toms*

Vln. *pizz.*

Vc. *pizz.*

Pno.

353

S. *Arg! You have-n't got a clue! Look! "We Must*

Bar. *sim - ly is - n't true, the prob-lem with your point is you think ev-ry-one's like you, read-y to bite your legs off! Look!*

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

358 **U**

S. *Tight-en Our Sec-ur-it-y Laws." "Vid-e-o Claims Towns-folk Shoud Die." "Crime, Cor-rup-tion, Degre da-tion."*

Bar. *"Watch-men Say WeGo To War!" "Race At-tacks At An All Time High."*

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



363

S. They hate peace, you know that's true.

Bar. "Hat-red, Vi-o-lence, Al-i-en-a-tion."

Chorus Well...not ev-ry-bo-dy thinks like you! Y'-know not ev-ry-bo-dy thinks like you! Y'

Fl. *mf*

B. Cl. *f*

Dr.

Vln. *f* arco

Vc. *f* arco

Pno. *f*

367

S. There are dan-ger-ous peo-ple,

Bar. There are in-no-cent peo-ple, And

Chorus know not ev-ry-bo-dy thinks like you! Y' know not ev-ry-bo-dy thinks like you! Y' know not ev-ry-bo-dy thinks like you!

Fl.

B. Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

The song ends. LA-LA and RA-RA look at ICKY, dumbfounded. Unbeknownst to ICKY, even SPLUDGE pokes his head out to look.

371

ICKY  
freely

shhhuuut upp!!!!

Voice

S. If we show a bit of grit, Be-fore we're blown to piec-es. You're talk - ing shhh...

Bar. if we stand to-ge-th er We can walk a way in peace. I think you're talk - ing shhh...

Chorus You're talk - ing shhh...

Fl.

B. Cl.

Dr. To Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

LA-LA, RA-RA and the two 'armies' of articles walk away. ICKY tries to talk to her cousins, but they're both busy with domestic tasks (such as tidying the home after all the emerging articles).

V

376 ♩=90

Can I ask you something? It's serious. Do you ever get scared? No, I mean do you ever get scared about "them"?

RA-RA heads off.  
LA-LA enters.

Course, mate. O-K On-ly by your face. It's La-la who should be scared, mate, not me.

Fl.

B. Cl. *p* *cued colla parte, play freely*

Pno. *l.v.*

8<sup>th</sup>.....  
hold down

379

Voice

La - La! Y'know how every day you and Ra - Ra argue about the same thing...Thing is, it's making me kinda on edge.

Fl. *cued colla parte, play freely*

B. Cl.

Pno. *p*

380

Voice

You do! But that's not what I'm asking! I'm asking...

Bar.

We don't ar - gue ev - 'ry day, mate. Ra - Ra and I just get heat-ed. It - 'll all blow o - ver e - ven-tual - ly.

Fl.

B. Cl.

Pno.

*LA-LA is gone. RA-RA has returned.*

383

Voice

Yes! I don't want to be doomed. It sounds painful. No?

S.

You're not still on a-bout "them" are you, mate? You're not doomed. No-one's "doomed". No! If a - ny-thing, they're doomed!

Bar.

Fl.

B. Cl. *p*

Pno. *p*

8<sup>va</sup>.....J

386 RA-RA is gone. LA-LA is back.

Voice: But... that sounds like it could backfire. What if... I wish you guys would stop doing that! I'm trying to talk to you!

Bar: What if what, mate?

Fl. *freely* *P*

B. Cl.

Pno. *P*



388 (=60)

Voice: You're doing my head in! I don't care who's right, I just don't want to be scared all the time anymore!

S. Do - ing what? Yes? You're shouting at her about how we're doomed if we do what she says - and you're shouting at him about how we're doomed if we do what he says.

Bar: Yeah! What are we do - ing? Yes?

Fl. *f* change to Clarinet

B. Cl. *f*

Vib. *f* To E. Drum Kit

Vln. *p* *f*

Vc. *p* *f*

Pno. *P* 8<sup>va</sup>.....! release *Ped.*



391 ♩=80

W

Voice: "Oh"?

S. 'realising' Oh! sympathetically I get it now, kid.

Bar: 'realising' Oh!

Pno.

Together, LA-LA and RA-RA sit ICKY down, 'lock' her into the chair with a cushion in her lap and drink in her hand, and put the television on. As LA-LA and RA-RA settle down in the glow of the television, HOST enters via the television 'screen'.

396

Voice: Do you? Fliggin' eggs! Agh!

S.: Are you be - ing bul - lied at school? I know what'll help, mate!

Bar.: Yeah mate, you need to chill.

Fl.: *f*

Cl.: *f* overflow

Vln.: *f*

Vc.: *f*

Pno.: *p*

**X** HOST acts like a 'domestic fairy godmother': he serves up meals from the microwave to the family (who all watch TV, not him); tidies a little (perhaps wearing a pinny); gives them all fizzy drinks with straws.

401 TV Voiceover *♩* = 120 Daniel Host

Voice: It's time to set your chat to "stun", No-thing bad hap - pens when you watch T - V, You are warm in its glow, Warm in its glow. Ladies and gentlemen, it's Daniel Host!

Fl.: *f*

Cl.: *f*

Drum Set

Vln.: *f* pizz.

Vc.: *f*

Pno.: *f*

409

Voice

No-thing bad hap - pens when you watch T - V, You were born in its glow, Born in its glow — It's time to tune in to who you love the most,

Fl.

Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

415

Voice

No it's not your fa-mi-ly it's Dan-i-el Host! Yes No-thing bad hap - pens when you watch T - V, So on with the show, On with the show!\_

Chorus

No it's not your fa-mi-ly it's Dan-i-el Host! Yes No-thing bad hap - pens when you watch T - V, So on with the show, On with the show!\_

Fl.

Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

421

Fl.

Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

428

Chorus

You can just flop, chil - lax and un wind. You don't need a sing-le thought to cross your mind, Cos No-thing bad hap-pens when you

Fl.

Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

434

**Z** HOST puts ICKY to bed and sings her a lullabye.

Chorus

watch T - V, So on with the show, On with the show! —

Fl.

Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

440

rall. . . . .

Voice

Fl.

Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

To Bass Cl.

roll To Vib.

445  $\text{♩} = 78$  molto rall. . . . .

Voice: Now you know ev - 'ry - thing will be al - right, With me, Dan - iel Host, to tuck you in at night. No

Pno. *mp*

449  $\text{♩} = 102$  attacca

Voice: No - thing bad hap - pens when you watch T - V, So to sleep you'll go, To sleep you'll

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno.

## Scene 4

**AA** **ICKY's bedroom. HOST is tucking ICKY into bed.** *8<sup>va</sup>* same tempo as song

**Slow**

Pno. *mp* *mp*

Left hand independent

*8<sup>va</sup>* *p* hold down Ped.

Voice: go.

**Icky** **Host**

Can I ask you something? Does something ever scare you so much, it's like you were just born scared?

Do you want some TV?

**ICKY:** No, like. Like there's something hot in your stomach that's black and gooey...

**HOST:** I know. Definitely. You want "Embarassing Bodies".

**ICKY:** No. Scared, like. Deep down, cold, where you can't see?

**HOST:** "Blue Planet"?

**ICKY:** - but in your stomach.

**HOST:** "Celebrity Bake-Off"?

S. *Extremely slow, legato, Star Trek / theramin-like, sing section between repeat signs to signal, section need not be completed*

Oo...

Vibraphone *Independent, play section between repeat signs to signal, section need not be completed*

Vln.

Vc.



slower tempo than before

458

Pno

*P* *mp*

8<sup>va</sup>

Voice

Icky Host Icky Host Icky

When La-La and Ra-Ra fight... I can feel it. Do they fight 'cos they're scared? I don't want anything bad to happen to them. Nothing bad's going to happen to anyone. Goodnight now, Icky. Then why were they fighting? They're not fighting. They were fighting, there was a whole song about it... someone came out of the sofa, didn't you see?

S.

Oo

Vib.

Independent, play section between repeat signs to signal, section need not be completed



462 much slower tempo than before

rall.

Pno

*mp* *p*

8<sup>va</sup>

release  $\Omega$

Voice

Host Icky

Nothing bad's going to happen. Your cousins weren't fighting. You're not scared - you're being hysterical. (hysterically) I'm not being hysterical!

HOST: You sound like you're being hysterical! Okay. One question, then lights out. But that's it.  
ICKY: Okay. And you'll definitely answer it?  
HOST: I promise.

S.

Oo

Vib.

Independent, play section between repeat signs to signal, section need not be completed



467

BB

Host Icky

So? I'm thinking. Everyone says if we do this we're doomed, or if we do that we're doomed. Right. And I don't care what we do so long as we're not doomed! Okay. So I guess my question is -

Vib.

Independent, play section between repeat signs to signal, section need not be completed

To E. Drum Kit



474

Host Icky Host Icky Host Icky Host Icky

It's okay, I know. You do? I understand. You do?! It's about fear, isn't it? Yes! You want to speak to the Minister for Mindfulness. No. no, I don't.

Vln.

Vc.

HOST is swapped for the MINISTER for Mindfulness.



Minister

Minister mimes along to off stage Baritone's voice, as if it is coming out of his body

478  $\text{♩} = 56$

Voice: It's a comp-li - cat - ed world, but thanks to the Min-ist ry for Mind-ful-ness you don't need to wor-ry a-bout that! We'll take

Bar. (off stage) a-bout that!

Fl. play ostinato as fast as possible until indicated to change *p*

B. Cl. play ostinato as fast as possible until indicated to change *p*

Vln. romantic vibrato, lyrical

Vc. *mf* gliss. romantic vibrato, lyrical *f*

Pno. *p* *mf* *f*



483

Voice: all those comp-li-cat-ed facts and de-tails and turn them in-to a big, read-y-to-eat cake of simp - li - ci ty!... A vote for the Min-ist-ry for Mind-ful-ness is a vote for Peace of Mind!

Bar. read-y-to-eat cake of simp - li - ci ty!... is a vote for Peace of Mind!

Fl. *p* *p*

B. Cl. *p* *p*

Vln. *p* *f* *p*

Vc. *p* *f* *p*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf*

488

Voice: Safe-ty. Se-cur - i - ty! And a - bove all, Simp-li - ci - ty. Now does-n't your fam-ly de serve that? Each pen-ny of your

Bar: Se-cur - i - ty! Now does-n't your fam-ly de serve that? Each pen-ny [of]

Fl. *f*

B. Cl. *f*

Dr. *pp* *mf* snare drum

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

492

Voice: tax-es is a brick in the wall be-tween us and the North. Each pen ny is a shin-ey new but-ton on a brave new Watch-man's un i-form.

Bar: Each pen ny [is]

Fl.

B. Cl. *f*

Dr. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Vln.

Vc. *f*

Pno. *f*

497 Icky

Voice: But a-bove all else, But a-bove all else, each pen-ny is a bul - let! Off! Turn it off. Off-off-off!

Bar: But a-bove all else, but a-bove all else, each pen-ny is a bul - let!

Fl: play slightly out of time  
overflow and pitch bend down

B. Cl: ad lib. CHAOS along the lines of this musical gesture

Dr: roll rit. ad lib. CHAOS, increasing use of suspended cymbal  
To Vib.

Vln: play slightly out of time  
gliss. gliss. gliss. ad lib. CHAOS

Vc.

Pno: ad lib. CHAOS

**SPLODGE:** Are you okay?

**ICKY:** No! Everyone goes on about "them", like it's a problem the size of the Sun! But when Icky wants to talk about it, oh no, it's "go to bed, Icky". So! Go on then.

**SPLODGE:** Go on what?

**ICKY:** Tell me to chill out, tell me to go to bed, tell me I'm being silly.

*Inimidated. SPLODGE falls silent. ICKY is getting ready to sneak out.*

**ICKY:** Exactly. No-one understands.

**SPLODGE** builds up some confidence.

**SPLODGE:** My folks are kinda smart people... give or take. But it's like they never thought I'd grow up and, y'know, "Just maybe wanna talk to them like adults sometimes"?! They don't listen. Either they turn it into a joke, or... it's like here. That's what this is. This island's what life'd be like if no-one ever listened to each other.

**ICKY** is now ready to depart - she opens the window.

**SPLODGE:** Where are you going?

**ICKY:** Back.

**SPLODGE:** Back where?

**ICKY:** Back to where I was and what I was doing before you came along!

**SPLODGE:** But I -

**ICKY:** I like this island!

*She exits.*

**SPLODGE:** Icky! Don't go! Please! I'm scared.

503

Pno. release

♩=108

**SPLODGE** doesn't know whether to stay or follow.  
He follows but trips over exiting.

504

Voice

Fl.

Clarinet

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

*f* 3 *fp* *f*

*p* *f* *mp* *f*

*fp* *f* *mp* *f*

*mf* *f*

To Picc.

8<sup>va</sup>.....1

## Scene 5

### GENTLE WAVES SFX

The beach. **WATCHMEN** positioned in one or two spots. By another spot, out of sight of the **WATCHMEN**, **ICKY** sees the reflection of stars in the sea and descends to the water, thinking they are her pearls. As **SPLODGE** approaches, covertly, **ICKY** spots him.

510

♩=54

Voice

Vibraphone

Pno.

*pp*

*p*

513

**Icky**

Voice

Cl.

Vib.

Pno.

Can you see the glint, the gleam, the glit - ter, \_\_\_\_\_

*p*

*p*

515

Voice: Glist-ning in the gloop - dark, cold and bit- ter? These are the pearls my dad gave to me, I grasp at each glim-mer with hands full of sea,

Cl.

Vib.

Pno.

518

Voice: Clothes full of wa-ter, I grab at each glare, But each time I try, My hands come back bare.

Cl.

Vib.

Pno.

ICKY takes her boots off and tries - gently, gently - to scoop up the stars into if from the water, like a prospector panning for gold.

**EE**

521

Voice: Quickly! Quickly! I've nearly got them. See? I can't see any pearls, Icky. My fath-er brought me up here, A love-ly lit-tle place.

Cl.

Vib.

Pno.

**Splodge** **Icky** **Splodge** **Broadly, freely (recit)**

To B. Cl. To Dr. To E. Drum Kit

*mp*

525

Voice: Full of fruit and hill-sides, and an an-nu-al sack race. Our neigh-bours they were...jeal-ous, they saw we had it nice. So some-times there were fights, And we some-times paid the

Pno.

**FF****Splodge**

531  $\text{♩} = 108$  **lckv**

Voice  
price. Oh that's lovely, lck, but I don't know what that has to do with anything  
One day though a con-man came from far a way, It's em-bar-ras sing to ad-mit to, It's

Chorus  
One day though a con-man came from far a way, It's em-bar-ras sing to ad-mit to, It's

Picc.  
*mf*  
Piccolo

B. Cl.  
*f*  
Bass Clarinet

Dr.  
*f* *p*  
E. Drum Kit  
snare rim

Vln.  
*mf*

Vc.  
*mf*

Pno.  
*f*

**GG**

538

Voice  
kind of a cli-ché, He said that all our prob-lem-s, were all our neigh-bours' fault, Ev' ry crime stat-is - tic from rob-b'ry to as-sault.

Chorus  
kind of a cli-ché, He said that all our prob-lem-s, were all our neigh-bours' fault, Ev' ry crime stat-is - tic from rob-b'ry to as-sault.

Picc.  
*mf*

B. Cl.  
*p* *f*

Dr.  
*f*

Vln.  
*p* *mf*

Vc.  
*p* *mf*

Pno.  
*p* *f*

546

Voice: He said that all he want-ed was com - mit-ment in re turn, A bond-ed band of broth ers... if they were keen to learn; He would teach them some-thing more

Chorus: He said that all he want-ed was com - mit-ment in re turn, A bond-ed band of broth ers... if they were keen to learn; He would teach them some-thing more

Picc. *f*

B. Cl. *p*

Dr. *p* normal

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno. *p*



552

Voice: **HH** **Splodge** **Icky**  
so-lid than a vault, "If you point your fin-ger first then no-thing is your fault!" (Tries it out.) Hey that's a clever point! Like a thunderbolt! But my dad-dy told me in the

Chorus: so-lid than a vault, "If you point your fin-ger first then no-thing is your fault!"

Picc.

B. Cl.

Dr. rim

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



Voice: long run it got worse, Ev-ry one blamed ev-ry one, the an-swer was a curse... Dad said: "For each com-pli - ca-ted ques - tion" "For each

Chorus: "There's a ve-ry sim - ple an

Picc.

B. Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Voice: com-pli - ca-ted ques tion" "For each com-pli - ca-ted ques tion" "For each com-pli - ca-ted ques tion"

Chorus: - swer!" "There's a ve-ry sim - ple an - swer!" "There's a ve-ry sim - ple an - swer!" "There's a ve-ry sim-ple an - swer!"

Picc.

B. Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

JJ

572

Voice: ...and it's wrong. We gave the con-man ev-ry thing, our fut-ure and our friends, Be-

Chorus: We gave the con-man ev-ry thing, our fut-ure and our friends, Be-

Picc. *f*

B. Cl. *f*

Dr. *f*

Vln. *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *f*

Pno. *f*



580

Voice: cause he swore with out. him our peace-ful days would end. So he launched the Min-ist-ry and Watch-men with-out fail, When my dadex-pressed con-cern they

Chorus: cause he swore with out. him our peace-ful days would end. So he launched the Min-ist-ry and Watch-men with-out fail, When my dadex-pressed con-cern they

Picc.

B. Cl.

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

585

**KK**

**molto rall. . . . . 41**  
**Splodge**

Voice: sent my dad to jail. I'm really sorry, Icky. I'm sorry about the conman and your dad and everything. But - do you have to do this now?

Chorus: sent my dad to jail.

Picc. [Musical notation]

B. Cl. [Musical notation]

Dr. [Musical notation] *fp*

Vln. [Musical notation] *f*

Vc. [Musical notation] *f*

Pno. [Musical notation] **molto rall.**



592

**Icky** Freely

Voice: My dad gave me five pearls, with mag-ic qual - i - ties. He said, "If you ev - er need my help, they will set you free". But

Picc. [Musical notation]

B. Cl. [Musical notation]

Dr. [Musical notation] To Vib.

Vln. [Musical notation] *legato, poco sul pont* *p*

Vc. [Musical notation] *legato, poco sul pont* *p*

Pno. [Musical notation]



598

**Splodge**

Voice: Splodge I'm such an id - iot, it's here I dropped my purse. You have to help me find them... OK, I get why you came down here, but...

Picc. [Musical notation]

Pno. [Musical notation]

42 **LL** **AIR RAID SIREN SFX**  
*The WATCHMEN catch each others' eye. One of them signs to the other and they spread out across the beach looking for trespassers.*

602  $\text{♩} = 48$  **Splodge**

Voice  
 Look, I didn't want to say this, Icky, and you're not gonna like it - but, I come from the Real World and... and I'm sorry, but you're not *quite* as real as I am. (*She's fishing, not listening*) Did you hear me? I'm really sorry, Ick, but your problems here aren't as real as mine at home. So if we can prioritise them accordingly - Icky? (*Loudly*) Icky!

Picc.  
 Vibraphone 1.v. fast vibrato

Vib.  
 Pno.

**AIR RAID SIREN SFX FADE TO STOP**  
*She catches the reflections in her boot.*

606 **Icky**

Voice  
 Stop getting yourself so anxious, don't go on overdrive! I need a moment...

Vib.  
 One. Two.  
 note preceding each count

*She turns to show **SPLODGE** her full purse, with a proud smile. The **WATCHMEN** emerge from behind him. On their walkie-talkies:*

611  $\text{♩} = 100$  **MM**

Voice  
 Three. Four. Five. Finally!

S.  
 Come in. Two sus-pects found,

Picc.  
 B. Cl.  
 Vibraphone simile To E. Drum Kit

Vln.  
 Vc.  
 Pno.

617

S. South Beach, run a ground...

Bar. Acc-omp-li - ces no - where in sight... Pos - sib - ly have tak - en flight. To Fl.

Picc.

B. Cl.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

accel. . . . .

624

S. *p* O . . . . . *f* To S. To Voice ver!

Bar. *p* O . . . . . *f* ver!

B. Cl.

AIR RAID SIREN SFX

629

Picc. *f* =48 molto accel. =90 molto accel. =120 molto accel. =150 molto accel.

B. Cl. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

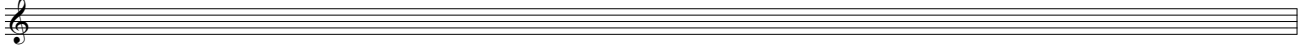
Pno. *ff*

# Scene 6

ICKY and SPLODGE are thrown in a prison cell. They are both panicking.

641

Voice



**SPLODGE:** Oh flippin' eggs! I just need to be at home!

**ICKY:** Locked up! I must speak to my cousins!

**WATCHMAN:** They will be notified of your arrest.

**ICKY:** But -

**WATCHMEN** exit.

**ICKY:** It's worse than ever. We're in prison, Splodge - what if they find me guilty, what if they never trust me here again?

**SPLODGE:** I'm sure it won't be that bad for you.

**ICKY:** For me? Of yeah. Of course. Because I'm "slightly less real" than you and your world.

**SPLODGE:** I know it might sound a bit complicated to you.

**ICKY:** I used to think what happened on other islands weren't *quite* as real or important as what happened on mine. Sad things weren't *quite* as sad. Problems weren't *quite* as problematic.

**SPLODGE:** Can I stop you there?

**ICKY:** The families we saw on TV were real families, but just not as real as we were.

**SPLODGE:** That's not what I'm saying.

**ICKY:** (Angry) So it doesn't sound 'complicated', Splodge - it sounds like Dr Stupid, twelve-time winner of the Mr. Stupid Competition, putting on his stupidest trousers and saying something so dumb, so basic, so primitive even the Stupid Judges disqualify him for lack of imagination!

**SPLODGE:** (Snapping) Well I'm sorry! But I don't have a lot of people I can talk to about this stuff!

*They face away from each other.*

**SPLODGE:** It's not easy, y'know? Being ignored.

Slow, hesitant

642 **lcky** **Splodge** **lcky**  $\text{♩} = 120$

Voice: It feels like a hole clos-ing in at the top. And ev-'ry-one who should be help-ing is, I guess, not. Tell me what you're scared of. I don't know, I've never been asked exactly... I'm

Flute: *p*

Clarinet in B $\flat$ : *p*

648 **NN**

Voice: scared that Ra - Ra's right, and com - pass-ion is all wrong. I'm scared that La - La's right, and that Ra - Ra's too head-strong. I'm scared that in or - der to win we

Flute: *p*

Clarinet in B $\flat$ : *p*

653

Voice: have to be sad - ist - ic, but that vio-lence stop-ping vio lence is - n't re - al - ist - ic. I'm scared of try-ing to ex-plain ex - act - ly why I'm scared, and

Flute: *p*

Clarinet in B $\flat$ : *p*

658 Splodge Icky ♩=120

Voice: being told not to wor-ry and sent a-way in-stead. Alright! I get it! So just like everyone else, tell me to forget it! A-dults are like wash-ing mach-ines. When you

Fl. Cl. E. Drum Kit Electronic Drum Kit Temple blocks / Congas / Tom-toms FX

Vc. Pno.

665

Voice: give them some-thing big they all go through the same rou tine, theyclunk and glug and swig. But it all comes out way too small, Theythink they're be -ing nice, your

Dr. Vc. Pno.

670

Voice: fears come back like a lit-tle doll from a kind of shrink-ing de-vice! Ex - cept of course this mon-ster's not stay-ing shrunk and cute and squat, it grows a - gain, but twice the size. Now

Dr. Vc. Pno. To Vib.

ICKY is playing the 'monster', making monster noises - SPLODGE is avoiding eye-contact, 'in character', but also slightly for real.

675 Icky Splodge Icky ♩=102 (Optional: this passage can be spoken)

Voice: you can't look it in the eyes! Don't be embarrassed. Sorry, I'm not used to people listening. And I'm sorry, none of this is helping. No. It does. A bit. The door is op-en now you see.

Vln. Vc. Pno.

681

Voice

I'd bolt-ed it with lock and key, but now the fears that fright-en'd me Don't have to be my en-e - my, cos if you can bear what I might share and hold it's gaze her-

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



690

ICKY takes off her shoe. She takes the pearls out of it. ♩=54

Voice

o - ic - lly Then so can I. Or at least, I'll try! It's a poss - i - bil - i - ty.

Vibraphone

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



698

**PP Splodge**

ICKY pops the pearls in the bucket of water and stars appear on the ceiling above her, as if the stars on the ceiling are reflections of the pearls in the water.

Voice

You got them! I thought they were just the reflections of the stars!

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.



701 **Icky** **SPLODGE** sees the reflections shine on the ceiling like stars. **Splodge**

Voice: They're special. Flippin' eggs!

Chorus: Can you see the glint, the gleam, the glit - ter, \_\_\_\_\_ Glist-'ning in the gloop - dark, cold and bit - ter? \_\_\_\_\_

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

703 **Splodge** *Puts up his collar.* **Icky**

Voice: It's letting the cold in. The night is filling up the cell with stars. Can you see your home?

Chorus: These are the pearls my dad gave to me, I grasp at each clim-mer with hands full of sea, A shoe full of stars in an oc - ean of fear.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

706

Voice: There! Look, Icky! This means we can escape! Quickly, come with me.

Chorus: Rid - ing through the storm and land - ing here.

Cl.

Vib. *pp*

Pno.



The stars start shining brightly.  
SPLODGE disappears from ICKY's  
world. She collects the pearls from  
the bucket of water.

*poco accel.* . . . . .

716

Voice: light.

Cl.

Vib. *pp*

Vln. arco, play slightly out of tempo *p*

Vc. arco, play slightly out of tempo *p*

Pno. *poco accel.* . . . . .



repeat bracketed pattern as fast as possible  
ad lib. until next pattern specified

720

Fl. repeat bracketed pattern as fast as possible ad lib. until next pattern specified

Vib. To E. Drum Kit

Vln. sul E seagull effect *gliss.*

Vc. sul A seagull effect *gliss.*

Pno.



*attacca*

724

Fl. repeat bracketed pattern as fast as possible ad lib. until next pattern specified

Cl. repeat bracketed pattern as fast as possible ad lib. until next pattern specified

Pno. *p*

# Scene 7

*HERO swaggers onstage.*

$\text{♩} = 120$

*Just as s/he's about to speak, SPODGE returns to his own world (falling out of a cupboard, skidding in through a door), knocking him/her out of the way.*

*rit.*

730

Voice

Fl.

Cl.

Drum Set

Dr.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

*f p f p f*

*fp f fp f*

*f f*

To Vib.

*poco rall.*

735

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

*p*

*poco rall.*

**RR**  $\text{♩} = 42$   
Narrator

*DAD pokes his head in.*

*There is a knock at his door.*

739

Voice

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

The house creaked, ordinarily, his bedroom sat in the mess it was always in, ordinarily. And the sounds of dogs and police cars, ordinarily, wafted in through the window. Mum and dad's argument, downstairs, had finished and, to his surprise, Splodge could hear a quiet - at his door.



751

Voice

It's ok if you disagree with mum, it's ok if you disagree about everything - you love each other. But you should listen to her. And she should listen to you. In a world where everyone wants to talk over each other, it's the listeners who have the power to change everything.

Bar. *p* humming

Chorus *p* humming

Fl. *p*

Cl. *p*

Vib.

Vln.

Vc. *f*

Pno.

TT

To her surprise, MUM finds a pearl in her pocket. She shows DAD. DAD shrugs, baffled. They put it in SPLODGE'S hand/pocket, and exit.

754 **Narrator**  $\text{♩} = 120$

Voice

But Splodge wasn't sure when the door of his room closed, if it was before or after he'd finished, or whether dad had listened to a word he'd said, because he'd fallen asleep. And if he was curious if his dad had taken his advice, or his mum, all he'd have to do is keep his ears open in the morning.

Bar.

Chorus

HERO exits.

Fl. *f* 3

Cl. *f* 3

Vib.

Vln. *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *f*

Pno.

761

Fl. *3*

Cl. *3*

Vib.

Vln. *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *f*

Pno. *3*



765

*molto rall.*

*End of opera.*

Fl. *3* *3* *15*

Cl. *3* *3*

Vib. *f*

Vln. *fp* *f*

Vc. *fp* *f*

Pno. *3* *molto rall.* *f* *ff* *3*