

Alex Temple

Diadem

for voice (C#3–B4) + toy glockenspiel,
trumpet in C, tenor trombone and bass clarinet

transposing score

text by R.A. Briggs

composed in 2019–2021
commissioned by loadbang

Performance Notes

VOICE: *Diadem* is a song about gay desire in Medieval Europe. The text, by poet R.A. Briggs, tells of the protagonist's inner conflict as he discovers his longing for another man and has to reevaluate what he has been taught by Church. The piece is more or less in the form of a 15th-century virelai (I like to think of it as a "queerelai"), and the musical style is suggestive of Dufay and the composers of the Ars Subtilior. In order to convey this theme most clearly, the piece should be performed a) in a style that evokes the Middle Ages or "early music" in general (there are many options for this!), and b) by a singer who presents as male for the performance (regardless of their gender identity or presentation in everyday life).

In mm. 74–84, the singer is also called upon to play a toy glockenspiel (range: C4–F5).

BRASS: In mm. 75–85, both brass parts require a harmon mute. In mm. 35–6, the trombone part includes a D2, but an alternative is provided for instruments without an F attachment.

BASS CLARINET: The part requires an instrument that extends down to concert B₁.

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Diadem

Our Holy Father says he knows
true love doth presuppose
how stags pursue their does
and boys must marry girls.

Half-hearted, I have sought the hem
of many a skirt at many a fete,
and yet
my wanton self uprose and chose
to light in song upon this churl.

He flares, a flower on upright stem.
He shimmers like Arachne's net
when wet
with dew. His sweet complexion glows
like sunlit bloom upon the merle:

his cheek where wild currant grows,
his eyes like blackthorn sloes,
his mouth, that rarest rose,
the thicket of his curls.

Our Holy Father says he knows
true love doth presuppose
how stags pursue their does
and boys must marry girls.

He'll take me as his diadem
as stars in firmament are set
and let
the silver of his arms enclose
my body like a precious pearl.

O Father, let me be his gem,
his sweet, his doll, his toy, his pet.
My debt,
though great, I shall discharge. Propose
a breakback task; I shall not quarrel.

We sapling lads who plight our trows
grow green where God bestows
His grace, though blizzard blows
and cruel tempests whirl.

Our Holy Father in heaven knows
within our breasts repose
all creatures: stags and does
and gems and boys and girls.

Diadem for loadbang

music: Alex Temple
text: R.A. Briggs

$\text{♩} = 76$ *mp* formal and serious

Voice: Our Ho - ly Fa - ther says he_ knows true

C Trumpet: *f* fanfaric *fp* \leftarrow *f* *p* solemn

Trombone: *f* fanfaric *fp* \leftarrow *fp* solemn

Bass Clarinet: *f* fanfaric *fp* \leftarrow *fp* solemn

6
V: love doth pre-sup - pose how stags pur - sue their does _____ and boys must mar - ry

Tpt

Tbn

B Cl

$\text{♩} = 72$

mf

A

f *sprightly*

10

V

girls.

Half - heart - ed,

I have sought the hem of

Tpt

mf no diminuendo; abrupt cutoff

mf light and lyrical

Tbn

mf no diminuendo; abrupt cutoff

mf *sprightly*

B Cl

(slap tongue)

f

mf *sprightly*

16

mf

V

ma - ny a skirt at ma - ny a fete,

and yet — my wan-ton self up - rose and chose to

Tpt

f

mp

Tbn

f

mp

B Cl

f

mp

22

V

light in song ————— up-on this churl. He flares, a flow-er on up-right stem. He

f

mp gentler

Tpt

f

p fluid

Tbn

f

p

B Cl

f

p fluid

29

V

shim-mers like A-rach - ne's net when wet ——— with dew. His sweet com - plex-ion glowslike

mf

p

Tpt

mf

p

Tbn

mf

p

(if no F attachment, replace D2 with A2)

B Cl

mf

p

B

♩ = 72

35

mf *p dreamy*

sun - lit bloom up - on the merle: his cheek where wi - ld

mf

mf

mf

p hushed and mysterious

39

mf

cur - rant grows, his eyes like black - thorn sloes, his mouth, that rar - est rose,

p hushed and mysterious *mf*

p hushed and mysterious *mf*

42 *p* $\text{♩} = 76$

V *p* the thick-et of his curls.

Tpt *p* *f* (pickup in new tempo)

Tbn *p* *f*

B Cl *mf* *p* *f*

47 *p* suddenly formal again

V Our Ho - ly Fa - ther says he knows true love doth pre-sup - pose how

Tpt *fp* *f* *p* solemn

Tbn *fp* *fp*

B Cl *fp* *fp*

♩. = 64

51

V

stags pur-sue their does _____ and boys must mar - ry girls.

mf

Tpt

mf

Tbn

mf

B Cl

f

57

C

mf lyrical, bright-eyed and romantic

V

He'll take me ___ as his di - a-dem as stars _____ in

mf

Tpt

bisbig.

Tbn

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

B Cl

p *v.* *v.* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

62

f *mp* *mf*

V
fir - ma - ment are set and let the sil - ver of his arms en - close my bo - dy like a

bisbig.

f *mp* *mf*

Tpt

f *mp* *mf*

Tbn

mf *f* *mp* *mf*

B Cl

D

pp *entering a rêverie*

68

f *pp*

V
pre - cious pearl. O Fa - ther, let me be his gem, his sweet, his doll, his

toy glockenspiel

pp

Gl

harmon mute stem in

pp

Tpt

harmon mute stem in

pp

Tbn

f

fp

pp

B Cl

75

V *mp* *pp*
 toy, his pet. My debt, though great, I shall discharge. Pro - pose a

Gl *mp* *pp*

Tpt

Tbn *mp* *pp*

B Cl *mp* *pp*

E

♩ = 72

79

V *mp* *mf* finally coming to a realization
 break-back task; I shall not quarrel. We sap - ling lads who

Gl *mp*

Tpt

Tbn *mp*

B Cl *mp* *mf*

83

V
 plight our trows grow green where God be-stows His grace, though bliz - zard blows _____

Tpt
 no mute
mf

Tbn
 no mute
mf

B Cl

86

V
 _____ and cru-el tem - pests whirl. Our

Tpt
f (pickup in new tempo) *fp*

Tbn
f *fp*

B Cl
f *fp*

f $\text{♩} = 76$ *mf*

newly confident

92

V Ho - ly Fa - ther in Hea - ven knows with - in our breasts re-*po*se all crea-*tu*res:

Tpt *mf*

Tbn *mf*

B Cl *mf*

Rit. *f*

96

V stags and does _____ and gems and boys _____ and girls.

Tpt *fp* *sfz*

Tbn *fp* *sfz*

B Cl *fp* *sfz*