Illinois Wesleyan University

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A Devil's Abecedarium (26 of Ambrose Bierce's Cynic's Definitions)

Jonathan D Green, *Illinois Wesleyan University*

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For Hope and Brian Thacker

Score

A Devil's Abecedarium

26 of Ambrose Bierce's Cynic's Definitions

Text - Ambrose Bierce

Music - Jonathan D. Green

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9
mf
Said a man to a cra - pu - lent youth: "I thought you a
14
f
to - tal ab - stai - ner, my son." "So I am. so I am," said the scrap -

19
mf
grace caught— "But not sir a bi - go - ted one."
Bacchus, noun:
Bacchus, noun:
Bacchus, noun:
Bacchus, noun:

24
♩.=80
cup mute
f
marimba - very hard mallets
f
f
f

30

f

A con-ven - ient de-i-ty in - ven-ted by the an-cients as an ex-

p

35

cuse for get-ting drunk. Christian, noun: One who be-lieves that the

♩.=88 *mf*

senza sord.

Christian, noun:

mp

vibes or marimba - medium

mf

Christian, noun:

Christian, noun:

mf

41
f
New Tes-ta-ment is a di-vine-ly in - spi - red book ad-m'ra-bly sui - ted to the spi-ri-tual needs
47
p
of his neigh-bor. Die, noun:
♩=96
mf
The sin - gu-lar of "dice." We sel-dom hear the
Die, noun:
woodblock - small hard beater
Die, noun:
mf
leggiero
Die, noun:
mf

54
mp
word, be - cause there is a pro - hi - bi - to - ry pro - verb, "Ne - ver say die." At
slowly and ominous
f
a tempo mf
54
54
54
mp
62
long in - ter - vals, how - e - ver, some one says: "The die is cast," which is not true,
slowly and ominous
p
a tempo
mf
62
62
marimba - very hard m
mf
62
mf
mf

69
f
marcato
for it is cut…
Edible, adjective:
Good to eat, and whole-some to di-gest, as a worm to a toad, as a
mf
77
p
toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man,
and a man to a worm.
Freedom noun:
f

A Devil's Abecedarium

♩=116

84

mf

Free - dom, free - dom, as e - v'ry school-boy knows,

f

Once shrieked as Ko - sciu - sko

straight mute

mf

snare drum - light wooden sticks

mf

f

87

mp

fell; On e - v'ry wind, in - deed that blows

mf

f

I hear her yell. She

mp

mf

mp

mf

91
mp
screams when - e - ver mon - archs meet, And par - lia-ments as well, to
f
f

95
p
mf
bind the chains a - bout her feet And toll her knell. And when the sov - reign
mp
mf
mp
p
mf

100
f
p
peo - ple cast The votes they can-not spell, U - pon the pes - ti - len - tial blast Her
100
100
f
p
100
f
p
105
mf
cla - mors swell. For all to whom the po - wer's gi - ven To sway or to com -
105
p
105
mf
105
mf

110
mp
f
pel, A-mong them-selves ap - por - tion Hea-ven And give her Hell.
senza sord.
mf
mp
mf
mp
f
115
Gunpowder, noun:
=60
p
An a-gen-cy em-ployed by ci - vi-lized na-tions for the
Gunpowder, noun:
sostenuto
p
cresc.
poco
Gunpowder, noun:
p
sostenuto
cresc.
poco

119
set-tle-ment of dis-putes which might be-come trou-ble-some if left un-ad - jus-ted
a poco
f
123
p
Mil - ton says it was in - ven-ted by the de - vil to dis-pel an-gels, and
mp
cresc.

127
this o - pi - nion seems to de - rive some sup - port from the scar - ci - ty of an - gels.
mp
p
131
♩=112
Homocide, noun:
The slay - ing of one hu - man

135
being by a - no - ther. There are four kinds of ho - mi - cide: fe-lo - nius,
mf
135
marimba - medium yarn mallets
135
mp
135
138
mp
ex - cu - sa - ble,
p
jus - ti - fi - a - ble,
f
and praise - wor - thy,
138
mf
138
mf
138
mf

142
mp
but it make no great dif - frence to the per - son slain whe-ther he
142
mp
142
mp
142
mp
147
f
fell by one kind or a - no - ther the clas - si - fi - ca - tion is for the ad -
147
mf
147
mf
147
mf

151
van - tage of the law - yers.
Immortality, noun:
A
Immortality, noun:
Immortality, noun:
Immortality, noun:
♩.=60
f
mf
156
toy which peo - ple cry for,
And on their
mf
mf

161
mp
knees ap - ply for, Dis - pute, con -
161
mp
161
mp
161
mp

165
tend, and lie for, And if al - lowed Would
165
165
165

170
f
be right proud E - ter - nal - ly to die for.
170
170
f
170
f
♩=92
175
mf
mp
Jealous, noun: Un - du - ly con - cerned a - bout the pre-ser - va - tion of
175
Jealous, noun:
175
Jealous, noun:
mf
175
Jealous, noun:
mf

181
p
that which can be lost on - ly if not worth keep - ing. Kiss, noun:
181
181
p
181
p
186
♩=120
p
mf
f
A word in - ven - ted by the po - ets as a rhyme for "bliss." It is sup - posed to sig - ni - fy, in a
186
p
mf
186
p
186
p
cresc.
Ped.

192
ff
f
=76
ge-ne-ral way, some kind of rite or ce-re-mo-ny ap-per-tain-ing to a good un-der-stand-ing; but the
192
f
192
mf
f
192
f
197
man - ner of its per - for - mance is un - known to this le - xi - co - gra-pher.
197
197
197

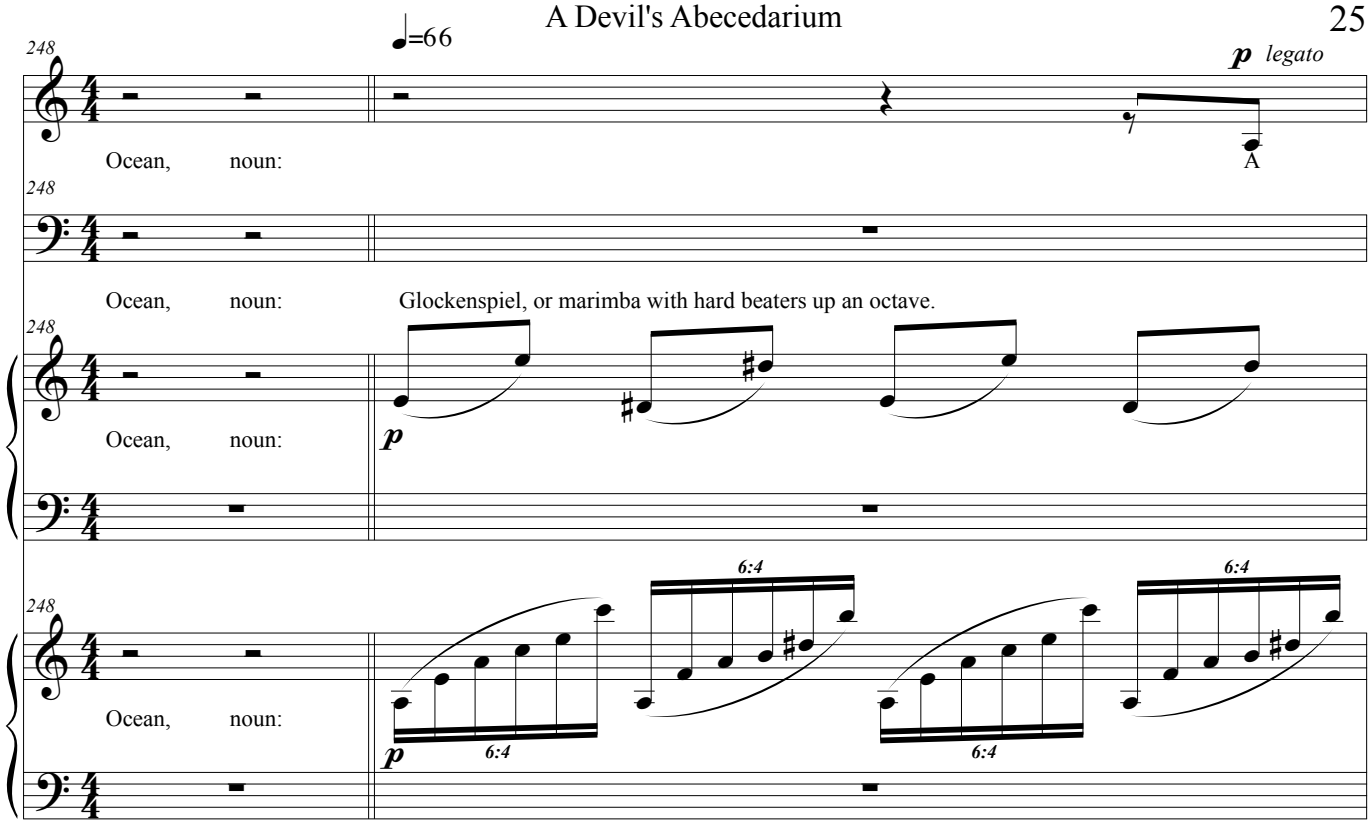
♩=108
201
mf
Liberty, noun:
The ri - sing Peo - ple
woodblock - small hard beater
208
f
ff
hot and out of breath, Roared a - round the pa - lace: "Li - ber - ty or death!"

214
mp
"If death will do," the King said, "let me reign; you'll have, I'm
p
finger cymbals
p
mp
220
f
sure, no rea - son to com - plain."
Marriage, noun:
f
Marriage, noun:
f
Marriage, noun:
f
Marriage, noun:

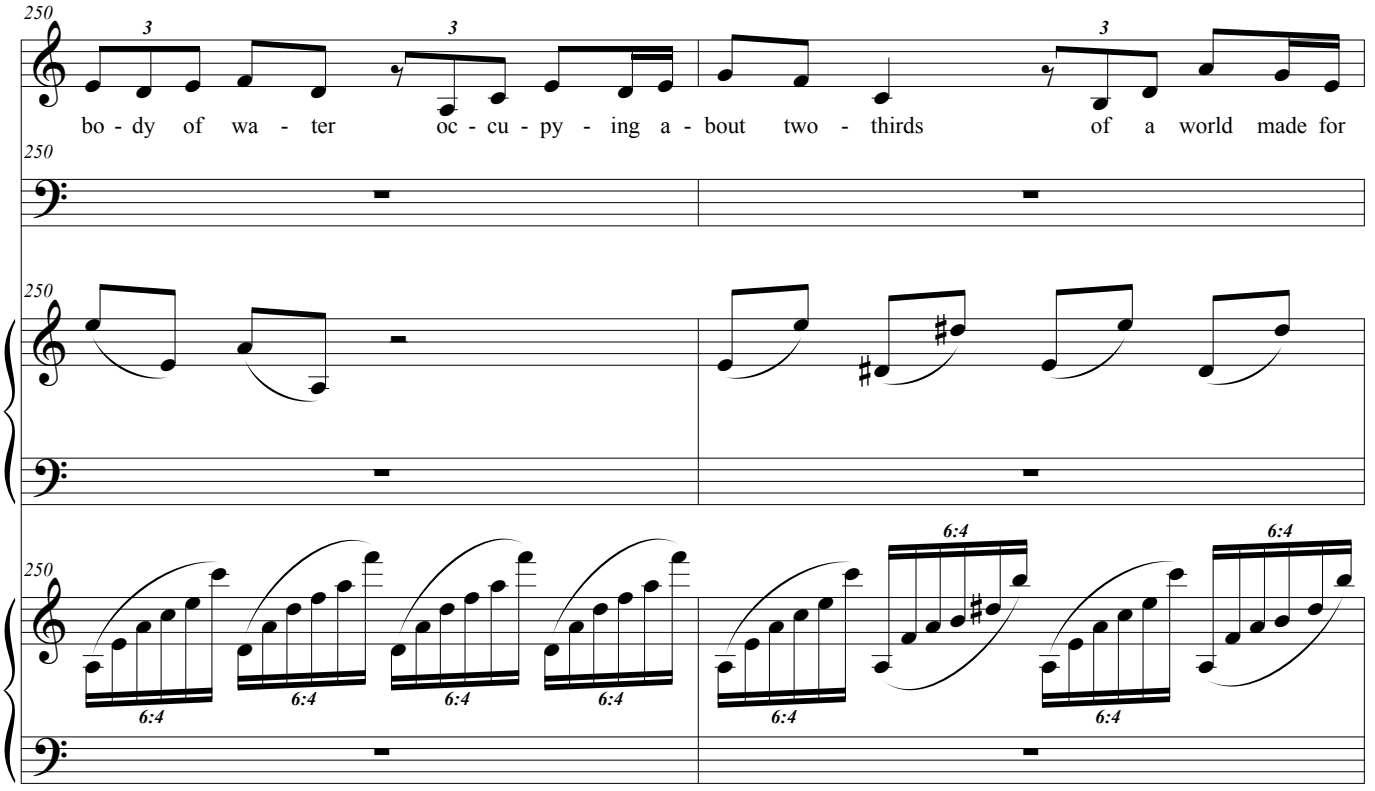
227
♩=76
p
mf
The state or con-di-tion of a com-mu-ni-ty con-sis-ting of a
marimba - medium yarn mallets
mp
mf
232
mp
p
3
mas-ter, a mis-tress and two slaves, ma-king in all, two. Noise, noun:
Noise, noun:
Noise, noun:
Noise, noun:

238
♩=108
f
ff
♩=60
A stench to the ear.
Un - do-mes-ti-ca-ted mu - sic.
straight mute
sustained splat
p
marimba - very hard mallets
ff
With apologies to Stravinksy

243
p
The chief pro-duct and au-then-ti-ca-ting sign of ci-vi - li-za - tion.
senza sord.



With apologies to Saint-Saens



♩=112
252
mf
man — who has no gills.
Politics, noun: A-
finger cymbals
Politics, noun:
6:4
256
strife of in - te - rests mas - que - ra - ding as a con - test of
mp
mf

261
f
mf
prin - ci - ples. The con - duct of pub - lic af - fairs for
261
261
f
261
f
266
♩.=100
pri - vate ad - van - tage. Queen, noun:
266
Queen, noun:
266
marimba - very hard mallets
mf
Queen, noun:
p
266
mf
Queen, noun:
p

272
p
A wo-man by whom the realm is ruled when there is a
272
p
272
272
278
f
p
king, and through whom it is ruled when there is not. Rumor, noun:
278
mf
p
Rumor, noun:
278
f
p
Rumor, noun:
278
f
p
Rumor, noun:

♩=108
284
f
p
Sharp, ir - re - sis - ti - ble by mail or sheild, By guard un - par - ried as by flight un - stayed, O
288
f
ser - vice-a - ble Ru - mor, let me wield A-gainst my e-ne-my no o - ther blade.
p
f

293
His be the ter - ror of a foe un - seen, His the in - u - tile hand u - pon the hilt, And
p
297
mine the dead - ly tongue, long, slen - der, keen, Hint - ing a ru - mor of some an - cient
p
p

301
mf
guilt. So shall I slay the wretch with - out a blow, Spare me to ce - le - brate his
mp
mf
305
p
o - ver throw, And nurse my va - lor for a - no - ther foe. Sacrament, noun: A
=112
mp
Sacrament, noun:
p
Sacrament, noun:
Sacrament, noun:

310
so - lemn re - li - gious ce-re - mo - ny to which se - v'ral de - grees of au-
mp
mp
315
tho - ri - ty and sig - ni - fi-cance are at - tached.

320
f
Rome has se - ven sa - cra - ments, but the Pro - tes - tant chur - ches, be - ing
320
mf
320
f
320
f

325
p
mf
less pro - spe - rous, feel that they can on - ly af - ford two, and these of in -
325
325
325
p

331
f
mf
fe - ri-or sanc-ti-ty.
Some of the smal - ler sects have no
mf
f
336
mp
p
sa-cra-ments at all — for which mean e - co - no-my they will in-du-bi-ta-bly be damned.
mf
p

♩.=66
341
Telephone, noun: An in - ven - tion of the De - vil which a - bro - gates some of the ad -
Telephone, noun:
marimba - medium yarn mallets
Telephone, noun:
Telephone, noun:
347
van - ta - ges of ma - king a dis - a - gree - a - ble per - son keep his dis - tance.

♩=112
353
mf
Unction, noun: An oil - ing or greas -
mp
Unction, noun:
Unction, noun:
mf
Unction, noun:
mf
359
ing. The rite of ex - treme unc - tion con - sists of
359
359
359

364
touch - ing with oil con-se - cra - ted by a bi - shop se - v'ral
364
364
364
369
parts of the bo - dy of one en-gaged in dy - ing.
f
3
Mar - bu-ry re-
369
369
369
f

374
lates that af - ter the rite had been ad - mi - ni-stered to a cer tain
379
p
wick - ed En-glish no-ble-man it was dis - co - vered that the oil had not been pro-per-ly con-se-
p
p

384
mf
mp
cra - ted and no o - ther could be ob - tained. When in - formed of this the sick
p
mp

389
f
mf
man said in an - ger: "Then I'll be damned if I die!" "My

394
pp
son," said the priest, "this is what we fear, my son this is what we
394
394
mf
pp
394
mf
pp
399
♩=84
f
fear." Vote, noun: The in-stru-ment and sym-bol of a free-man's pow'r to make a
399
Vote, noun:
marimba - medium yarn mallets
399
Vote, noun:
f
399
Vote, noun:
f

406
fool of him-self and a wreck of his coun-try. War, noun: A
War, noun:
War, noun:
War, noun:
411
by - pro-duct of the arts of peace. The most me-nac-ing po - li - ti-cal con-

♩=66
416
legato
p
di - tion is a pe - ri - od of in - ter - na - tion-al a - mi-ty… The
416
416
416
p
421
soil of peace is thick - ly sown with the seeds of war and sin - gu-lar - ly
421
421
421

♩=108
426
suit - ed to their ger - mi - na - tion and growth.
X, noun: X in our al - pha - bet
f
mf straight mute
X, noun:
431
be - ing a need - less let - ter has an add - ed in - vin - vi - bi - li - ty to the at -
3
f

433
tacks of the spel - ling re - for - mers, and like them, will doubt - less last as long as the lan - guage.
3
3

436
♩.=88
mf
Youth, noun: Youth is the true Sa - tur - ni - an Reign, the Gol - den Age on
mp
Youth, noun: vibes or marimba - medium yarn mallets
mf
Youth, noun:
mf
Youth, noun:

442
p
earth a - gain, when figs are grown on thist - les, and pigs be - tailed with whist - les, and
442
p
442
442

448
f
mf
p
wear - ing sil - ken brist - les, live e - ver in clo - ver, and cows fly o - ver, de -
448
mf
p
448
p
f
p
448
p
f
p

454
cresc.
f
li-ver-ing milk at e-ve-ry door, and Jus-tice ne-ver is heard to snore, and e-v'ry as - sas - sin is
mf
f
cresc.

459
♩=100
mf
made a ghost and howl-ing, is cast in - to Bal - ti - most! Zany, noun: A
Zany, noun: marimba - very hard mallets
Zany, noun:
Zany, noun:

464
po - pu - lar cha - rac - ter in old I - ta - lian plays, who i - mi - ta - ted with lu - di - crous in -
mp
mf
467
com - pe - tence the buf - fo - ne, or clown, and was there - fore the ape of an ape,
p
f
mf

470
for the clown him - self i - mi - ta - ted the se - ri - ous cha rac - ters of the
470
470
470
♩=108
477
mf
play. The za - ny was pro - ge - ni - tor to the
477
p
477
mf
477
mf

480
f
spe - cia-list in hu - mor, as we to - day have the un - hap - pi - ness to know him.
480
480
f
480
f
484
mp
In the za - ny we see an ex - am - ple of cre - a -
484
p
finger cymbals
484
marimba - medium yarn mallets
mp
484
mp

489
tion, in the hu - mo - rist the trans - mis - sion. A -
f
494
no - ther ex - cel - lent spe - ci - men of the mo - dern za - ny is the
mf
f

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