

This Homeless Way

for clarinet and bass clarinet

inspired by the poetry of Jacob Folger

JONATHAN RUSSELL

This Homeless Way (2018)

for B \flat clarinet and B \flat bass clarinet

Duration: c. 9:30

Commissioned by the Égide Duo:

Joshua Gardner, clarinet and Stefanie Gardner, bass clarinet

Inspired by the poetry of Jacob Folger

ABOUT JACOB FOLGER

This composition is inspired by three poems by Jacob Folger, a formerly homeless person who now runs an organization called "Friend to the Homeless" (www.friendtothehomeless.org), whose purpose is "to educate on Homelessness and help people to discover simple things they can do to ease the lives of Homeless People."

The Friend to the Homeless website provides this description of his background:

"I spent my childhood running for cover in a volatile home and drew the line when I was fourteen. I chose Homelessness over coexisting with a violent father. It was an awful choice, but I was intact and very glad for that. The "glad" soon wore off however. Just basic survival was a battle everyday. I nearly starved on more than one occasion and the cold of the winters tore into my very being. I never really got away from the Homelessness until I joined the Army when I was 18 years old. I served as a Paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne. When I had completed my tour of duty in the military, I became a handyman and soon thereafter, I felt a strong urge to work with Homeless People. After having been Homeless myself for so long, I felt a strong compassion for Homeless People and wanted to do something to help them. I began working with a project in Herndon Virginia. It was a home for Homeless People set up much like any typical home any family would have. And I employed people that lived there to work with me in my handyman business. My business supported the household expenses and paid the rent. I found this work with Homeless People to be extremely rewarding. Having a desire to learn more about Homeless People, I picked up and headed for East Harlem in New York City in 1982. That experience was deep into a world I would never experience again. Life was cold there for everyone. And Homeless People could not have had it worse. I took on quite an education there about Homelessness and many of the causes. In 1983, I began my own project, a home for Homeless People. It was very small with no more than 2 guests at a time. But even then, there were a lot of issues to deal with and without the help of a team of like-minded individuals to help me, I soon became burned out. My personal life began to falter and I took to drinking which was a major downfall for me. My life spiraled out of control and I ended up Homeless again. But still, as a Homeless Person, I continued to reach out to others like me by giving Homeless People care packages of clothing and other necessities. I did get sober and landed on my feet in 2007. And at that time, I launched Friend to the Homeless. At first and still, its purpose is to help those who have never been homeless to connect with those who are through Homeless stories, poetry, images, video and the sharing of my personal experiences as a Homeless Person. All told, I was Homeless for 13 years. Today, Friend to the Homeless is a venue for anyone who wants to help Homeless People with care package giving through our training, support and mentoring programs. In addition, Friend to the Homeless continues to help educate and connect those who have never been homeless with those who are."

A Shiver Is All

By Jacob Folger

Summer drops off to Autumn
Leaves change and blow free
Days darken early
A shiver is all

A clear cold night
Wind whistling through trees
Frost keeping me up
A shiver is all

A cold dank stairwell
One blanket not two
No pillow for my head
A shiver is all

A sweet Christmas home
Cozy and warm
Comfort completely
But for me, a shiver is all

Am I Invisible?

By Jacob Folger

People pass me by
I must not be here
Sitting alone, down and out
No one will come near.

No gaze from another
No concern for me
I am completely by myself
On this cold street.

In the Morning I wake
From my Homeless sheets
Where I slept the night before
Should I even call it sleep?

Homeless I am
Forgotten by the world
Am I invisible?
Am I invisible?

This Homeless Way

By Jacob Folger

It has been years and years and years since I left that awful life
The freezing cold, the sweaty hot, being lost in time
The isolation, the loneliness, am I not even of this earth?
Will my life ever have meaning? What will it ever be worth?

I had not bathed myself in so many, many months
My clothing was so filthy, man I surely must have stunk
Everything I owned in the world was within my very reach
This life I had not chosen had completely taken over me.

Terrible fears plagued me, would I lose my little spot?
No one must know I'm living here, absolutely not
I had to hide my life from the world, of which I was not a part
This whole life I was living was hurting me a lot.

It took so many years before I landed on my feet
Still could I walk among the world? Was I really free?
Yes, I guess I have a home I can almost call my own
But even though, it is all still, so very bitter sweet.

So now I do have a home but there is little change in me
I still have the homeless habits, that homeless mentality
I think I will, in some way, always feel I'm still on the street
Do other former homeless people feel the same as me?

So if you know me now, if you see the same clothing day to day
For some reason It is difficult to even want to bathe
And I worry about tomorrow, If I still will have a home
Please know I am trying, it is hard to change this homeless way.

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Jonathan Russell

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Joshua Gardner, clarinet and Stefanie Gardner, bass clarinet

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I. A Shiver is All

$\text{♩} = 40$

Clarinet in B \flat

Bass Clarinet

p espress.

p espress.

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

naturally growing in intensity

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

naturally growing in intensity

naturally growing in intensity

17

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

21

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

f

f

25

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

rit.

dim.

p

(poco) a tempo

(poco)

p

30

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

rit.

II. Am I Invisible?

36 $\text{♩} = 68$

B \flat Cl. *p* with restrained expressiveness

B. Cl. *p* with restrained expressiveness

42

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

48

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

54

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

60

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

66

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

accel. poco a poco a poco

(naturally let it fall forward, don't try to intentionally push)

72

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

pp

cresc. poco a poco a poco

pp very slight accents on each half note

cresc. poco a poco a poco

77

very fast and light grace notes throughout

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

81

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

mf

mf

85

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

This Homeless Way

89

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

93

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

$\text{♩} = 100$

ff

97

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

Tempo I $\text{♩} = 68$

pp

101

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

pp

dim.

106

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

rit.

III. This Homeless Way

like an overtone of the bass clarinet sound

111 ♩ = 52

B♭ Cl. *pp*

B. Cl. *p espress.*

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

B♭ Cl. *ominous, chant-like*

B. Cl. *pp ominous, chant-like*

B♭ Cl. *cresc.* *f* *Heavier, more Edmund Welles-ian*

B. Cl. *cresc.* *f* *Heavier, more Edmund Welles-ian*

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

128

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

rit. a tempo

132

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

fff *pp*

p espress.

136

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

140

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

dim.

146

B \flat Cl.

B. Cl.

rit. *molto esp.*