

Dinos Constantinides

The Magic Pot

(Assemblages IV)

for Reader and string quartet

LRC 245

Story adapted by Judy Constantinides



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Magni Publications

THE MAGIC POT (2009)

for reader and string quartet

LRC 245

Duration: 12 minutes

The Magic Pot is based on an old folktale from Denmark. It is adapted by Judy Constantinides for this work.

The Magic Pot is the ninth in a series of musical stories for children, involving small ensembles, reader, and solo instruments. **The Dancing Turtle** (1999), **The Singing Cucaracha** (2000), **Lazy Jack** (2001), **The Penguin Parade** (2002), **The Dancing Shoes** (2003) **Anansi and the Hat Shaking Dance** (2006) and **The Cat that Walked by Himself** (2007) **How the Camel Got His Hump** (2008) are the previous pieces in the series.

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The music of Dinos Constantinides has been performed throughout the world. He is the recipient of many grants, commissions and awards, including first prize in the 1981 Brooklyn College International Chamber Opera Competition and the 1985 First Midwest Chamber Opera Conference. He also received the 1985 American New Music Consortium Distinguished Service Award, the 1989 Glen Award of l'Ensemble of New York, several Meet the Composer grants and numerous ASCAP Standard Awards. In the 1994 he was honored with a Distinguished Teacher White House Commission on Presidential Scholars.

Judy Constantinides has been a storyteller and children's librarian for over forty years. She has a BA in English from the University of Rochester and an M. S. in Library Service from Columbia University. She is recently retired from the East Baton Rouge Parish Library where she worked as a Children's Librarian for over 14 years, serving as Head of Children's Services at Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library for six years. She also reviews children's books for the *School Library Journal*, and appears as storyteller often with the Louisiana Sinfonietta.

THE MAGIC POT

Once upon a time, there was a poor couple who lived in a tiny cottage in a small village. Often they were so poor they didn't have enough to eat. The poor man's brother also lived in the same village and he was very rich. He had a large house, countless fields of grain, and many coins, but he never shared anything with his less fortunate brother.

Well, in time, the poor man and his wife had nothing left except one cow, which the man reluctantly took to market to sell. On the way, he met a stranger, who asked if he might buy the cow. "It would cost you \$20," the poor man said. "I don't have \$20," the stranger replied, "but what I have is worth much more," and he drew out of his coat a large black pot. "Look!" he said, "Here is my pot in exchange for your cow."

"A POT!" said the poor man. "What can I do with a pot when I have no food to put in it to feed my family! No, I must have money." And he started to walk away.

But suddenly, the pot began to speak. "Take me!" it said. The poor man turned around in surprise. "Well," he thought to himself, "here is a most wonderful thing—a talking pot! If it can talk, maybe it can do other things as well!" So he exchanged the cow for the pot and returned home.

He proudly showed the empty three-legged pot to his wife, who immediately called him a blockhead.

But the pot shouted: "Wash me! Clean me! Put me on the fire!" and the startled wife realized it was a magic pot. So she carefully did as it directed—washed and cleaned it and put it on the fire.

"I skip! I skip!" said the pot. "Where do you skip?" said the wife. "To the rich man's house! To the rich man's house!" cried the pot, and off it went, as fast as it could on its three short legs—tip-tippy-tap--, through the door, across the yard, out the gate and up the road until it reached the house of the rich brother. It ran into the kitchen where the rich man's wife was baking, and hopped up on the table and stood very still.

"Ah!" the woman said when she saw the pot. "Here is the perfect pot for the pudding I am just making!" And she heaped a great deal of good things into the pot—sugar, flour, raisins, nuts, butter and spices. Then she put the pot on the fire to cook. When the pudding was done, tip, tippy, tap, went the three short legs and the pot ran out the door.

"Where are you going?" cried the rich man's wife. "To the poor man's house! To the poor man's house!" called the pot back to her.

When the poor family saw the pot coming back and looked inside it and saw the pudding they were overjoyed and sat down to a wonderful meal.

The next day the pot spoke up again: "Wash me! Clean me! Put me on the fire!" The woman did so and the pot said: "I skip! I skip!" "Where do you skip?" said the woman. "To the rich man's house! To the rich man's house!" said the pot. Tip, tippy, tap went the three short legs and off it went to the rich man's barn. There, the farm's workers were threshing the wheat.

"Look at that little pot!" said one of the workers. "Let's see how much wheat it will hold." They put bushel after bushel of wheat into the pot but it just didn't get full. Finally, when they had put all of the wheat into the pot, the three short legs went tip, tippy, tap. "Stop! Stop!" called the men. "Where are you going with our wheat?"

“To the poor man’s house! To the poor man’s house!” shouted the pot running down the road. The poor people were delighted for they had enough wheat in the pot to bake bread for a year and more!

On the third morning, the pot called out again: “Wash me! Clean me! Put me on the fire!” The woman did so. Then the pot said: “I skip! I skip!” “Where do you skip?” asked the woman. “To the rich man’s house! To the rich man’s house!”

It was a beautiful sunny day and the rich man had his window open as he counted his gold coins. The pot hopped right in through the open window and stood very still. The rich man was busy counting, and seeing a nice pot sitting there he thought what a good place to put his money and started throwing in his gold coins by the handfuls until all his coins were in the pot.

Tip, tippy tap went the three short legs. The pot ran across to the window and hopped out. “Wait! Wait!” shouted the rich man. “Where are you going with my money?”

“To the poor man’s house! To the poor man’s house!” replied the pot, skipping down the road with the money dancing inside it.

The pot tumbled across the floor of the tiny cottage, spilling gold coins everywhere to the family’s great joy!

Next morning, the pot said once again: “Wash me! Clean me! Put me on the fire!” And they did so. “I skip! I skip!” “Where do you skip?” “To the rich man’s house! To the rich man’s house!” and off it ran on its three short legs, tip, tippy tap until it reached the rich man’s house. As soon as the rich man saw it he cried out-- “There is the pot that carried off our pudding, our wheat and all our money!” and he threw himself on the pot. And he found he was stuck there. “I skip! I skip!” said the pot. “Skip to the North Pole if you wish!” said the rich man angrily, as he struggled to get loose from the pot. Tip, tippy, tap went the three short legs, and the pot ran out of the house and down the road, carrying the rich man quickly off to the north, never stopping. The poor brother and his wife shared their new wealth with the other people in the village, often remembering the magic pot with the three short legs which skipped so cheerfully and helped them so much. But they never saw the pot or the rich man ever again.