

# ABBIE BETINIS

## BAR XIZAM (UPWARD I RISE)

For SATB chorus, and s.a.t. soloists, a cappella

*Commissioned by The Esoterics as part of the POLYPHONOS Young Composer Prize, 2007*

*Premiered July 2007*

*The Esoterics; Eric Banks, founding director  
Tacoma, Medina, Seattle, and West Seattle, WA*

## Program Note:

Khvajeh Shams al-Din Muhammad Hâfez-e Shirazi (ca. 1320-1390) was born in Shiraz, Persia (Iran). He wrote nearly 400 lyric poems, called *ghazals*, and is the undisputed master of that particular poetic form. His writing is mystical and based on Sufism, a tradition of Islam that is associated both with the Sunni and Shi'a denominations, as well as other currents of Islam. This particular ghazal, excerpted a bit in this setting, is written on Hâfez's tombstone.

The music has a very specific structure, moving systematically from confinement to freedom. Each singer begins on a hum, which to me depicts confinement: the desire to create something (in this case sound) without the means to see it through (to open one's mouth). Each of the four voice parts begins to explore a very small musical interval and to gradually expand it. At each soloist's cry "Bar xizam!" another voice part is "freed" and joyfully begins to sing scales and glissandi, building into a whirling invocation to the Beloved.

So much of writing music is about studying things close-up. The exact articulations, dynamics, intricacies of text setting... But as I was wondering how best to set this magnificent text to music, I found myself stepping farther and farther back from the page. I began to search for a larger compositional gesture that could paint what I was starting to envision: whole crowds of people, through the centuries even, rising up – whether in the name of religion, social justice, personal healing – all, like Hâfez, longing for something better. So I studied up on the Shepard scale, the auditory illusion of a never-ending rising scale (not unlike M.C. Escher's famous staircase, or the endlessly rising stripes on a barber pole). In one part of this piece, I've tried to recreate that illusion by overlapping a few specific series of rising glissandi, hoping that it gives the impression of these countless souls in their continuous ascent.

This piece is dedicated, with much love, to my parents, John and Emily Betinis, who continue to teach me, by their example, how to rise up.

- Abbie Betinis, June 2007

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## Text and Translation

مژدهی وصل تو کو کز سر جان برخیزم

Waiting, where is the harmony of your voice, so that, free from the desires of this life: I might rise?

طائر قدسمو از دام جهان برخیزم

I am a dove from paradise, but out of this worldly cage: I shall rise.

بولای تو که گر بندی خیشم خانی از سر برخیزم

If, in your devotion, you call upon me to serve you, then I promise, from the desires of life and this world: I will rise.

یا رب از ابر هدایت برسان بارانی

O Lord, from the cloud of your grace, let your rain fall over and over,

بیشتر زانکه چو گردی زمین برخیزم

Before this, from the midst of it all, like a handful of dust: Let me rise.

خیزو بالا بنما ای بت شیرین حرکات

O rise up, with sweet gesture, and show me your stature: lofty, like the cypress,

کز سر جانو برخیزم

So that, free from the desires of this life: I may rise.

رقصکنان برخیزم

With dancing feet: I rise.

دست فشان برخیزم

With clapping hands: I rise

روز مرگم نفسی مهلت دیدار بده

On the day that I die, in the span of a single breath, grant me but a glimpse of you,

تا چو حافظ ز سر جانو جهان برخیزم

And then, like Hafez, free from the desires of life and this world: upward, I rise!

(Translated from Persian into English by Eric Banks and the composer, after renderings by Michael Boylan and H Wilberforce Clarke)

# Bar xizam

(Upward I rise)

Shams Hâfez-e Shirazi (14th c.)

Abbie Betinis

Meditatively (♩ = ca.92)

Soprano  
pp  
Mmm...

Alto 1  
pp (barely open lips)  
Mmm... mož-de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye vas -

Alto 2  
pp (barely open lips)  
Mmm... mož-de - ye

Tenor  
pp  
Mmm...

Bass  
pp  
Mmm...

7

S  
\*

A  
le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde -

A 2  
vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku

T  
\*

B  
\*

\* All glissandi should begin and end on the beat written. For instance, here, there's a full beat to slide: begin sliding on bt. 2 and arrive on bt. 3.

Trans'n: *Waiting, where is the harmony of your voice...*

Betinis / Bar xizam

2

13

(crying out) *mf*

A. Solo \_\_\_\_\_  
Mož - de - ye, \_\_\_\_\_

*mp*

S \_\_\_\_\_

A  
ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to \_\_\_\_\_ vas - le to ku

A 2  
možde ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to

*mp*

T \_\_\_\_\_

*mp*

B \_\_\_\_\_

19

A. Solo  
mož - de - ye, vas - - - le to ku, \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_

A  
mož de - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde ye vas - le to ku mož - de - ye vas -

A 2  
ku mož de - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku mož - de - ye \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

Trans'n: ...waiting, where is the harmony of your voice...

25

(mf)

A. Solo

S

A

A 2

T

B

le to ku mož-de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de-

vas - - le to ku mož-de - ye vas - - le to ku mož-de - ye

Oh...

Oh...

Oh...

Oh...

30

A. Solo

S

A

A 2

T

T 2

B

re jon bar - xi - zam?

Oh...

ye vas - le to ku Oh...

vas - le to ku Oh...

Ah... *molto* *p* (barely open lips) mož-de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de-

Ah... *molto* *p* (barely open lips) mož-de - - - ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye

Ah... *molto* *p* Oh...

Ah... *molto* Oh...

Trans'n: ...so that, free from the desires of this life: I might rise?

35

S  
A  
A 2  
T  
T 2  
B

kaz sa-re jon \_\_\_\_\_ bar - - - - xi - zam? \_\_\_\_\_ Oh... \_\_\_\_\_

kaz sa-re jon \_\_\_\_\_ bar - - - - xi - zam? \_\_\_\_\_ Oh... \_\_\_\_\_

ye vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to

vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku

*n.b.*

*n.b.*

41

*mf* (Trapped, fluttering)

S. Solo  
S  
A  
A 2  
T  
T 2  
B

To ye-re, \_\_\_\_\_ to yere, to ye - re qod - samo, to yere qod - samo,

*cresc. poco a poco*

kaz sa-re jon \_\_\_\_\_ bar - - - -

*cresc. poco a poco*

kaz sa-re jon \_\_\_\_\_ bar - -

ku mož - de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye vas - le to

mož-de-ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku

*cresc. poco a poco*

Trans'n: ...I am a dove from paradise... (Waiting, where is the harmony of your voice, so that, free from the desires of this life: I might rise?)

Betinis / Bar xizam

46

S. Solo  
 az - do - - - - me ja-hon \_\_\_\_\_ bar - xizam. *f*

S  
 Ah... *mf*

A  
 - xi - zam? \_\_\_\_\_ kaz sa re jon \_\_\_\_\_ kaz - - - sa re jan \_\_\_\_\_ *f* *mf*

A 2  
 - - xi - zam? \_\_\_\_\_ kaz sa re jon \_\_\_\_\_ kaz - sa re \_\_\_\_\_ *f* *mf*

T  
 ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku moždeye vas - le to ku \_\_\_\_\_ kaz- \_\_\_\_\_ *f* *mf*

T 2  
 mož-de-ye vas - le to ku možde - ye vas - le to ku \_\_\_\_\_ *f*

B  
 možde - ye vas - le to \_\_\_\_\_ *f* *p cresc. to m.67*

52

S  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *p*

A  
 - bar - xi - zam... \_\_\_\_\_ kaz - sa - re jan \_\_\_\_\_ bar - xizam... \_\_\_\_\_

A 2  
 jan \_\_\_\_\_ bar - xi - zam... \_\_\_\_\_ kaz \_\_\_\_\_ sa - re jon \_\_\_\_\_ bar - xi - \_\_\_\_\_

T  
 - - sa - re jan \_\_\_\_\_ bar - - - xi - zam... \_\_\_\_\_ kaz - - - sa - re jan \_\_\_\_\_ bar - \_\_\_\_\_

B  
 ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku mož-de - ye vas - le to \_\_\_\_\_

B 2  
 ku mož-de-ye vas - le to ku \_\_\_\_\_ mož-de-ye vas - le to ku možde-ye vas - \_\_\_\_\_

Trans'n: ...but out of this worldly cage: I shall rise.... (Waiting, where is the harmony of your voice, so that, free from the desires of this life: I might rise?)

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web: [www.abbiebetinis.com](http://www.abbiebetinis.com) ♦ phone: 612-590-3998 ♦ email: [abbie@abbiebetinis.com](mailto:abbie@abbiebetinis.com)

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67

*f*

T. Solo

bar - xi - zam.

*mp* (barely open lips)

repeat, ad lib.

S

mož-de - ye vas - le to ku

A

*f* *mp*

Ah...

T

Ah...

Hmm be-va - lo - ye to,

Hmm be-va

T 2

Hmm be-va-lo - ye to,

Hmm be va-lo-ye to,

B

Hmm be-va-lo - ye to,

Hmm be va-lo - ye to,

B 2

Hmm be-va-lo - ye to,

Hmm be va-lo - ye to,

70

S

A

Ah...

T

lo - ye to,

Hmm be-va - lo - ye to,

Hmm beva - lo - ye to,

Hmm beva

T 2

Hmm be va-lo - ye to,

Hmm beva lo-ye to,

Hmm beva lo-ye to,

B

Hmm be-va-lo - ye to,

Hmm beva lo - ye to,

Hmm beva lo - ye to,

B 2

Hmm be va-lo - ye to,

Trans'n: ...I will rise. (...in your devotion, in your devotion...)

## Betinis / Bar xizam

Slower (♩ = ca.80)

73

S  
ku (gradually change from "oo" to "ee") Yo Rab! Yo rab, az-

S 2  
ku (gradually change from "oo" to "ee") Yo Rab! Yo rab, az-

A  
ku (gradually change from "oo" to "ee") Yo Rab! Yo rab, az-

A 2  
ku (gradually change from "oo" to "ee") Yo Rab! Yo rab, az-

T  
lo - ye to, Yo! Yo!

T 2  
Hmm be va-lo-ye to, Yo! Yo!

B  
Hmm beva - lo - ye to, Yo! Yo!

B 2  
Yo! Yo!

77

S  
ab - re he do - yat be-ra sön bo - rö - ni, piš - tar zön - ke, čo,

S 2  
ab - re he do - yat be-ra sön bo - rö - ni, piš - tar zön - ke, čo,

A  
ab - re he do - yat be-ra sön be-ra - sön bo - rö - ni, piš - tar zön - ke, čo,

A 2  
ab - re he do - yat be-ra - sön bo - rö - ni, piš - tar zön - ke, čo,

Trans'n: O Lord, from the cloud of your grace, let your rain fall over and over / Before this, from the midst of it all..

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Betinis / Bar xizam

10

89

Tempo Primo ( ♩ = ca.92)

S. Solo

- - zam! \_\_\_\_\_

A. Solo

- - zam! \_\_\_\_\_

T. Solo

- - zam! \_\_\_\_\_

S

*pp* *mm...* *mm...* *repeat, ad lib.*

S 2

*pp* *mm...* *repeat, ad lib.*

A

*pp* *mm...* *repeat, ad lib.*

A 2

*pp* *mm...* *repeat, ad lib.*

T

- - zo bo - lo be - na - mo ey bot - e ši - - - rin ha - ra - kot

T 2

- - zo bo - lo be - na - mo ey bot - e ši - - - rin ha - ra - kot

B

- - zo bo - lo be - na - mo ey bot - e ši - - - rin ha - ra - kot

B 2

- - zo bo - lo be - na - mo ey bot - e ši - - - rin ha - ra - kot

\* Stagger entrances individually to replicate the aural illusion of the Shepherd Tone: a seemingly constantly rising scale

Trans'n: O rise up, with sweet gesture, and show me your stature: lofty, like the cypress...

98

S. Solo

A. Solo

T. Solo

S

S 2

A

A 2

T

*mp cresc. poco a poco*      *repeat, ad lib.*

kaz\_ sa - re jan \_\_\_\_\_ bar - xi - zam      kaz\_ sa - re jan

T 2

*mp cresc. poco a poco*      *repeat, ad lib.*

kaz\_ sa - re sa - re jan \_\_\_\_\_ kaz\_

B

*mp cresc. poco a poco*      *repeat, ad lib.*

kaz\_ sa - re jan      bar - xi - zam      kaz\_ sa - re

B 2

*mp cresc. poco a poco*      *repeat, ad lib.*

kaz\_ sa - re jan      bar - xi - zam      kaz\_ sa - re

Trans'n: *So that, free from the desires of this life...*

Betinis / Bar xizam

(m.103 = at least 30 seconds long. Repeat each cell ad lib.)

103

S. Solo

*f* To ye-re, \_\_\_ to ye re, to ye - re qod-sa mo,

A. Solo

*f* Mož - de - ye, mož - de-ye, vas - le to ku, -

T. Solo

*f* Be va - lo ye, be va-lo - ye to, -

S

mm...

S 2

mm...

A

mm...

A 2

mm...

T

mm...

T 2

sa-re jon - mm...

B

jan mm...

B 2

mm...

A Joyful, Dancing tempo (♩ > 104)

104

S Mmm... Mmm...

S2 mf

A Mmm... Mmm...

A2 mf

T Mmm... Mmm...

T2 mf

B *molto* *f Joyfully!*  
Oh... raq - s - ko - nan, das - t fe - šon, jan - o, jan - o ja - hon,

109

S *Accelerando*

S2 *Accelerando*

A *Accelerando*

A2 *Accelerando*

T *Accelerando* *f Joyfully!*  
raq - s - ko - nan, das - t fe - šon, jan - o, jan - o ja - hon,

B *Accelerando*  
raq - s - ko - nan, das - t fe - šon, jan - o, jan - o ja - hon,

Trans'n: With dancing feet, with clapping hands, life and the world...

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Tempo Primo (♩ = ca.92)

121

S *f* *f* *f cresc.*  
 Bar xi - zam! Bar xi - zam! Bar \_\_\_\_\_

A *f* *f* *f cresc.*  
 Bar xi - zam! Bar xi - zam! Bar \_\_\_\_\_

T *f*  
 Bar xi - zam! Bar xi - zam! Bar xi - zam!

B *f*  
 Bar xi - zam! Bar xi - zam!

127

S *molto* *ff* (non decresc.)  
 Bar \_\_\_\_\_ xi - - - zam!

A *molto* *ff* (non decresc.)  
 Bar \_\_\_\_\_ xi - - - zam!

T *sfz* *p*  
 Bar \_\_\_\_\_ xi - zam! (mm) \_\_\_\_\_

B *sfz* *p* *pp*  
 Bar \_\_\_\_\_ xi - zam! (mm) \_\_\_\_\_

Trans'n: I rise! I rise! I rise!

Betinis / Bar xizam

132

Slower

*p* *distantly*

S  
Ru - ze mar - - - gam, \_\_\_\_\_ na - fa-

Slower

*p* *distantly*

A  
Ru - ze mar - - - gam, \_\_\_\_\_ na - fa-

Slower

T

Slower

*p* *distantly*

B  
Ru - ze mar - - - gam, \_\_\_\_\_ na - fa-

137

S. Solo \_\_\_\_\_ *(very soft glissandi, on a hum)*

A. Solo \_\_\_\_\_ *(very soft glissandi, on a hum)*

T. Solo \_\_\_\_\_ *(very soft glissandi, on a hum)*

S  
si, moh - la - te di - dor be - deh... \_\_\_\_\_

A  
si, moh - la - te di - dor be - deh... \_\_\_\_\_

T

B  
si, moh - la - te di - dor be - deh... \_\_\_\_\_

Trans'n: *On the day that I die, in the span of a single breath, grant me but a glimpse of you...*

145

S. Solo

A. Solo

T. Solo

S  
to, čo Ho - fez, ze - sa - - - re jan,

A  
to, čo Ho - fez, ze - sa - re o ja-

T

B  
to, čo Ho - fez, ze - sa - re o ja-

150

S. Solo

A. Solo

T. Solo

S  
*poco* *p* Bar xi - - - - zam! *close to* (mm) *ppp*

A  
*poco* *p* hon, Bar xi - - - - zam! *close to* (mm) *ppp*

T  
*p* Bar xi - - - - zam! *close to* (mm) *ppp*

B  
*poco* *p* hon, Bar xi - - - - zam! *close to* (mm) *ppp*

Trans'n: ...and then, like Hafez, free from the desires of life and this world: upward, I rise!

Selected Choral Works by Abbie Betinis:

Aililiú, ó Íosa	soprano, countertenor, SATB chorus, bodhran, gaelic harp, vielle	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-036-00
Another Sky	SSA, marimba	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-012-00
The Babe of Bethlehem (arr.)	SSAATTBB a cappella	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-031-01
Blessed Be the Lord, My Rock	SAB a cappella/organ	<b>Graphite Publishing</b> GP-B004
Carmina mei cordis I. Aeterna lux divinitas II. Angele dei	SATB a cappella	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-030-00
Dormi, Jesu	SATB a cappella	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-007-00
Hail, Christmas Day! (a canon)	SATB (or SAB) a cappella	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-026-C3
In a Far Judean City	SATB a cappella	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-009-C1
Jerusalem Luminosa	SA a cappella	<b>Kjos</b> Cat. No. 6323
The Piper's Son	SA children's choir, flute	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-014-00
Prayer for Peace	SATB a cappella, soprano solo	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-033-C4
Psalm 126 – A Song of Ascents	SATB a cappella	<b>Augsburg Fortress</b> 0-8006-7720
To the Evening Star	SSAATTBB, flute	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-040-00
Toward Sunshine, Toward Freedom I. The Bees' Song II. A noiseless patient spider III. Envoi	SATB a cappella, soprano solo	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-035-01
Yhinx: An Ancient Greek Love Charm	T'TBB a cappella, TTB soli	<b>Abylon Press</b> AB-018-01

**ABBIE BETINIS** (b. 1980) has written music in a variety of genres, but her greatest passion is for the human voice, as evidenced by her continually expanding catalogue of works for solo, chamber, and mixed vocal ensembles. Since graduating from St. Olaf College in 2001, she has received over thirty commissions for new work, from organizations such as the American Suzuki Foundation, Cantus, the Dale Warland Singers, Ensemble of the North, Kantorei (Denver, CO), The Rose Ensemble, The Schubert Club, and the University of Minnesota Men's Choir. Betinis has spent two summers on scholarship from the European American Musical Alliance at La Schola Cantorum and the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, France, where she studied harmony and counterpoint in the tradition of Nadia Boulanger with faculty from Juilliard and the Paris Conservatory. Originally from Stevens Point, Wisconsin, she now lives in Minneapolis, where she is completing her Master of Arts degree in music composition at the University of Minnesota, and working as a freelance singer, music copyist, and web designer. In September 2005, she was named a composer-in-residence for The Schubert Club in Saint Paul, MN.