

ABBIE BETINIS

YHINX

~ An ancient Greek love charm for men's voices ~

Written for Cantus

with special thanks to Adam Reinwald

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Written for Cantus' spring 2003 concert series "Magic, Myth, and Legend," *Yhinx* melds together two ancient Greek love charms for an energetic setting of the evocative texts. The *Yhinx* (spelled "*Iunx*" in Greek, and now known as a "*jinx*") is an ancient Greek spell which requires a spinning brass disk bound with a wryneck bird. It is specifically an "erotic binding spell" meant to freeze a wayward lover in any sinful act, then return the lover to the one casting the spell.

The text here is from two ancient Greek sources. The verses are from Theocritus' *Idyll II*, written in the 3rd century BC. In it, the narrator, Simaetha, lays a binding spell onto her neglectful lover. She burns barley-meal, bay leaves, bran, and a waxen puppet upon an altar, then demands that the maid, Thestylis, secretly smear the ashes above her absent lover's doorway. True to the much longer English translation by J.M. Edmonds (1912), this musical setting uses whistling, spitting, and the vocal equivalent of the beating of drums to evoke the mysticism of the event. I also added voiced shadow vowels ("charms-zah!") for extra drama.

The second source of text is from a stone recently discovered in Egypt which contains the following string of Greek letters:

Ιυνξ: α β ε ρ α μ ε ν θ ω ο υ λ ε ρ θ ε ξ α ν α ξ ε θ ρ ε λ υ ο ω θ ν ε μ α ρ ε β α

Like the Theocritus text, it is thought to be a binding *Yhinx* spell, dating from the 3rd century AD. Because these 39 letters can be read the same way backward and forward, much of the melodic and rhythmic figures in Yhinx are written symmetrically. The first half of the refrain, for instance, is from an ancient Hymn to Apollo (incidentally the twin of Artemis, who Simaetha entreats), while the second half is its retrograde. Many of the 7/8 figures are subdivided symmetrically as 3+2+2 / 2+2+3. The mixed meter, a feature of Greek music, is superimposed in symmetrical rhythms to match the mystical palindromic structure of the *Yhinx*.

But does the spell work? In the hope that there may have been some truth to these awkward syllables, only in the very last statement of the chorus does the inversion of the chant appear. Finally the chant has turned itself upside down – and hopefully the lover returns home!

~ *A. Betinis, January 2003*

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Theocritus (c.250 BC)

Abbie Betinis
rev. 4/04

Freely, out of time

Solo I: *mf* Hey - dey! Yhinx... Hey - - - - - dey! Yhinx...

Solo 2: *mf* Yhinx... Hey - - - - - dey! Yhinx...

Tenor I, II: *mf* Yhinx... Yhinx...

Bass I, II: *p* *mf* *p* *mf* Yey... Yhinx... Yey... Yhinx...

1. *f* Hey - - - - - dey! Yhinx... *f* =120, rhythmically

2. *f* Hey - - - - - dey! Yhinx...

T I, II: *f* Hey - - - - - dey! Yhinx... *f* ta - ku, ta - ku!

B I, II: *f* Yey... ta - ku, ta - ku!

4 *p* *8^{va}*

2. (solo:whistled)

T I, II *sub p* *f* *mf*

B I, II *sub p* *mp* *f* *mf*

A - ber - a - men - tho - ou - ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - them - a - re - ba are my bay leaves?

Where are my bay leaves?

8 *f* *mf* *f*

T I, II (~zah!) Come Thes - ty - lis; Where are my love charms? (~zah!) Come, crown me the bowl with the crim - son

B I, II *f* *mf* *f*

12 *p*

T I, II flow - er o' wool; tutti: Come, Thes - ty - lis!

B I, II *p* *with anticipation* *p*

solo: First bar - ley meal to the burn - ing,

16 *f* *sub p*

T I, II Throw it on! On, on with the meal! (LL)

B I, II *f* *sub p* *p*

opt. solo: So I burn the bay - As it crack - les and

20 *pp* (solo:whistled)

20 *fp* Lo!

20 *mp* then... Yhinx: A - ber - a - men - tho - ou - ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re -

24 *mf* *f* Now for the bran_____ (~nah!) O Ar - tem - is! Ar - tem - is!

24 *mf* *f* ba a - ber - a - men (~nah!)

27 *p* *mf* *f* Whelmed in the flames!_____ (~zah!)

27 *p* *mf* *f* Ar - tem - is, _____ Whelmed in the tho - ou - ler - thex (~zah!) Hark Thes - ty - lis

30 (Soloists may improvise over this vamp -- possibly using opening material: "Hey-dey!")

30 *pp* drum-like, sotto voce

quick, beat the pan! Bum - ba - da - da Bah - dah Bah - dah (sim)

33 *mp* *poco a poco cresc.*

T I, II
8 Hey - dey! Hey - dey! Hey - dey! Hey - dey! Hey - dey!

B I, II
poco a poco cresc.

37

T I, II
8 Hey - dey! Hey - dey! Hey - dey! Hey - dey! ta - ku!

B I, II

41 *f*

T I, II
8 Hey - dey! ta - ku! Hey - dey! Hey - - - dey! ta - ku!

B I, II
f
Bum - ba - da - da Bah - dah

44 *Fluidly, same tempo* *mp*

1. And as this pup - pet melts for me,

2. *f* Yhinx... *mp* So

T I, II
8 *f* Yhinx... *p* Oh... *8va-p* (solo:whistled)

B I, II
p Bum - ba - da - da Bah - dah Bah - dah (sim.)
Oh... Oh...

♩=60, half-tempo, straight-tone **pp**

1. 48
8 — my love so speed - i - ly, ———— **pp**

2. 48
8 melt my love ———— so speed - i - ly, ———— **pp**

T I, II 48
8 (oh...)

B I, II 48
8 Oh... *♩=60, half-tempo, straight-tone* **mp** And as this wheel of

T I, II 52
8 **mp** So turn and turn ———— a -

B I, II 52
8 **fp** turn and turn a - **mf**

brass Turns by grace of Aph - ro - di - te Yhinx: (kss) A - ber - a - men -

T I, II 55
8 gain, and turn a - gain, ———— a - gain... A -

B I, II 55
8 **f** **f**

tho - ou - ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re -

Ah...!

T I, II 58
8 *♩=120, rhythmically* **mp**

B I, II 58
8 **ff** *accel. to m.64* *decrsc.* **mp**

ber - a - men - tho - ou - ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re - ba ber -

b'a - ber - a - men - tho - ou - ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re - b'a - ber -

63 *p*

T I, II
8 a - men - tho - ou - ler - thex - a - na - - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re -

B I, II
8 a - men - tho - ou - ler - thex kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re - *pp*

Fluidly, same tempo

67 *mf*

1. *mf*
8 Lo there! Now Wave is still and wind still, still the pain burn - ing

2. *sub f* *mp* *mf*
8 Yhinx... Though ne - ver still burn - ing

T I, II
8 *sub f* *p* *8va* (whistled)
Yhinx! Ah...!

B I, II
8 *fp*
ba Oh... Oh... Oh...

73 *f* *ff* *accel.*

1. *f* *ff* *accel.*
8 in my breast, For I am all a - fire, a - fire a - las!

2. *f* *ff* *accel.*
8 in my breast, For I am all a - fire, a - fire a - las!

T I, II
8 *mf* *ff* *accel.* *p*
burn - ing burn - ing Oh... For I am all a - fire, a - fire a - las! So...

B I, II
8 *mf* *ff* *accel.* *p*
burn - ing burn - ing Oh... For I am all a - fire, a - fire a - las! So...

With much energy
mf *f*

T I, II
 78
 8
 Take thou these ash - es, (~zah!) Come Thes - ty - lis; while tis yet dark, and

B I, II
mf *f*
 ash - es, ash - es,

T I, II
 81
 8
 Smear them pri - vi - ly, (spitting) (pdu) pri - vi - ly, Smear them pri - vi - ly, (spitting) (pdu)

B I, II
f *sub p* *f*
f *sub p* *f*
 (pdu)

T I, II
 85
 8
 (pdu) and Spit for what thou do - est and (pdu) for what thou do - est and

B I, II
 (pdu)

T I, II
 88
 8
 Thrice this li - ba - tion (~nah!) I pour Thrice this prayer

B I, II
mf *f* *mf*
 a - ber - a - men (~nah!) Thrice this prayer

91 *f* *p*

T I, II
8
(~rah!) O Ar - tem-is, Ar - tem-is, Thrice I say to Thee...

B I, II
8
(~rah!) Ar - tem - is, Thrice I say to Thee...

95 *p poco a poco cresc. et accel.* *mf*

T I, II
8
A - ber - a - men - tho - ou - ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re - ba ber - a - men - tho - ou -

B I, II
8
p poco a poco cresc. et accel. *mf*

99 *poco a poco cresc.* *f cresc...*

T I, II
8
ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re - ba A - ber - a - men - tho - ou -

B I, II
8
poco a poco cresc. *f cresc...*

102 *ff* *pp*

T I, II
8
ler - thex - a - na - kzeth - rel - ou - oh - thnem - a - re - ba "Yhinx!"

B I, II
8
ff *pp*

YHINX: text

ἤδη ἤδη ταχύ ταχύ (Now, now, quickly quickly)

Ιυνξ: ἀβερὰ μὲν θωοὺ λερθεξ ἀναξέθρελυοωθνεμαρεβὰ

Where are my bay leaves? Come, Thestylis; Where are my love charms? Come, crown me the bowl with the crimson flower o' wool...

First Barley meal to the burning, Come, Thestylis! Throw it on! On, on with the meal! So I burn the bay, As it crackles and then – Lo!

Ιυνξ: ἀβερὰ μὲν θωοὺ λερθεξ ἀναξέθρελυοωθνεμαρεβὰ

Now for the bran... O Artemis! Artemis! Whelmed in the flames! Hark Thestylis! Quick – beat the pan!
ἤδη ἤδη ταχύ ταχύ

And as this puppet melts for me
So melt my Love so speedily –
And as this wheel of brass
Turns by grace of Aphrodite,
So (my Love shall) turn and turn again...

Lo there! Now wave is still and wind is still, though never still the pain burning in my breast. For I am all afire, afire alas! So take thou these ashes, come Thestylis, while tis yet dark, and smear them privily, and spit for what thou doest and... Thrice this libation I pour – Thrice this prayer... O Artemis, Artemis! Thrice I say to Thee:

Ιυνξ: ἀβερὰ μὲν θωοὺ λερθεξ ἀναξέθρελυοωθνεμαρεβὰ

Ιυνξ: ἀβερὰ μὲν θωοὺ λερθεξ ἀναξέθρελυοωθνεμαρεβὰ

Ιυνξ: ἀβερὰ μὲν θωοὺ λερθεξ ἀναξέθρελυοωθνεμαρεβὰ

Pronunciation Key for Ancient Greek:

ἤδη ἤδη ταχύ ταχύ

Hey-dey, hey-dey, tah-ku, tah-ku (Now, now, quickly quickly!)

Ιυνξ: ἀ-βερ-α-μὲν-θω-ου-λερ-θεξ-α-να-ξεθ-ρελ-υο-ω-θνεμ-α-ρε-βὰ

Yhinx: ah-behr-ah-men-thoh-oo-lehr-thex-ah-na-kseth-rehl-oo-oh-thnem-ah-reh-bah

Notes: “Yh” of Yhinx is an aspirated Y sound, with the front of the tongue close to the roof of the mouth. All vowels are pure (like Latin vowels), with the exception of the “i” in Yhinx which (because it is “υ”) may be more similar to the pointed French “eu.” R’s should be rolled or trilled. Because the chant is thought to be a nonsense word, there is no specific text stress.

Also by Abbie Betinis . . .

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Yhinx: An Ancient Greek Love Charm Text: Theocritus, ancient Greek stone	TTBB a cappella, t. t. b. solos	Abylon Press AB-018-01

ABBIE BETINIS (b. 1980) has written music in a variety of genres, but her greatest passion is for the human voice. Betinis, who also sings professionally, holds a BA in music with emphasis in theory/composition from St. Olaf College, where she studied primarily with Peter Hamlin and Mary Ellen Childs, and a MA in music composition from the University of Minnesota, where she studied under Judith Zaimont. Upon twice receiving the Cynthia Lilley Scholarship from the European American Musical Alliance, she spent two summers 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. Betinis has won the Craig and Janet Swan Composer Prize in Choral Music (2005) the *Mention Excellent* and *Mention Bien* (EAMA), numerous Minnesota Music Educators Association Awards in composition, and was a finalist for the Ithaca College Choral Composition Contest (2004), and the Young New Yorkers Chorus Composition Competition (2005). Her work has been commissioned by the American Suzuki Foundation, Cantus, the Dale Warland Singers, Ensemble of the North, Hopkins High School, The Rose Ensemble, The Schubert Club, and the University of Minnesota Men's Chorus, among others. Her work is published by Abylon Press, Augsburg Fortress, Graphite Publishing, Kjos, and Santa Barbara Music Publishing. She lives in Saint Paul, where she serves as Composer-in-Residence for The Schubert Club.

The Music of Abbie Betinis

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