

Robinson McClellan

WHEN HAFIZ SINGS

for SA+TB Choir, SA Soloists, and Drums

written for ActorCor's concert January 18, 2010

About this piece:

At a time when the U.S. and Iran are so much at odds, this song brings together the words of great writers from both nations, each central to his people's 'creation myth' and spiritual ethos: Hafiz, the 14th-century Iranian poet and mystic, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the 19th-century American transcendentalist writer. Emerson, who became deeply enamoured of Hafiz' poetry, called him the "Shakespeare" of Persia. Hafiz' playful spirit and independent vision became a part of Emerson's worldview, which in turn helped shaped the nascent American ethic through writings such as *Self-reliance*.

This piece takes an assortment of Emerson's translations of Hafiz (based on earlier German translations, and thus not necessarily close to the originals), and brings them together into a joyful choral celebration.

The tune of the refrain comes from a Sufi chant written out in H. Wilberforce-Clarke's 1891 translation of Hafiz' complete works (p. 330).

TEXTS*

When Hafiz sings, the angels hearken,
and Anaitis,** the leader of the starry host,
calls even the Messiah in heaven out to the dance.
— *Refrain*: La ilaha illa-l-lah. [There is no deity but God]

By breath of beds of roses drawn,
I found the grove in the morning pure,
In the concert of the nightingales
My drunken brain to cure.
— *Refrain*: La ilaha illa-l-lah.

If over this world of ours
His wings my phoenix spread,
How gracious falls on land and sea
The soul-refreshing shade!
Either world inhabits he,
Sees oft below him planets roll;
His body is all of air compact,
Of Allah's love his soul.
— *Refrain*: La ilaha illa-l-lah.

See how the roses burn!
Bring wine to quench the fire!
Alas! the flames come up with us,—
We perish with desire.
— *Refrain*: La ilaha illa-l-lah.

When Hafiz sings, the angels hearken,
and Anaitis, the leader of the starry host,
calls even the Messiah in heaven out to the dance.
— *Refrain*: La ilaha illa-l-lah.

VOICING

Soprano solo (free rhythm)

TB Choir, with SA (duple meter)

SSA Choir (3/4 meter)

TB Choir, with SA (duple meter)

Alto solo (free rhythm, gospel style)

TB Choir alone (duple meter)

SSA Choir (6/8 meter)

TB Choir, with SA (duple meter)

Soprano solo (free rhythm)

TB Choir, with SA (duple meter)

* From *The Complete Prose Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Fifth Edition (New York: Ward Lock & Co., 1891), pp. 630-633.

** **Anaitis**: A goddess whose worship was widespread over large portions of the Near East; identical with the Hindu Annapurna, one of the names of Kali—the female aspect of Siva— at her best. Identified with the Greek Artemis and Aphrodite. "Anna (the name of the Mother of the Virgin Mary); derived from the Chaldean Ana, heaven, or Astral Light, Anima Mundi. [from http://www.experiencefestival.com/a/Anaitis_Anait/id/98934]

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When Hafiz Sings

Texts: Hafiz, trans. Ralph Waldo Emerson

Music: Robinson McClellan
(with Sufi chant)

Very free (♩ = ca. 96)

SOPRANO SOLO

mf

Soprano Solo

When Ha - fiz sings, the an - gels hear-ken, and A - nai - tis, the

Alto Solo

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Drums

Drummer: feel free to improve/expand on what's written



Slow steady beat (♩ = 50)

p *Mischievous, with a knowing smile*

7

S. Solo

lead-er of the star-ry host. calls ev-en the Mes-si-ah in hea-ven out

Dr.

14

S. Solo
to the dance.

S(S)

A

T *mf* Refrain
La i - la - ha il - la - l - lah, la i -

B *mf*
Al - l - ah! Al - l - ah!

Dr. *mf*



18 CHOIR

S(S) *mf*
Al - - -

A

T
la - ha il - la - l - la - ha, la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah. La i - la - ha il - la - l -

B
Ah - l - lah! Ah - - - l - lah. Al - l - ah!

Dr.

23

S(S) lah! Al - - - lah! Al - - -

A *mf* Al - - - lah! Al - - -

T lah, la i - la - ha il - la - l - la - ha, la i - la - ha il - la - l -

B Al - l - ah! Ah - - l - lah! Ah - - - l -

Dr.



27 $\text{♩} = \text{♩.}$

S(S) lah! *mp* By breath of beds of ros - es

A *mp* lah! By breath of beds of ros - es

T lah.

B lah.

Dr. *p*

35

S(S) drawn, I found the grove in the morn - ing pure, In the

A drawn, I found the grove in the morn - ing pure, In the

Dr.

43

S(S) con-cert of the night - in - gales My drunk -

A con-cert of the night - in - gales My drunk -

Dr.

50

S(S) - - - en brain to cure.

A - - - en brain to cure.

T *mf* La i -

B

Dr. *mf*

55 *mf*

S(S) Al - - - lah! Al - - - lah!_

A *mf*
Al - - - lah!

T
la - ha il - la - l - lah, la i - la - ha il - la - l - la - ha, la i -

B *mf*
Al - l - ah! Al - l - ah! Ah - - l - lah! Ah -

Dr.



59 ALTO SOLO: *Gospel-style* **Very free rhythm**

A. Solo
If ov - er this world of ours His wings my phoe-nix

S(S)
Al - - - lah!

A
Al - - - lah!

T
la - ha il - la - l - lah.

B
- - l - lah.

Dr.

64
A. Solo
spread How grac-ious falls on land and sea The soul - re - fr-esh-ing shade! Ei-ther world in-

70
A. Solo
ha-bits he, Sees oft be-low him plan-ets r - oll; His bo - dy is all of air_ com-

75
A. Solo
pact, Of Al - - lah's love his soul.

T
La i -

B

Dr. *mf*

81
A. Solo

T
la - ha il - la - l - lah, la i - la - ha il - la - l - la - ha, la i -

B
Al - l - ah! Al - l - ah! Ah - - l - lah! Ah -

Dr.

Faster ♩ = 66

85

S(S) 

A 

T 


B 


Dr. 


mp

89

CHOIR


S(S) 

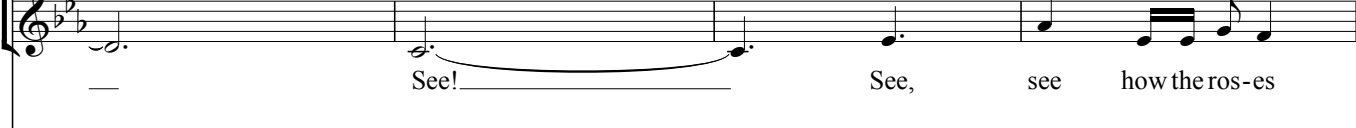
A 


Dr. 

p *mp*

94

S(S) 

A 

Dr. 

mf

98

mf *f*

S(S) burn, burn, burn, See how the ros-es burn, burn, burn, burn, Bring

A burn, burn, burn, burn, See how the ros-es burn, burn, burn, burn, Bring

Dr.

103

S(S) wine_____ to quench the fire!_____ A - las! A - las! the

A wine_____ to quench the fire! A - las! A - las! the

Dr.

107

Tempo I (slower $\text{♩} = 50$) *p*

S(S) flames_____ come up, up with us,— We per - ish with de -

A flames, flames_____ come up with us,— We per - ish with de -

Dr.

111 *mf* $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

S(S) sire, de - sire, with de - sire.

A *mf* sire, de - sire, with de - sire.

T *mf* La i -

B

Dr. *mf*



115 *mf*

S(S) Al - - - lah!

A *mf* Al - - - lah! Al - - - lah!

T *mf* la - ha il - la - l - lah, la i - la - ha il - la - l - la - ha, la i -

B Al - l - ah! Al - l - ah! Ah - - l - lah! Ah -

Dr.

SOPRANO SOLO **Very free** (♩ = ca. 96)

119 *mf*

S. Solo When Ha - - - fiz sings, the an - gels

S(S) Al - - - - lah!

A Al - - - - lah!

T la - ha il - la - l - lah.

B - - - l - lah.

Dr.

123

S. Solo hear - ken, and A - nai - - - tis, the lead - er of the star - ry

Dr.

Slow steady beat

126 (♩ = 50) *p* *Mischievous, with a knowing smile*

S. Solo host. calls ev - en the Mes - si - ah in hea - ven out to the

p

Dr.

133

S. Solo
dance.

A. Solo
la i - la - ha il - la - l -

S(S)
f
La i - la - ha il - la - l - lah, la i - la - ha il - la - l -

A
f
La i - la - ha il - la - l - lah! la i - la - ha il - la - l -

T
f
Al - l - ah! Al - l - ah! Ah - - l -

B
f
Al - l - ah! Al - l - ah! Ah - - l -

Dr.
mf

137

S. Solo
ff
la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah! la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah!

A. Solo
ff
la - ha, la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah! la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah!

S(S)
ff
la - ha, la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah! la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah! [optional notes]

A
ff
la - ha, la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah! la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah!

T
ff
lah! Ah - - - l - lah! la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah!

B
ff
lah! Ah - - - l - lah! la i - la - ha il - la - l - lah!

Dr.