

Chant for Great Compassion
SSAA div., soloists
AB-057-01

Abbie Betinis

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ABBIE BETINIS

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CHANT FOR GREAT COMPASSION

SSAA div. chorus, soloists

Text from the Dàbēi Zhòu
(Great Compassion Mantra)
Traditional Chinese (7th c.)



*Commissioned by the
Cornell University Chorus, Ithaca, New York
Scott Tucker, conductor*



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CHANT FOR GREAT COMPASSION

texts from
7th c. CHINESE MANTRA, QIU JIN, WANG ERBEI

music by
ABBIE BETINIS

Meditatively, with rubato (♩ = 48)

Solo Speaker: *I ride the clouds ten thousand leagues, ...I left... ...and now return,*

Sop *p*
(humming)

Alto *p*
(humming)

4 *My self... alone in the eastern sea,*

spring thunder...at my side,

S

A

7 *No wine can ever drown away... the sorrow for my nation...*

S *port.*

A

10 *To save this age... we must rely... on the un-common... emerging... from the crowd.*

S

A

With energetic precision (♩ = 112)

14 *mf*

S1

S2 *f* forceful, punctuated

A *mf*

na mo ho la da nu do la ye ye, na mo o li ye,

19

S1

S2

A *f* chanted, forceful

po lu sa di bo la ye,

we will ris(s)k — this blood that flows from one

24

S1 *f*

S2

A

and thus ex-ert the strength to turn

pu ti sa do po ye, mo ho sa do po ye,

hundred thousand skulls and thus ex-ert the strength to turn mo ho sa do

29

S1

S2

A

the cos - mos back in place!

mo ho jia lu ni jia ye, an, an, sa bo la fa yi, the cos - mos back in place!

po ye, mo ho jia lu ni jia ye, an, sa bo la fa yi, the cos - mos back in place!

Rough translation: "Adoration to the noble Avalokitesvara, bodhisattva, the Great Compassionate One!"

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33

S1
an, sa bo la fa yi, an, su da nu da sia, ña mo si ji li do

S2
an, sa bo la fa yi, an, su da nu da sia, ña mo si ji

A
an, sa bo la fa yi, an, su da nu da sia, ña mo

38

S1
yi mung o li ye, po lu ji di, sho fo la ling to po,

S2
li do yi mung o li ye, po lu ji di, sho fo la ling to po,

A
si ji li do yi mung o li ye, po lu ji di, sho fo la ling to po,

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S1
na mo nu la jin cho, si li mo ho po do sha me, wo si yun,

S2
na mo nu la jin cho, si li mo ho po do sha me, wo si yun,

A
na mo nu la jin cho, sa po wo to sa po wo to do shu pung,

47

S1
sa po sa do na mo po sa do na mo po che, mo fa to do, da dzo to, an(nn) *fp*

S2
sa po sa do na mo po sa do na mo po che, mo fa to do, da dzo to, an(nn) *fp*

A
sa po sa do na mo po sa do na mo po che, mo fa to do, da dzo to, an(nn) *fp*

"Om, I shall enunciate the 'heart' dharani which is pure and invincible for all beings, and which purifies the path of existence. Thus: Om..."

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Slower, more relaxed (♩ = 72)

53

Solo Speaker:
A precious mirror is shattered.

Please don't grieve,

S1

S2 *p legato*
an, o po lu si, lu jia di,

A *p legato*
an, o po lu si, lu jia di,

59

There will be as many honest eyes... as there are shattered pieces.

S1

S2 *rit.*
jia lo di, i si li,

A *rit.*
jia lo di, i si li,

64

Comforting (♩ = 84)

S1 *mp*
mo ho pu ti sa do, sa po sa po, mo la mo la, mo si mo si li to yun,

S2 *mp*
mo ho pu ti sa do, sa po sa po, mo la mo la, mo si mo si li to yun,

A *mp*
mo ho pu ti sa do, sa po sa po, mo la mo la, mo si mo si li to yun,

"Om... Effulgent One, World-Transcending One... Bodhisattva... Descend, descend; Bear in mind, bear in mind my heart-dharani..."

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69 *accel. poco a poco*

S1
ji— lu ju lu, jie mong, du— lu— du lu, fa she ye di, mo— ho— fa she

S2
accel. poco a poco
du lu, fa she ye di, mo ho fa she

A
accel. poco a poco
ji lu ju lu, jie mong, du lu du lu, fa— she— ye di,— mo ho fa she

73 *(accel. poco a poco)* ***f***

S1
ye di,— to la to la, zhe la,

S2
(accel. poco a poco) ***f***
ye di, to la, zhe la zhe la,

A
(accel. poco a poco) ***f***
ye di, di li ni, shi fo la ye, mo mo, fa— mo la,

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78 *More driving* ($\text{♩} = 112$) ***mf***

S
mu di li, yi si yi si, shi nu shi nu, o la son, fo la so li,

A
mf
mu di li, yi si yi si, shi nu shi nu, o la son, fa sha

83 *sub p*

S
sub p
fo la she ye, hu lu hu lu mo la, hu lu hu lu si li, si li si li, su lu su lu, so la so la,

A
sub p
fa son, fa sha fa hu lu hu lu mo la, hu lu hu lu si li, si li si li, su lu su lu, so la so la,

"Do, do the work; Hold on, hold on... Move, move; Come, come; Quick, quick; Descend, descend, descend, descend.."

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88 *mf*

S1
pu ti ye, pu ti ye, pu ti ye, i si li, pu to ye, pu to ye, pu to ye, pu to ye, mi di li ye,

S2
pu ti ye, pu ti ye, pu ti ye, i si li, pu to ye, pu to ye, pu to ye, pu to ye, mi di li ye,

A1
pu ti ye, pu ti ye, pu ti ye, i si li, pu to ye, pu to ye, ye,

A2
mf
Ah Ah pu to ye, ye, ye, mi di li ye,

92 *f*

S1
nu la jin cho, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

S2
nu la jin cho, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, li so ni nu,

A1
nu la jin cho, nu la jincho, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, so ni nu,

A2
nu la jin cho, nu la jincho, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, so ni nu,

"Being enlightened, being enlightened; Enlighten me, enlighten me; O merciful, blue-necked one... appear to me..."

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96 *pp*

S1 di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

S2 *pp*
di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

A1 *pp*
di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

A2 *pp*
di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

101 *cresc.*

S1 di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

S2 *cresc.*
di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

A1 *cresc.*
di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

A2 *cresc.*
di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu, di li so ni nu,

106 *f* *sub p* *ff*

S1 po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, so po ho,—

S2 *f* *sub p* *ff*
po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, so po ho,—

A1 *f* *sub p* *ff*
po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu,

A2 *f* *sub p* *ff*
po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu, po ye mo nu,

"Appear to me, appear to me, appear to me, appear to me... To you who eyes us, to you who eyes us; Hail!"

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109

S
so po ho,

A *ff*
si to ye, mo ho si to ye,

112

S
so po ho, so po ho,

A
si to yu yi, bo la ye,

poco rit.
molto

116 *a tempo* *ppp* *sotto voce, half-whispered, from a distance, even eerie*

S
di li so ni nu, po ye mo nu, so po ho, si to ye, so po ho, mo ho si to ye,

A *a tempo* *ppp* *sotto voce, half-whispered, from a distance, even eerie*
di li so ni nu, po ye mo nu, so po ho, si to ye, so po ho, mo ho si to ye,

122 *second time only*

Soloist 1: *p* so po ho, (repeat, ad lib.)

Soloist 2: *p* so po ho, (repeat, ad lib.)

S
so po ho, si to yu yi, shi bo la ye, so po ho, no la jin cho, so po ho,

A
so po ho, si to yu yi, shi bo la ye, so po ho, no la jin cho, so po ho,

"To the Great Siddha, Hail! To the Great Siddha in Yoga, Hail! (...appear to me, to you who eyes us, hail...)"

(repeat solos, ad lib.)

128

Solos

(soloist 1) so — po ho,

(soloist 2) so — po ho,

Soloist 3: *p* so po ho,

S

mo la nu la, so po ho, si la son o mo chi ye, so po ho, so po mo ho o si to ye,

A

mo la nu la, so po ho, si la son o mo chi ye, so po ho, so po mo ho o si to ye,

134

Solos

(opt'l: add soloists, perhaps spatially)

S

so po ho, zhe ji la o si to ye, so po ho, bo fo mo jie si to ye, so po ho, nu la jin cho

A

so po ho, zhe ji la o si to ye, so po ho, bo fo mo jie si to ye, so po ho, nu la jin cho

142

Solos

solos more sparse, softer, dying away

solos out

S

bo che la ye, so po ho, mo po li song ji la ye, so po ho,

A

bo che la ye, so po ho, mo po li song ji la ye, so po ho,

151

Solos

p non-vib.
Oo...

S

so po ho, *pp* whispering, at first so po ho, so po ho, so po ho, so po ho,

A

so po ho, *pp* whispering, at first so po ho, so po ho, so po ho, so po ho,

156 *mp*

Solos

ff in the nose

ff shouting!

S

na mo ho la da nu do la ye ye, na mo o li ye, and thus ex-ert the strength to

ff in the nose

A

na mo ho la da nu do la ye ye, na mo o li ye,

161 *mf* beautiful, legato

Solos

Na - - - mo Guan Shih - - - Yin pu - - - sa! - - -

turn!

S

sho bo la ye, pu ti sa do po ye, shouting! the

shouting!

A

po lu je di sho bo la ye, pu ti sa do po ye, the

166

Solos

ff

an si den do, man do la, ba to ye, so po ho.

fff

S

cos-mos back in place! an si den do, man do la, ba to ye, so po ho.

fff

A

cos-mos back in place! an si den do, man do la, ba to ye, so po ho.

"Adoration to the Triple Gem. Adoration to the noble Avalokitesvara bodhisattva! May this mandala be successful, Hail!"

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From the composer:

This piece is for anyone in any need or trouble. It is about calling out for strength and courage as individuals, and also on behalf of a generation.

The opening melody is inspired by the traditional chant to the goddess **Guan Yin** (觀音), whose name means “she who hears the cries of the world.” In Chinese mythology, Guan Yin is the goddess of mercy and compassion, an all-seeing, all-hearing being who is called upon in times of uncertainty, despair, and fear. Revered in China, Japan, and Taiwan, and her spiritual ancestor, Avalokiteśvara, in Malaysia, Tibet, and Thailand, one Buddhist legend describes her head splitting into eleven pieces as she attempts to comprehend the needs of so many. She is then given eleven heads to hear the world’s myriad cries (my inspiration for the 11-part chords on page 8). As she attempts to reach out to everyone who is suffering, her arms shatter into pieces. She is then given one thousand arms with which to provide aid and relief to those in need.

This piece was written in response to the earthquake which took the lives of nearly 70,000 people in Sichuan Province in May 2008. But it is said that every recitation of the Great Compassion Mantra generates karma. I encourage singers to envision their own karma recipient(s) as they recite these enduring and beautiful syllables.

The piece incorporates three texts:

**LINES WRITTEN WHILE TRAVELING BY BOAT
IN THE YELLOW SEA**

By Qiu Jin (1905)

I ride the clouds ten thousand leagues,
I left and now return;
My self alone in the eastern sea,
spring thunder at my side.
I cannot bear to see his map,
and so my face grows pale;
How can I let these rivers and hills
return to kalpa ash?
Cheap wine can never melt away,
the sorrow for my nation;
To save this age, we must rely
on those emerging from the crowd.
We will risk this blood that flows
from one hundred thousand skulls –
And thus exert the strength to turn
the cosmos back in place.

- trans. Paul Rouzer

Qiu Jin was a Chinese revolutionary, feminist, and writer. An eloquent orator, Qiu Jin spoke out for women’s rights: the freedom to marry, freedom of education, and abolishment of bound feet. She was tortured and publicly executed in 1907, at the age of 31.

THE GREAT COMPASSION MANTRA (Dàbēi Zhòu)

Traditional (7th c.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. na mo ho la da nu do la ye ye | 6. mo ho jia lu ni jia ye |
| 2. na mo o li ye | 7. an |
| 3. po lu je di sho bo la ye | 8. sa bo la fa yi |
| 4. pu ti sa do po ye | 9. su da nu da sia |
| 5. mo ho sa do po ye | 10. na mo si ji li do yi mung o li ye |
- (continues for 84 lines)

The **Great Compassion Mantra** is an 84-line chant first translated from Sanskrit to Chinese in the seventh century. It is used for protection, purification, and healing. Because the Chinese version has been translated so many times and is spread widely through oral tradition, today the individual words have shed their original meanings. It now exists in many variations in East Asia and around the world, and is said to generate karma – even to the dead – upon its recitation.

MIRROR

By Wang Erbei (b.1926)

A precious mirror is shattered
Please don’t grieve, there’ll be as many honest eyes
As there are shattered pieces.

- trans. Julia C. Lin (excerpted)

Wang Erbei was born in 1927 in Yanting County, Sichuan province, where she was journalist and editor for the Sichuan newspaper until her retirement. Yanting County was one of the counties seriously affected in the May 2008 earthquake.

On the cover: The Guishan Guanyin statue in Jinxin China Folk Village park in Shenzhen, China



Composer Abbie Betinis creates “inventive” (*The New York Times*), “joyful... incandescent” (*Boston Globe*) music that “expands into ethereal realms” (*Cambridge University Press*). Her vast catalog, grown from her love for the human voice, includes commissions for the American Choral Directors Association, Cantus, Conspirare, Dale Warland Singers, James Sewell Ballet, Minnesota Music Educators Association, MUSE Cincinnati Women’s Choir, St Olaf Choir, and Young New Yorkers’ Chorus. A two-time McKnight Artist Fellow, Abbie is a graduate of St. Olaf College, the University of Minnesota, and the EAMA Nadia Boulanger Institute in Paris, France. She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she has been composer-in-residence for The Schubert Club and adjunct professor of composition at Concordia University.

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