ABBIE BETINIS

MARY AND GABRIEL

For SATB chorus, s. a. t. b. soloists, and percussion

Commissioned in loving memory of Mary Joyce Frantz by Choral Arts Ensemble (Rochester, MN)

Michael Culloton, conductor

Program Note:

Rupert Brooke (1887-1915), who, incidentally, never wore socks, was the most famous of the Georgian poets. He delighted in life, and equally celebrated both the mundane and the extraordinary. He and his many friends in literary circles were known for their progressive thinking, their struggles for women's rights, and political idealism. They knew Brooke as a brilliant companion who "infused the purely academic with the very spirit of youth." Athletic and handsome, Brooke was almost as well-known for his dashing good looks as for his poetry. (In fact, the composer must confess she was quite distracted by his picture while working on this piece.) Much of his work was inspired by his deep love for England, and his early death in World War I was, according to many poets of the time, "one of England's great literary losses."

In the spirit of Brooke's reputation for "free-thinking" (!) have taken some liberties with his text. His original poem in its entirety appears below, written at age 25.

- Abbie Betinis

Mary and Gabriel

Young Mary, loitering once her garden way,
Felt a warm splendour grow in the April day,
As wine that blushes water through. And soon,
Out of the gold air of the afternoon,
One knelt before her: hair he had, or fire,
Bound back above his ears with golden wire,
Baring the eager marble of his face.
Not man's nor woman's was the immortal grace
Rounding the limbs beneath that robe of white,
And lighting the proud eyes with changeless light,
Incurious. Calm as his wings, and fair,
That presence filled the garden.

She stood there, Saying, "What would you, Sir?"

He told his word,

"Blessed art thou of women!" Half she heard, Hands folded and face bowed, half long had known, The message of that clear and holy tone, That fluttered hot sweet sobs about her heart; Such serene tidings moved such human smart. Her breath came quick as little flakes of snow. Her hands crept up her breast. She did but know It was not hers. She felt a trembling stir Within her body, a will too strong for her That held and filled and mastered all. With eyes Closed, and a thousand soft short broken sighs, She gave submission; fearful, meek, and glad.... She wished to speak. Under her breasts she had Such multitudinous burnings, to and fro, And throbs not understood; she did not know If they were hurt or joy for her; but only That she was grown strange to herself, half lonely,

All wonderful, filled full of pains to come And thoughts she dare not think, swift thoughts and dumb,

Human, and quaint, her own, yet very far, Divine, dear, terrible, familiar... Her heart was faint for telling; to relate Her limbs' sweet treachery, her strange high estate, Over and over, whispering, half revealing, Weeping; and so find kindness to her healing. 'Twixt tears and laughter, panic hurrying her, She raised her eyes to that fair messenger. He knelt unmoved, immortal; with his eyes Gazing beyond her, calm to the calm skies; Radiant, untroubled in his wisdom, kind. His sheaf of lilies stirred not in the wind. How should she, pitiful with mortality, Try the wide peace of that felicity With ripples of her perplexed shaken heart, And hints of human ecstasy, human smart, And whispers of the lonely weight she bore, And how her womb within was hers no more And at length hers?

Being tired, she bowed her head; And said, "So be it!"

The great wings were spread Showering glory on the fields, and fire. The whole air, singing, bore him up, and higher, Unswerving, unreluctant. Soon he shone A gold speck in the gold skies; then was gone. The air was colder, and grey. She stood alone.

Mary and Gabriel

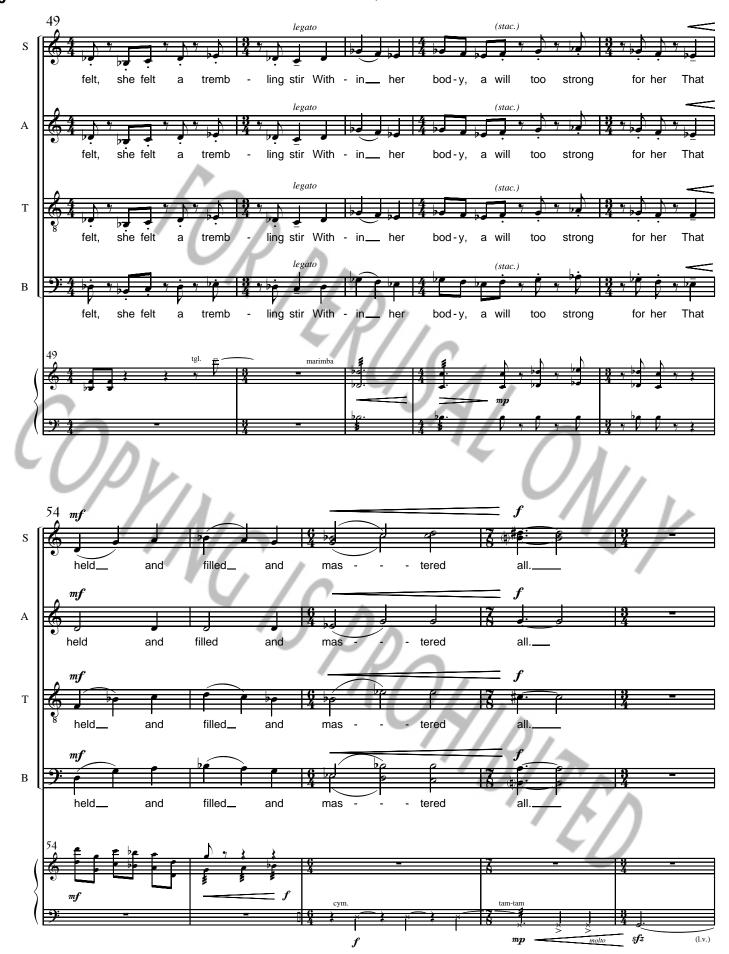
Rupert Brooke, 1912 Abbie Betinis Gently, $\int = 54$ freely, mp Solo Sop. Young Mar - y, - ring once her gard - en way, Felt a warm splen - dour_ Perc. mf Solo Sop. in the A-pril day, It grew, it grew, that blush - es wat-er through. Solo Sop. And soon, S Out of the gold of the One aft - er-noon, knelt be-fore her:___ p mf Out of the gold of the aft - er-noon, One knelt be-fore her:_ T Out of the gold air of the aft - er-noon, knelt be-fore her:___ **mf** 3 Out of the aft - er-noon, One knelt be-fore her:___ gold air of the (l.v.) mp















The Music of Abbie Betinis

web: www.abbiebetinis.com + phone: 612-590-3998 + email: abbie@abbiebetinis.com

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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.