

Rhapsodos (B $\flat$  Clarinet, Piano)  
AB-097-00

Abbie Betinis

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# ABBIE BETINIS

**PERUSAL ONLY**  
(PERFORMANCE PROHIBITED)



# RHAPSODOS

(Ραψωδός)

for B $\flat$  Clarinet & Piano

*Premiered by  
Michael Collins, clarinet  
and Michael McHale, piano*

*Commissioned by the  
Minnesota Commissioning Club and  
the Seattle Commissioning Club*

ABBIE BETINIS  
MUSIC COMPANY

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## Program note:

This piece began by wondering about the origin of the word “rhapsody” and falling down a fantastic rabbit hole of language, history, performance practice and traditions, until I found myself sitting at my piano, surrounded by ancient Greek epic poetry and feeling Odysseus’ boat set sail.

The word *rhapsody* – which, in composition, means an emotional journey through an unfolding, episodic musical form – originally comes from the Greek word “*rhapsodein*” which means “to sew songs together.” The rhapsodist (or, in Greek, *rhapsodos*) was like a singing storyteller, standing with a long staff in front of an eager crowd, and performing memorized snippets of stories from the great epic poets, one after the next, telling long, varied tales of adventure. Some rhapsodists became quite famous, traveling many miles to sing night after night.

The rhapsodists took their rhythm from epic poetry’s dactylic hexameter (strong weak weak, strong weak weak), and, for their melodies, exaggerated the natural accents in the Greek language into a kind of speech-driven music. Their performance practice was surprisingly strict, as they attempted to recreate the legends of bards like Homer, who lived several centuries earlier.

I was curious to explore the musicality in the language, and dove into fragments from Homer’s epic poem, *The Odyssey*. Using research and translations from scholar Rodney Merrill, I gave the poem’s narration to the clarinet, letting the original language suggest both the rhythmic accents and melodic contour (in fact, if you know the poem in Greek you could theoretically sing along). The piano paints the context and emotion of each adventure: the shifting sea, Penelope’s loom, memories of home.

When my own great-grandparents left Greece to come to America, they proudly taught their language to their children, but it died with that next generation. Through studying this poem, unraveling its melodies, twisting and threading it onto the score page, I’ve begun feeling closer to them somehow. The result is certainly unlike anything their ancestors would have heard in the Greek amphitheaters of Epidaurus or Delphi, but it’s fulfilling to me to play a small part in passing the song along, one generation to the next.

Like all epic poems, our performance opens with an invocation to the muse, then the stories begin. You might hear Odysseus dodging arrows, calling back to his dying comrades, the thick glissandi of the lotus eaters, or the shriek of the Cyclops while Odysseus escapes. Whatever the music suggests to you, I hope it takes you on an adventure, and that it might somehow connect you to those who – thousands of years ago – also gathered to hear musical storytellers ‘sew songs together.’

I am grateful to Michael Collins and Michael McHale for premiering – and indeed inspiring – this piece.

- Abbie Betinis, 2016

Commissioned by the Minnesota Commissioning Club and the Seattle Commissioning Club  
for Michael Collins and Michael McHale

C SCORE

# Rhapsodos

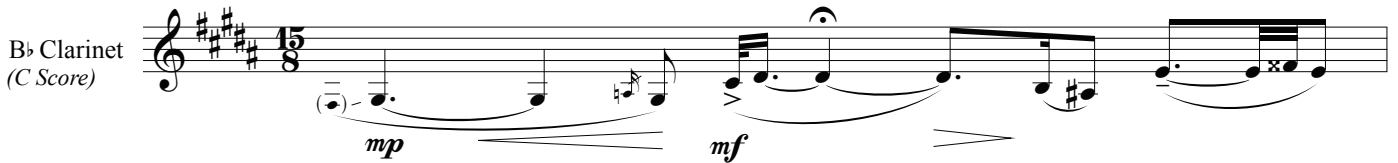
for B $\flat$  clarinet and piano

INSPIRED BY HOMER'S  
THE ODYSSEY  
(ca. 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE)

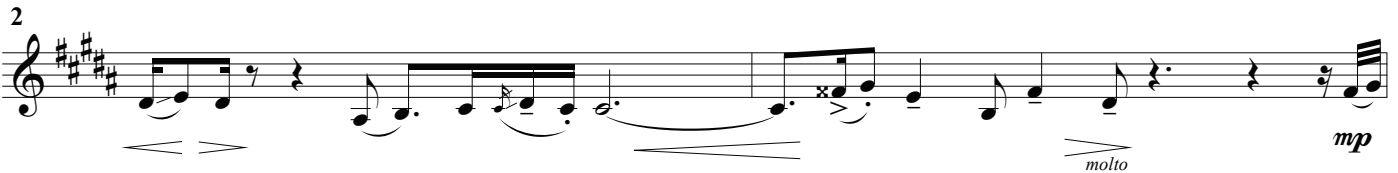
ABBIE BETINIS  
(b. 1980)

Freely, as an invocation (♩ = 40)

B $\flat$  Clarinet  
(C Score)



2



4



**A** Misterioso

6



**A** Misterioso

6



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8

*mf* *f*

*mp* *p*

*delicately at first*

(Ped ad lib. throughout)



10

*poco rit.* **B Più Mosso (♩ = 52)**

10

*poco rit.* **B Più Mosso (♩ = 52)**

*mf* *f* *sub mp* *p undulating*

*Ped.*

12

*mp espress.*

12

*p*

Meno Mosso

Musical score for measures 14-15. The top staff (treble clef) begins at measure 14 with a *mf* dynamic and a crescendo hairpin. It features a melodic line with slurs and accents, including a *lovingly* marking and a *poco rit.* instruction. The bottom staff (bass clef) starts at measure 14 with a *cresc.* marking and continues with accompaniment. Measure 15 includes a *f* dynamic and a *sub mp* marking. The tempo is *Meno Mosso*.

Moderato (♩ = 48)

Musical score for measures 16-17. The top staff (treble clef) starts at measure 16 with an *a tempo* marking and a *mf* dynamic, marked *longingly*. It includes a key signature change to three sharps and a time signature change to 6/8. The bottom staff (bass clef) starts at measure 16 with an *a tempo* marking and a *p* dynamic. It features triplets and a *ten.* marking. The tempo is *Moderato* (♩ = 48).

Musical score for measures 18-19. The top staff (treble clef) starts at measure 18 with a *poco rit.* marking and a tempo change to ♩ = ♩. The bottom staff (bass clef) starts at measure 18 with a *dolce* marking and a *cantabile* instruction. It includes a *diminuendo* hairpin and a *poco rit.* instruction. The tempo is *poco rit.* (♩ = ♩).

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22 Ominously (♩ = 66)

*mp cresc. poco a poco*

22 Ominously (♩ = 66)

*mp cresc. poco a poco*



25 *stringendo* (♩ = 72) *f* *ff* Doppio Movimento (♩ = 72) *p cresc.*

25 *stringendo* (♩ = 72) *f* *ff* *pp* Doppio Movimento (♩ = 72) *p*

28 *mf* *mp cresc.*

28 *sub mf* *sub p* *cresc. poco a poco*

32 C Moderato (♩=72)

*f* *lunga*

32 C Moderato (♩=72)

*sf* *sf* *ff* *lunga* *pp* (distant mandolins)

*And.* 6

37 *mf dolce* *p*

37 *cantabile* *p* *mf warmly* *p*

†Sost. Ped. \_\_\_\_\_

42 *poco rit.* **Freely (an invocation)** *ad lib.* *espress.*

42 *poco rit.* *bell-like* *pp* *misterioso* *p*

(sost.) \_\_\_\_\_

*And.* \_\_\_\_\_

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**D** Magic Sailing Winds (♩ = 48)

46

*pp* *mp* *sim.*

**D** Magic Sailing Winds (♩ = 48)

46

*pp* *cresc.*

49

*mf* *p* *rit.* **Lazily** (♩ = ca. 72, humorous rubato encouraged) (lotus-eaters) *slow, syrupy bends*

49

*mf* *p* *cresc.* *mf* *mf* *sim.*

53

60

**Più Mosso** (♩ = 80) *p*

60

*pp* *p breezy*

*led. washy*



65 *sotto voce*

65 *mp*

70 **E** Pesante (♩ = ca.60)

*mf* *f* *pp* *sub p*

74 *mp*

*mf*

78 *cresc. poco a poco*

*mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

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81 *accel.*

83 *♩ = 72* *Cyclops' painful wail* *ff* *accel.* *(get gritty/ugly)*

**Doppio Movimento** (♩ = 72)

83 *♩ = 72* *ff* *mp* **Doppio Movimento** (♩ = 72)

86 *p*

86 *mf* *p*

90 **Moderato** (♩ = 48) **Slower**

*lovingly* *mp*

90 **Moderato** (♩ = 48) **Slower**

*pp* *mp* *pp*

*Red. washy*

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93 **F** Penelope at Her Loom\* (♩ = 60)

93 **F** Penelope at Her Loom\* (♩ = 60)

99 *mp*

99 *mp*

103

103

108 **G**

108 **G**

\* Piano: intended to give the illusion of endlessly falling

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112 *cresc.*

112 *f*

114 *molto rit., allarg.* **Broadly** (♩=96) *f*

114 *molto rit., allarg.* **Broadly** (♩=96) *mf* *f*

117

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141 H Moderato (♩ = 72)

*p* *molto* *pp*

141 H Moderato (♩ = 72)

*f* *ff* *mf* *n* *p*

Red. Red.

146 *cantabile*

*warmly f*

3 5

150 *dolce*

*mp* *p*

153 *poco rit.*

*mf dolce* *sub p*

153 *poco rit.*

*(p)* *mf* *sub p* *bell-like* *ppp*

↑Sost. Ped. Red.

158 Freely (an invocation)

Musical notation for the first system, measures 158-161. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes a fermata over the first measure, followed by a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The dynamic marking *mf* is present. The instruction *ad lib.* is written below the first measure.

158 Freely (an invocation)

Musical notation for the second system, measures 158-161. It consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes a fermata over the first measure in both staves, followed by rests and then a melodic line in the bass staff with a slur and a fermata. The dynamic marking *p* is present. The instruction *(Ad.)* is written below the first measure.



162

Musical notation for the third system, measures 162-165. The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. The dynamic marking *p* is present. The instruction *opt'l 8vb* is written above the second measure. The dynamic marking *ppp* is present at the end of the system.

162

Musical notation for the fourth system, measures 162-165. It consists of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes a chordal texture in the treble staff with a slur and a fermata, followed by rests and then a melodic line in the bass staff with a slur and a fermata. The dynamic marking *pp* is present. The instruction *8va* is written above the final measure. The instruction *(Ad.)* is written below the first measure.

## Also by Abbie Betinis . . .

### Chamber Music:

<b>Four Carols of Alfred Burt (medley)</b> (Abbie is the grand-niece of famed Christmas carol composer Alfred Burt)	<b>flute, harp</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-039-00
<b>Clan of the Lichens</b> I. All Things Live II. Night and the Little Failures III. The Prayer Wind IV. The Comet: a tale for children (and taller ones) V. The Clan of the Lichens	<b>flute, piano</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-032-01
<b>Rhapsodos</b>	<b>clarinet, piano</b>	<b>manuscript</b>

### Vocal Chamber Music:

<b>Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight</b> Text: Vachel Lindsay	<b>tenor, snare drum, piano</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-061-10
<b>Moonlight</b> Text: Suzanne Asher	<b>high voice, cello</b>	<b>manuscript</b>
<b>My Heart is Longing to Praise My Savior</b> Text: Princess Eugenie of Sweden	<b>high voice, cello, piano</b>	<b>Graphite Publishing</b> GP - B006
<b>Nattsanger (Nightsongs): song cycle</b> Text: Rolf Jacobsen (sung in Norwegian)	<b>high voice, clarinet, piano</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-055-02
<b>Prologue</b> Text: Yevgeny Yevtushenko	<b>medium voice, bassoon</b>	<b>manuscript</b>

### Choral Music:

<b>Aililiú, ó Íosa (Alleluia, O Jesu)</b> Text: traditional Gaelic and Latin	<b>SSA, TTBB, s.a. solos, Gaelic harp, viola, bodhrán</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-036-00
<b>Cedit, Hyems (Be gone, winter!)</b> Text: Prudentius (in Latin)	<b>SATB div. (or SSAA div.), flute</b>	<b>G. Schirmer</b> Cat. No. 50486492
<b>From Behind the Caravan</b> Text: Hâfez (in Persian)	<b>SSAA div., s.a. solos, viola or cello, Persian hand drums, opt'l Oud</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-049-02
<b>Remember, O Thou Man (arr.)</b> Text: Thomas Ravenscroft	<b>SATB div., cello, harp</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-045-00
<b>To the Evening Star</b> Text: William Blake	<b>SATB div., flute</b>	<b>Abbie Betinis Music Co.</b> AB-040-01



Reviewed as “inventive, richly melodic” (*The New York Times*), “the highlight... pushes forward a brooding, dissonant unease” (*Boston Globe*), and “extraordinary music by a greatly gifted young composer” (*Chicago Classical Review*), the music of Abbie Betinis is being performed increasingly in the United States and abroad. Born in 1980, and a graduate of the Suzuki piano program in her hometown of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, Abbie’s catalog includes commissions from more than 60 music organizations including the American Suzuki Foundation, Cantus, Dale Warland Singers, Flying Forms Baroque, James Sewell Ballet, New England Philharmonic, Young New Yorkers’ Chorus, and Zeitgeist.

A two-time McKnight Artist Fellow, her music has won awards from the American Composers Forum, ASCAP, Minnesota Music Educators Association and New York’s Sorel Organization, among others, and she has been Composer-in-Residence for The Rose Ensemble, The Singers-Minnesota Choral Artists, and the New York State School Music Association. Abbie holds degrees in music composition from St. Olaf College and the University of Minnesota, and a diplôme from the European American Musical Alliance in Paris, France where she studied harmony and counterpoint in the tradition of Nadia Boulanger. A three-time cancer survivor, Abbie lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where she is adjunct professor of composition at Concordia University and Composer-in-Residence for The Schubert Club.