

Music of a Distant Drum Songs from Medieval Arabic, Persian and Hebrew (2006)
For Baritone and Chamber ensemble

The texts found in this work came from one book, namely *Music of a Distant Drum; Classical Arabic, Persian, Turkish, & Hebrew Poems* translated by Bernard Lewis. The collection of poems is by turn surprising, sensuous, disarmingly witty and frank. In choosing the texts to set musically I wished to suggest a world filled with longing and desire, of struggle with everyday existence from birth to adulthood. The texts speak for themselves, showing us that neither time, creed nor culture truly divide us on a fundamental human level.

Musically, the score reflects the exotic nature of the text, cor anglais and bass clarinet being prominent in the ensemble. The Baritone line uses varying means of declamation, be it impassioned, reflective, or humorous to project the emotions of the texts. The songs are all self-contained but the initial call to Allah is used as a framing device being sung at the start and played at the end by off-stage clarinet.

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