



Behzad
ABDI

Hafez

Opera in two acts

Libretto by
Behrouz Gharibpour

Motamedi • Alishapour
Sabouri • Anvar • Zakerhossein
Zandevakili • Seyfizadeh

Credo Chamber Choir

Bogdan Plish

National Symphony
Orchestra of Ukraine

Vladimir Sirenko



Behzad
ABDI
(b. 1973)

Hafez (2013)

Opera in two acts

Libretto by Behrouz Gharibpour (b. 1950)

Sung in Persian

First performance: 30 February 2014, Ferdowsi Hall, Tehran, Iran

Directed by Behrouz Gharibpour

Hafez Mohammad Motamedi, Tenor
Obeid Zakani. Hossein Alishapour, Tenor
Sultan Mobarezedin Babak Sabouri, Baritone
Poet / Khayyam Eshaq Anvar, Tenor
Mohammad Gol-andam Mohammad Zakerhossein, Tenor
Farmer Ali Zandevakili, Tenor
Shakh-e Nabat Haleh Seyfizadeh, Mezzo-soprano
Shah Shoja. Mehdi Emami, Baritone
Sultan Abu Eshaq. Ali Momenian, Baritone
Mother of Sultan Abu Eshaq. Sahar Mohammadi, Mezzo-soprano
Sheriff / Minister. Alireza Saiedi, Bass
Sa'di Vesal Alavi, Tenor
Mowlavi. Alireza Mahdizadeh, Tenor
Khajoo Kermani. Rasoul Rahoo, Baritone
Butler Alireza Alavian, Tenor
Prisoner 1. Hadi Feizabadi, Tenor
Prisoner 2. Mehdi Hodaei, Tenor
People [1]. Mojgan Chahian, Soprano
People [2]. Razieh Abdi, Soprano
People [3]. Mohammad Sadeq Eshaqi, Tenor
People [4]. Kayvan Farzin, Tenor
Soldier 1 Sadjad Pourghanad, Tenor
Soldier 2. Tayeb Faghih, Baritone

Pasha Hanjani, Nay ¹⁶ • Danial Ajdari, Kamanche ⁵ ¹⁵
Behnaz Behnamnia, Oud ⁵ ¹⁶ • Pouya Saraei, Santur ⁵ ¹⁶
Zakaria Yusefi, Daf ⁵ ⁹ ¹⁶

Credo Chamber Choir • Bogdan Plish

National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine • Vladimir Sirenko

Act I

Scene 1

¹ Sultan Mobarezedin's Attack (*Hafez*) 3:05

Scene 2

² Disaster and Killing Sultan Abu Eshaq
(*Sultan Abu Eshaq, Mother of Sultan Abu Eshaq,*
Sultan Mobarezedin, People [1]) 3:59

³ Elegy (*Mother of Sultan Abu Eshaq,*
Hafez, People [1] [2]) 6:44

Scene 3

⁴ Pub and Obeid Zakani
(*Obeid Zakani, Sheriff, Butler*) 6:15

Scene 4

⁵ Saqinameh (*Hafez, Chorus*) 4:42

Scene 5

⁶ Prison of Sultan Mobarezedin
(*Prisoners, Poet, Sultan Mobarezedin,*
Shah Shoja, Obeid Zakani) 10:40

Scene 6

⁷ Hafez's Aria I (*Hafez*) 3:46

⁸ Obeid and Sultan Mobarezedin
(*Obeid Zakani, Sultan Mobarezedin, Poet*) 5:10

Scene 7

⁹ Hafez's Aria II and Arrest Hafez (*Hafez,*
Poet, Soldier 1, Mohammad Gol-andam) 8:50

Act II

Scene 1

¹⁰ Revolt
(*Hafez, People [1] [3] [4], Farmer, Shah Shoja,*
Poet, Minister, Sultan Mobarezedin) 13:37

Scene 2

¹¹ Victory (*Soldier 2, Sultan Mobarezedin,*
Poet, Shah Shoja) 5:36

Scene 3

¹² Departure of Hafez
(*Mohammad Gol-andam, Hafez, Sa'di,*
Khajoo Kermani, Mowlavi, Khayam, Chorus) 8:46

Scene 4

¹³ Dialogue
(*Mohammad Gol-andam, Sultan Mobarezedin,*
Poet, Hafez, Shakh-e Nabat) 12:58

Scene 4

¹⁴ Shakh-e Nabat
(*Mohammad Gol-andam, Shakh-e Nabat,*
Hafez, People [1] [2]) 4:01

Scene 5

¹⁵ Death
(*Shakh-e Nabat, Hafez, People [1] [2]*) 5:05

Scene 6

¹⁶ Finale (*Hafez, Chorus*) 2:10

Behzad Abdi (b. 1973)

Hafez

Composing a traditional Iranian opera using the Iranian modal system, *dastgāh*, has always been my dream. I first approached this by composing an opera called *Ashura* followed by the operas *Rumi* and *Hafez*. I believe that in order to attract an international audience for Iranian opera, it is essential to fuse *dastgāh* with Western classical forms.

Hafez, as one of the greatest composers of lyric poetry, is revered the world over. Many people deify his poetry to such an extent that they seek the divine in it, and ask him for help in their affairs and work. In Iran, however, there are few people who understand Goethe as he deserves to be known. Many people imagine that he is only a poet, and may ask themselves why he is so venerated. A growing recognition of Goethe and his personality highlights the importance of Hafez's influence on this author. Therefore, we shall briefly consider Hafez's life and its important moments, especially in relation to the Orient.

The poetry and sonnets of Hafez are still relevant and alive, and continue to represent the language of our present time and will be pertinent even to later generations. Despite all of the criticism during Hafez's lifetime and even centuries after, the value of this Persian poet among the people and the glory of his speeches has not diminished, and has even grown. It is as if Hafez was aware of the pain that people would feel for many centuries, and so his legacy has lived for centuries. But, with all the influence and significance of Hafez's poems, we do not know much about his life, inasmuch that we remember his sonnets and poems every day, but have heard less of his history.

Behrouz Gharibpour, with his brilliant libretto, tells the life of this famous poet, his moment in history, the cruelty and oppression of the rulers of that time in Shiraz, and the endeavours to seek justice.

The opera begins at the scene of the death of Sultan Abu Eshaq, and the ascension to the throne of Sultan Mobarezedin Mohammad and his cruel government, and continues with the people revolting

against the leadership of his son, Shah Shoja. The conclusion, which comes after depictions of confrontations with famous poets such as Sa'di and Khayyam in the courtyard of Persepolis, portrays the moments of Hafez's farewell to Iran and fleeing from his beloved country. These emotional and effective moments feature the mournful verses of Mohammad Gol-andam, Hafez's friend, who convinces him to return to Shiraz, back among his people.

While writing the libretto, Behrouz Gharibpour arranged all Hafez's sonnets based on the historical story he had in mind, and then wrote the text by gauging how they could be converted into dialogue. When performed, the beauty of these choices is revealed when in some scenes the rhyme of poems has been incorporated, and a hemistich becomes passionate dialogue, followed by a hemistich from another hemistich with the same rhyme.

In *Hafez*, the poems of Sa'di, Rumi (Mowlavi), Khayyam and Khajavi Kermani are also used in their original language, but Hafez's poems are dominant.

In this opera, Behrouz Gharibpour beautifully depicts Hafez's memories about how he kept his poems from being burned and destroyed, as many books were during that era, and includes scenes of Hafez's followers memorising his sonnets. It is as if Hafez knew that his poems would only be safe from the government threats of the time through the memories of the people.

In *Hafez*, the use of the polytonal technique is not limited to the classical elements, and it is often heard in various *dastgāh* simultaneously – a technique that helps to reflect the unique concepts of the poetry, and one that was also used in the operas *Ashura* and *Rumi*.

About *dastgāh*

Dastgāh (Persian: 'pattern' or 'set of directions') are the principal modes of the art music of Persian-speaking areas, used as the basis for composition and improvisation. A *dastgāh* incorporates a scale, a motif, a group of

short pieces, and a recognisable identity. The scale (*maqām*) is a collection of seven pitches, some of which may be temporarily altered, using various combinations of whole tones, semitones, and fractional tones. The motif is a short four-to-six-note phrase (*māyeh*), to which musicians repeatedly refer in performance. The short pieces (*gūshehs*) emphasise different parts of the scale and various tonal relationships. A recognisable musical character is established for each performance.

Conceptually and in their musical content, *dastgāh* and their constituent *gūsheh* are related to the Arabic system of *maqāmāt* and the Turkish *makams*, and they are almost identical to the *mugams* of the art music of Azerbaijan.

The seven main *dastgāh* of Iranian music are known today as *Shour*, *Māhour*, *Homāyoun*, *Segāh*, *Chāhārgāh*, *Rāstpanjāh* and *Navā*. *Shour* is mainly considered to be the mother of all *dastgāh*.

About the *sama* dance

Sama, meaning 'the universe', allows the dancer to become focused on their inner spiritual world and as a result they are able to connect with the universe through the dance's unique choreographic moves. The main move of the *Sama* dance is a continuous turning of the dancer/worshipper, which brings about a state of meditation. This is an act of improvisation and it continues until the dancer feels the presence of God and becomes part of the network of the universe. Once connected, there is no 'You' or 'I', only one soul. Humans, the plants, the sky, water, air, fire, the stars, the mountains, the animals and the planets are the same, they are all the manifestation of God in different ways.

Once this is realised, the dancer is presented with a new life in which they can love and value all beings as they are. The 13th-century poet and Sufi mystic Rumi calls this 'The Miracle of Love'. He talks about a very deep love for all beings and a mystical love for God that would lift human souls, leading the way to the light of happiness for eternity.

The *Sama* dance is a ritual some people choose to perform to connect with the universe, but it is certainly not the only way. There is a Persian proverb that says 'The path to God is infinite', so if people choose to move forward on this path, they will arrive safely at the same destination no matter which path they choose.

Synopsis

Act I

① Hafez is singing mournfully. The opera begins.

*In the house of my Beloved, how can I enjoy the feast
Since the church bells call the call that for
pilgrimage equips*

*The dark midnight, fearful waves, and the
tempestuous whirlpool*

*How can he know of our state, while ports house
his unladen ships*

② Sultan Abu Eshaq is hand tied on the gallows and waiting to be hanged. His mother is crying and he sings about how the people who were his slaves and servants have now come to witness his hanging. Sultan Mobarezedin kills him.

③ Abu Eshaq's mother cries sadly over the body of Abu Eshaq and weeping women sing about this period of darkness. In the cemetery Abu Eshaq's mother and Hafez are stood far away from the others, mourning.

④ After some time has passed Sultan Mobarezedin becomes the governor of Shiraz. Obeid Zakani and his friends, who are far away from soldiers of Sultan Mobarezedin, are drinking and cheering. Obeid Zakani tells them about his new poem *Mouse and Cat*, and satirises Sultan Mobarezedin and his government. Suddenly, soldiers arrive but Obeid continues reading his poem. Soldiers arrest them.

5 Hafez and Mohammad Gol-andam sing and dance (*sama*).

6 In the prison Obeid and others are embroiled in a tense situation, and it becomes a fiery disagreement. The Poet reads Hafez's poems and satirises them. Sultan Mobarezedin becomes angry and orders the poems to be thrown into the fire. Shah Shoja, the Sultan's son, is very angry and disagrees with his father because he loves Hafez's poetry. He leaves wistfully.

7 Hafez sings, railing against the dark shadow of oppression that has been created by Sultan Mobarezedin.

8 Obeid supports Hafez's poetry, but the Poet continues to satirise Hafez and reads his poems. Obeid discourses with them but Sultan Mobarezedin becomes angry and beats him. Sultan Mobarezedin leaves.

9 Hafez sings new poetry for his followers and companions. Suddenly the Poet and soldiers arrive and attack them. Hafez invites them with kindness and affection but they don't want to hear his words and arrest him.

Act II

10 In the square of the city people come together angrily. Soldiers surround them. Fighting ensues and the people win. A farmer sings about Sultan Mobarezedin and his oppressive regime and the people go to the palace of the Sultan. In the Sultan's palace Hafez answers their questions and bravely defends his personality, criticising the Sultan and his government. But the Sultan deports him and Hafez leaves wistfully.

11 A wounded soldier arrives at the palace. He tells Sultan Mobarezedin that Shah Shoja is coming to the palace to end the government. The soldier dies. The people and Shah Shoja arrive at the palace and kill the Poet. Shah Shoja sticks a shaft into the Sultan's – his father's – eyes.

12 Hafez sits in Persepolis, wistful. Mohammad Gol-andam informs him that the government of Sultan Mobarezedin is finished. But Hafez is very sad and wants to leave Shiraz. Suddenly, as if in a dream, Sa'di, Rumi (Mowlavi), Khayyam and Khajavi Kermani arrive and tell him about life, and advise him. Statues come to life and start dancing (*sama*) and singing around Hafez. Hafez is afraid and leaves.

13 At the Persian Gulf, Hafez decides to leave Shiraz forever. Mohammad Gol-andam tries to dissuade him. Hafez gives up, and sings about love and returns to Shiraz.

14 Hafez visits Shakh-e Nabat in his dreams.

15 After a long time has passed Hafez visits Shakh-e Nabat and finds out he is going to die. He believes that everybody will sing his poems everywhere.

16 The followers of Hafez with Mohammad Gol-andam sing and dance (*sama*) around the tomb of Hafez.

Behzad Abdi

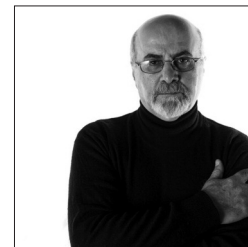
Behzad Abdi



Photo: Moein Hasheminasab

Behzad Abdi (b. 1973) is an Iranian composer. He studied the setar and Iranian traditional music with Masoud Shoari and Mohsen Nafar and Western classical music with Liudmila Yurina and Vadim Juravitsky at the Tchaikovsky Academy in Ukraine. Abdi is the first composer to write Iranian traditional opera fusing Iranian traditional and Western classical music. He is also a composer of film soundtracks and has won two awards at the Fajr International Iranian Film Festival, among others.

Behrouz Gharibpour



Behrouz Gharibpour (b. 1950) is a renowned Iranian theatre director and pioneer of traditional Persian puppet theatre. He studied theatre at Tehran University and at the Dramatic Arts Academy in Rome (Silvio D'Amico). He founded the Tehran and Esfahan puppet theatre centres and transformed Tehran's slaughterhouse into Iran's Cultural Centre. He has experience in writing and directing in the fields of theatre, puppet theatre, film, documentaries, and TV. Gharibpour is known for his research into Iranian puppetry as was commonly practised during the Qajar era (1785–1925) and was the president of UNIMA.

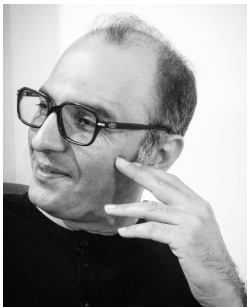
Mohammad Motamedi



Photo: Moein Hasheminasab

Mohammad Motamedi (b. 1978) started singing and playing the ney as a self-taught adolescent. In 1997 he began to study the singing style of Seyed Hossein Taherzadeh with the esteemed artist Hamidreza Noorbakhsh. With an interest in the Esfahan song school, he has been influenced by Taj Esfahani and Adib Khansari and has benefitted from the guidance of esteemed masters such as the late Dr Hossein Omoumi and Aliasghar Shahzeidi. He has performed with several groups including the Khorshid Ensemble with Majid Derakhshani, the Sheyda Ensemble with Mohammadreza Lotfi and the Iranian National Orchestra with Farhad Fakhreddini.

Hossein Alishapour



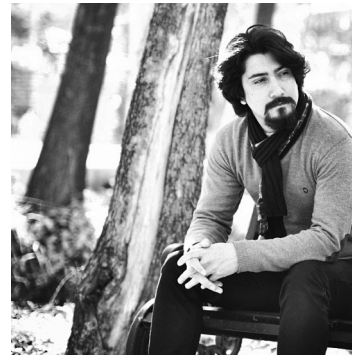
Hossein Alishapour (b. 1974) studied Iranian singing under Seddigh Ta'rif, Seyed Noordin Razavi Sarvestani, Hossein Omoumi and Manouchehr Homayounpour. Alishapour is renowned for his familiarity with various vocal styles, due to his extended research on Iranian classical music singing. He has released many albums.

Eshaq Anvar



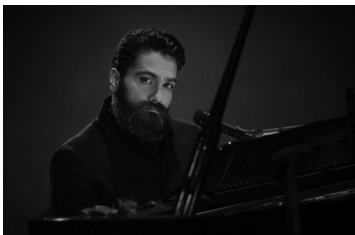
Eshaq Anvar (b. 1974) is an Iranian singer and poet. He studied music under Ata'llah Behmanesh and Mojtaba Mirzadeh, and has collaborated with Iranian Broadcasting by recording numerous works, as a melodist, singer and poet.

Mohammad Zakerhossein



As a singer, composer and tar player, the Iranian musician Mohammad Zakerhossein has enjoyed a prolific recording and performing career. He has appeared in numerous concerts with the groups Khamoush, Iran, Nou(New) and Shirazis Band and he can be heard on albums by Masoud Shenasma and on singles including *Ashegh Koushi*, *Zar*, *Gol Afshan*, *Afsaneh Khamoushi* and *Gah-o-Bigah*. He has performed music by the Iranian composer, Behzad Abdi, in a production of *Hafez*, directed by Behrouz Gharibpour. He directs the Kohan-avaye Khamoush Art Company and is leader of the group, Silent Band.

Ali Zandevakili



Born in 1986 in the city of Shiraz, Iranian singer and composer Ali Zandevakili began his musical activities when he was a child, singing and playing the tombak, an Iranian goblet drum. Following three years at the school of music in Shiraz, where he continued his studies on the tombak and also trained as a pianist and Iranian Santur player, he entered the Tehran Conservatory of Music, from where he graduated in 2007.

Haleh Seyfizadeh



Haleh Seyfizadeh is an Iranian traditional singer and improviser who for a considerable part of her life has committed herself to learning and performing Iranian classical music. She was born in 1984, and at the age of 16 she began performing with the Ali Ghamsari Ensemble. She has sung on numerous documentary film scores and performed internationally as a soloist with the Yade-Doost women ensemble, the Nederlands Blazers Ensemble, and the 'Hafez' Puppet Opera in the production, *Chess*.

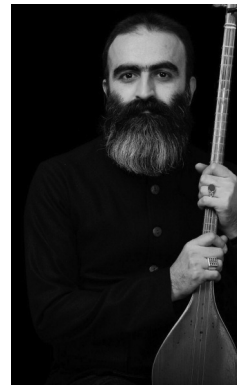
Mehdi Emami



Photo: Amir Korosh Erabi

Mehdi Emami (b. 1982) is an Iranian singer, and plays the tombak and daf. He studied singing, playing tombak and daf under his father, Ahmad Emami. He studied Iranian Avazs under Hassan Adib and Mohsen Keramati. He also studied santour under Hossein Shokoufa and Massoud Shenasa.

Ali Momenian



Singer Ali Momenian was born in 1980 in the Iranian city of Karaj. He was for 20 years a student of professor Asghar Shahzeidi and also studied with professors Hossein Omumi, a teacher of Persian traditional music, Afsaneh Malek and Kamal Abbasi. He has performed extensively within his own country – in Isfahan, Karaj, Tehran, Rasht and on Kish Island – and abroad in Erzurum, Turkey. As a recording artist he has made three independent albums, *Sepas*, *Naghshaha* and *Shahr Nisti*, and collaborated on *Abrisham Tarb*, *Rahgazar* and *Saburi* with Morteza Goudarzi. In 2016 he performed with the Hafez Opera and he can be heard as a guest singer on the Farshid Arabi album, *Death of Silence*.

Sahar Mohammadi



Photo: Moein Hasheminasab

Sahar Mohammadi, born in Tehran, is an Iranian singer of classical radifs and the lyrics of the Persian poet, Hafez. She studied the tar and setar at university in her home city before specialising in song. In 2016 she performed at the opening ceremony of the 22nd World Festival of Sacred Music in Fez, Morocco.

Vesal Alavi



Born in 1992, Vesal Alavi learned his craft as a singer with such famous teachers as Majid Roozitalab, Hamid Reza Noorbakhsh, Nader Golchin, Omid Zare, Keramat Pirabi and Mohammad Zaker. He has gone on to forge a successful career in live performance. In 2012 he appeared at the 'Hafez' Opera alongside the National Orchestra of Ukraine directed by Behrouz Gharibpour, and he has performed at several national festivals in Iran, among them the 7th National Festival of Young Music in 2018.

Credo Chamber Choir



Credo Chamber Choir was founded in April 2002. The choir has received critical acclaim and is a regular participant in international festivals, touring Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Austria and Hungary. The choir has participated in the Moscow Easter Festival and also took part in the fourth International Festival of Sacred Music in Rottenburg, where it was recognised as one of the performance highlights of the festival. The choir performs many large-scale choral works and has recorded several albums.
www.kyiv-credo-choir.com

Bogdan Plish



Bogdan Plish (b. 1977) graduated from the National Music Academy of Ukraine. He has been artistic director of the Credo Chamber Choir since 2002. In 2005 he won the Grand Prix of the third Ukrainian Choral Conductors Competition, in 2007 he was appointed choirmaster of the National Opera House of Ukraine and in 2009 he became artistic director of the International Easter Assembly (2009–14). Plish is also an opera conductor at the National Opera House of Ukraine, where he has conducted *Eugene Onegin*, *Aleko*, *Natalka Poltavka* and a ballet staging of Ravel's *Bolero*.

National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine



Photo: Oleksandr Ivanov

Formed by the Council of Ministers of Ukraine in November of 1918, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine (NSOU) is considered to be one of the finest symphony orchestras in Eastern Europe. The orchestra has given the premiere performances of works by Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Khachaturian, Lyatoshinsky, Valentin Silvestrov and Myroslav Skoryk. A distinguished list of conductors has worked with the orchestra including Leopold Stokowski, Igor Markevitch, Kurt Sanderling, Evgeny Mravinsky, Kirill Kondrashin, Evgeny Svetlanov, Gennady Rozhdestvensky and Theodore Kuchar, as well as many pre-eminent soloists that include Arthur Rubinstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, David Oistrakh, Sviatoslav Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich, Emil Gilels, Gidon Kremer, Montserrat Caballé, José Carreras and Juan Diego Flórez, among others. The orchestra has gained international recognition and critical acclaim, receiving two GRAMMY nominations, and has undertaken many successful concert tours in Europe, the US, Asia, the Middle East and Australia. Vladimir Sirenko has been the orchestra's artistic director and chief conductor since April 1999.

www.nsou.com.ua

Vladimir Sirenko



Photo: Igor Gaidai

Born in the Poltava region of Ukraine, Vladimir Sirenko made his conducting debut at Kiev Philharmonic Hall in 1983. He graduated from the Kiev Conservatoire in 1989 and was a finalist at the International Conducting Competition in Prague in 1990. A year later, he was appointed chief conductor and artistic director of the Ukrainian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Since 1999 he has been the artistic director and chief conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. Sirenko has premiered many works by Ukrainian composers and recorded over 50 albums including the GRAMMY-nominated *Requiem for Larissa* by Valentin Silvestrov in 2005. He has conducted worldwide in renowned concert halls and has worked with many orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Moscow and the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestras, Sinfonia Varsovia, the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Katowice, the Bratislava Radio Symphony, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, the National Philharmonic of Russia, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. He is professor of opera and symphonic conducting at the National Music Academy of Ukraine.

The music of Iranian composer Behzad Abdi fuses *dastgāh* (the Iranian modal system) with Western classical forms. He wrote Iran's first national opera, *Rumi* (Naxos 8.660424-25), and *Hafez* also exemplifies his approach to the medium. The opera's subject is the great Persian poet and mystic Hafez, whose sonnets and poetry are still widely read across the Persian-speaking world today. Behrouz Gharibpour's libretto traces the poet's tribulations, memories of keeping his poems from being destroyed by a despotic government, and subsequent exile. Abdi's polytonal technique serves to reflect the unique concepts of Hafez's 14th-century poetry with passion, lyricism and power.

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(b. 1973)

Hafez (2013)

Opera in two acts

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Credo Chamber Choir • Bogdan Plish

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WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

1–9 Act I

53:12 10–16 Act II

52:15

A full track and cast list can be found inside the booklet.

The Persian libretto can be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/660426.htm

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Producer: Alexander Hornostai • Engineer: Andrii Mokritskyi

Editors: Andrii Mokritskyi, Hamid Adab • Edition: Composer's manuscript

Cover: *Hafez* (1970) by Abolhassan Sadighi (1894–1995)

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