

# BEGIN



for Choir (SATB), Piano and String Quartet

Vocal Score

**Ben Ponniah**

# BEGIN

for Choir (SATB), Piano and String Quartet

(2021)

<b>Duration:</b>	24 minutes
<b>Cover photograph:</b>	<a href="http://pxfuel.com">pxfuel.com</a>
<b>For more information:</b>	<a href="http://www.benponniah.com">www.benponniah.com</a>

Depending on the size of the choir, more string players could be added if this results in a more balanced sound.

## PROGRAMME NOTE

*Begin* is the largest piece that I have written to date. My aim from the outset was to create a high-quality composition (forming a significant part of my PhD portfolio) that is cinematic, energetic and accessible – I took inspiration from film scores.

While exploring meditation, I happened upon quotations of Rumi, the thirteenth-century Persian poet and mystic. Like countless others, I connected with his powerful, concise and mindful writing, which contains beautiful descriptions of the natural world. I was going through a particularly challenging time while composing *Begin*. However, setting Rumi's inspirational words to music was a deeply cathartic experience.

*Begin* was written to provide energy for anyone starting to rebuild their life after experiencing significant loss. This could be the loss of a friendship, relationship, job, home, one's health or a family member. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to cause devastating loss for so many at the time of writing (October 2021).

After a traumatic event, it can be very hard to hear the quiet voice from within. *Begin* is here to help anyone – that is stuck or lost – to take the first steps on their journey of self-discovery.

I would like to thank my PhD supervisor, Dr Phillip Cooke, for his advice and encouragement.

## TEXT

### **I. Journey**

When will you begin that long journey into yourself?

### **II. Stars**

Let the waters settle and you will see the moon and the stars mirrored in your own being.

### **III. Silence**

Silence is the language of God. When I am silent, I fall into the place where everything is music.

### **IV. Fire**

Set your life on fire. Seek those who fan your flames.

**Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273)**

# BEGIN

for Choir (SATB), Piano and String Quartet

BEN PONNIAH (b. 1984)

## I. Journey

Con brio ♩ = 144

*ff*

Choir

When will

Piano

*ff*

8va

Ped.



Choir

5

you be - gin?

Pno.

8va

Ped.



Choir

9 **A**

When will you will

*ff*

When will you

Pno.

8va

Ped.

13

Choir

you be - gin? When will you be - gin?

will you be - gin?

*P*

5

Pno.

*8va*

*Ped.*

17

S. *mp* When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? *mf*

A. *ff* When will you will

T. *mp* When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? *mf*

B. *ff* When will you

Pno.

*8va*

21

S. *f* When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? *ff* be - gin?

A. you be - gin?

T. *f* When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? *ff* be - gin?

B. will you be - gin?

Pno.

*8va*

25 *sub. p*

Choir

When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin?

Pno. *sub. p*

29 *mf* *ff*

Choir

When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? When will you, When will you be-gin?

Pno. *mf* *ff*

8va

34 **B**

Choir

Pno. *ff*

Strings *ff*

37 *Solo*  
*ff* *Ah*

Choir

Strings

41 *Solo*  
*ff* *Ah*

Choir

Strings

45 **C** *Tranquillo* ♩ = 80

Pno.

*p*

*Lead.*

49

Pno.

Strings

*mp*

*mf*

53

Choir

Strings

*pp*

*pp*

When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?

Choir *p*  
 When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?

Strings *p*

**D**

Choir *Tutti mp*  
 When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?

Strings *mp*

Choir *f*  
 When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - *mp*

Strings *f*

Choir *mp* *pp*  
 self? that long jour - ney in - to your - self? that long jour - ney in - to that

Choir *pp*  
 long jour - ney in - to your - self? that long jour - ney in - to your - self? that

Pno. *mp*



73 9

Choir  
 long jour - ney in - to your - self?

Pno.

Strings



**E** **Con brio** ♩ = 144

77 *ff*

Choir  
 When will

Pno.

*ff*

8va

Ped.



81

Choir  
 you be - gin?

Pno.

8va

8va

Ped.

85

Choir

When will you will

*ff*

When will you

Pno.

8va

Ped.

89

Choir

you be - gin? When will you be - gin?

will you be - gin?

*p*

Pno.

8va

Ped.

93 **F**

S. *mp* *mf*

When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?

A. *ff*

When will you will

T. *mp* *mf*

When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?

B. *ff*

When will you

Pno.

8va

97

S. *f* When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? *ff* be - gin?

A. you be - gin?

T. *f* When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? *ff* be - gin?

B. will you be - gin?

Pno.

101 *sub. p*

Choir *sub. p* When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin?

Pno. *sub. p*

105 *mf* When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? When will you, When will you be - gin? *ff*

Choir *mf* When will you be-gin? When will you be-gin? When will you, When will you be - gin? *ff*

Pno. *mf* *8va*

12 G

110

Choir

Strings

*p*

113 **Tranquillo** ♩ = 80

*p*

Choir

*mm*

*p*

*mm*

Pno.

*p*

117

Choir

*mm*

*mm*

Pno.

Strings

*mf*

121

Choir

*pp*

When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?

3

Strings

*pp*

Choir *p*  
 When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?

Strings *p*

Choir **H** *mp*  
 When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?

Strings *mp*

Choir *mf*  
 When will you be - gin that long jour - ney,

Strings *mf*

Choir *molto rit.*  
 When will you be - gin that long jour - ney...  
 When will you be - gin that jour - ney...  
 When will you be - gin that jour - ney...

Strings

141 **I** **Con brio** ♩ = 144

Pno. *ff*



Pno.



149 *ff*  
Choir  
When will

Pno.



153  
Choir  
you be - gin?

Pno.

157 **J**

Choir  
When will you will

*ff*  
When will you

Pno.

8<sup>va</sup>

Ped.

161

Choir  
you be - gin? When will you be - gin?

will you be - gin? When will you be - gin?

Pno.

8<sup>va</sup>

Ped.

165

Choir  
When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin?

When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin? When will you be - gin?

Pno.

8<sup>va</sup>

169

Choir

When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?

Pno.

173

**K**

Choir

When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin? When will you be- gin?

Pno.

177

Choir

When will you be- gin? When will you, when will you be- gin?

Pno.

*fff*



## II. Stars

**Agitato**  $\text{♩} = 88$

Choir

Piano

Strings

5 **L**

Choir

Pno.

Strings

9 *mp* *mf*

Choir

Pno.

Strings

*mp* *mf*

The

13 *mf*

Choir  
wa - ters, the wa - ters, the wa - - ters, the

wa - ters, the wa - ters, the wa - ters, the wa - - ters, the

Pno.

Strings

17

Choir  
wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

Pno.

Strings

19

Choir  
wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

Pno.

Strings

*f*

21

Choir

wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

Pno.

8<sup>va</sup>

6

6

6

Strings

*f*

*Ped.*

23

Choir

wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

wa - - - ters, the wa - - - ters, the

Pno.

8<sup>va</sup>

6

6

6

Strings

25

Choir

wa - - - - - ters, the wa - - - - - ters

wa - - - - - ters, the wa - - - - - ters

Pno.

Strings

20

27 *ff*

Choir

set - - - - - tle,

set - - - - - tle, Let the

*ff*

Pno.

*ff*

Strings

*ff*

*8va*

Ped.

29 **M** *Espressivo*

S.

A.

T.

B.

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

Let the

Let the wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_ wa - - - - - ters set - tle, let the

**M**

Strings

*mp*

33

S.

A.

T.

B.

*mp*

Let the wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_ wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

let the wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_ wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_ wa - - - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

*pp*

Strings

Placido

37 21

Pno.

*And.*

41 accel. . . . .

Choir

*mp* Let the

Pno.

45 N **Con spirito** ♩ = 108

Choir

wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the

Strings

*mp*

49 N

Choir

*mp* Let the

wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down,

Strings

*Those who can  
whistle in tune  
should whistle  
(the rest sing)*

53

Choir

wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the

Strings

*mp*

*Whistlers stop  
and resume singing*

57

Choir  
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down, *mf*  
Let the

Strings

61

Choir  
let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle,  
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the

Strings  
*mf*

65

Choir  
let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down, *f* Let the  
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down,

Strings

69

Choir  
wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the  
*f* Let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa-ters

Strings  
*f*

rit. *ff* 23

73

Choir

wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle down, and

set - tle, let the wa - ters set - tle, let the, let the wa - ters set - tle down,

Strings



77 **O** *Molto espressivo* ♩ = 84 *p*

S. you will see, you will see,

A. you will see, you will see,

T.

B.

Pno. *p*

8<sup>va</sup>

*Ed.*

Strings *p*

81

S. *mp* you will see, you will see,

A. you will see, you will see,

T. - - - -

B. - - - -

Pno. - - - -

Strings - - - -



85

S. *mp* you will see, you will see,

A. *mp* you will see, you will see,

T. *mp* you will see, you will see,

B. *mp* you will see, you will see,

Pno. *mp* *8va* *Ped.*

Strings *mp*



89

S. you will see, you will see,

A. you will see, you will see,

T. you will see, you will see,

B. you will see, you will see,

Pno. *8va*

Strings

93

**P** *mf* you will see, you will see, you will see, you will see,

Choir *mf* you will

Pno. *mf* *8va*

Strings *mf* **P**

26 97 you will see, Let the  
you will see, you will see, you will see, you will Let the

8<sup>va</sup>

101 *f* wa - - - - - ters  
wa - - - - - ters set - - - tle, the  
*f*  
wa - - - - - ters

8<sup>va</sup>

103 set - - - - - tle and  
wa - - - - - ters set - - - tle and  
set - - - - - tle and

8<sup>va</sup>

105 you will

you will see, and

you will

Pno.

Strings

107 see

you will see the

see the

Pno.

Strings

109 **Q** moon and the stars,

moon and the stars,

*ff*

Pno.

Strings

*ff*

**Q**



125

Choir

*p*

wa - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

wa - - - ters set - tle, Let the wa - - - ters set - tle, let the

Pno.

*p*

Ped.

129

Choir

*p*

set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

wa - - - ters set - tle, \_\_\_\_\_ set - tle, set - tle, set - tle,

Pno.

*p*

Ped.

133

Choir

set - - - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

set - - - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

set - - - - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

set - - - - tle, \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

137

Choir

*pp*

set - - - tle. \_\_\_\_\_

set - - - tle. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

*pp*

*pp*

Ped.

## III. Silence

**Lento e molto tranquillo** ♩ = 60

Piano *pp*  
*con pedale*

5

9 **S** Semichorus *pp*  
Si - - - lence, Si - - - lence,

13  
si - - - lence, si - - - lence,

17  
si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

21

Choir

si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

Pno.

Strings

*pp* molto espressivo

25

Choir

si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

Pno.

Strings

29

Choir

si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

Pno.

Strings

32 <sup>33</sup> *mp* *mf*

Choir  
 si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

Pno. *mp*

Strings *mp*

37 **T** *p*

Choir  
 When I am si - lent, when I am si - lent,

Strings *p*

41

Choir  
 si - - - lent,

Strings

**U** *Espressivo* *Tutti*

45 *p* *Tutti* *pp*

Choir  
 fall, I fall, I fall, I fall,

Strings



49

Choir

fall, I fall, I fall, I fall, I fall, I fall, I

Strings

*p*

53

Choir

fall, fall, fall, fall in - to the

fall, I fall, I fall, I fall

Pno.

*p*

*Red. \* Red. \* Red. \* Red. \* sim.*

57

Choir

place, the place, the place, the place where ev' - ry - thing is

place, the place, the place, the place where ev' - ry - thing is

Pno.

3

3

Strings

*molto rit.*

**W**

a tempo ♩ = 60

34

62

**f**

Choir

mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,

mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,

**f**

Pno.

**f**

*Ped.* \**Ped.* \**sim.*

Strings

**f**

**ff**

66

**molto rit.**

Choir

mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,

mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic, mu - sic,

Pno.

**8va**

Strings

**3**

**X**

a tempo ♩ = 60

70

**ff** **mf**

Choir

si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,

si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,

**ff** **mf**

si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,

74 *p* *rit.* *pp*

Choir  
 si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,

*p* *pp*

si - lence, si - lence, si - lence, si - lence,

78 **Molto tranquillo** ♩ = 60  
 Semichorus

Choir  
 si - - - lence, si - - - lence,

Pno. *pp*  
*con pedale*

82

Choir  
 si - - - lence, si - - - lence,

Pno.

86 **Y**

Choir  
 si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

Pno.

90

Choir

si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

Pno.

Strings

*pp molto espressivo*



94

Choir

si - lence is the lan - guage of God,

Pno.

Strings



98

Choir

si - lence is the lan - guage of God.

rit. . . . .

Solo

Strings

### IV. Fire

Lento e misterioso ♩ = 60

Soprano *Solo p*

Your life, \_\_\_\_\_ your life, \_\_\_\_\_



S. 5

\_\_\_\_\_ your fire, \_\_\_\_\_ your flames. \_\_\_\_\_



8 **Z**

S. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_ *pp*  
Your

Strings *pp* *pp div.* *f*



12 *Tutti mp*

S. \_\_\_\_\_ Your

A. *mp*  
life, \_\_\_\_\_ your fire, \_\_\_\_\_ your life, \_\_\_\_\_ your fire, \_\_\_\_\_ your

T. *pp* *mp*  
Your life, \_\_\_\_\_ your fire, \_\_\_\_\_ your life, \_\_\_\_\_ your

Strings *pp*

16

S. flames, \_\_\_\_\_ your flames, \_\_\_\_\_ *f* your

A. life, \_\_\_\_\_ your fire, your life, \_\_\_\_\_ your fire,

T. fire, your life, \_\_\_\_\_ your fire, your life, \_\_\_\_\_ your *f*

B. *mp* Your flames, \_\_\_\_\_ your flames, \_\_\_\_\_

Strings *mp*



20

S. flames. \_\_\_\_\_

A. *f* your flames. \_\_\_\_\_

T. flames. \_\_\_\_\_

B. *f* your flames. \_\_\_\_\_

Strings *f*

24 *ff* **Con brio** ♩ = 144 39

S. Set your life on fire.

A. Set your life on fire.

T. Set your life on fire.

B. Set your life on fire.

Pno.

Strings

29 **AA** (♩ = 144) *Solo mp*

B. Seek those who fan your flames.

*port.*

34

Pno. *pp*

Ped.

38

A. *pp*

Seek

Pno. *pp*

Ped.

42

A. those who fan your flames. Seek

Pno. *sim.*

40 **46**

S. *p* Seek

A. those \_\_\_\_\_ who fan your flames. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

**50**

S. those \_\_\_\_\_ who fan your flames. \_\_\_\_\_ Seek

A. *p* fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames, fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames,

Pno. *p*

**54**

S. those \_\_\_\_\_ who fan your flames. \_\_\_\_\_ *mp* Seek

A. fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames, fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames,

Pno.

**58** **BB**

S. those \_\_\_\_\_ who fan your flames. \_\_\_\_\_ Seek

A. *mp* fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames, fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames,

T. *mp* Seek those \_\_\_\_\_ who fan your flames. \_\_\_\_\_

B. *Tutti mp* fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames, fan \_\_\_\_\_ your flames,

Pno. *mp*



62

S. those who fan your flames. Seek *mf*

A. fan your flames, fan your flames,

T. Seek those who fan your flames.

B. fan your flames, fan your flames,

Pno.

66

S. those who fan your flames. Seek

A. *mf* Seek those who fan your

T. *mf* Seek those who fan your flames.

B. *mf* Seek those

Pno. *mf*

70

S. those who fan your flames, who *f*

A. flames. Seek those who fan your

T. Seek those who fan your flames.

B. who fan your flames. Seek those

Pno.

CC

S. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

A. *f* fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

T. *f* fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

B. *f* fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

Pno. *f*



S. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, Set your

A. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

T. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

B. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

Pno.



DD

S. life on fire. Set your

A. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

T. Set your life on fire.

B. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

Pno.

S. life on fire.

A. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

T. Set your life on fire.

B. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

Pno.

**EE**

S. *ff* Your life, your fire,

A. *ff* Your life, your fire,

T. *ff* fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

B. *ff* fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

Pno. *ff*

S. your life, your flames.

A. your life, your flames.

T. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

B. fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames, fan\_ your flames,

Pno.

S. *on fire. on fire.*

A. *on fire. on fire.*

T. *Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.*

B. *Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.*

Pno.



S. *on fire. on fire. on fire.*

A. *on fire. on fire. on fire.*

T. *Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.*

B. *Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire. Set your life on fire.*

Pno.



**FF**

**Tranquillo** ♩ = 80

Pno. *p*



Pno.

Strings *mf*

*rit.*

115 **Meno mosso** ♩ = 60  
***p* Solo** 45

T. *When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?*

Pno.

Strings *p*

119 **rit.**

T.

Pno. *molto espressivo*  
*mp*  
*ped.*

123 ♩ = 60  
***mp* Solo ad libitum** **rit.**

S. *When will you be - gin that long jour - ney in - to your - self?*

Pno.

127 **Con brio** ♩ = 144

Pno. *ff*

131 *ff*

Pno. *ped.*

135 **ff Tutti**

Choir

Set your

Pno.



139

Choir

life on fire.

Pno.



143

Choir

Set your life your

**ff Tutti**

Set your life

Pno.

147

Choir

life on fire.

your life on fire.

Pno.



151

HH

Choir

Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?

Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?

Pno.



155

Choir

Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?

Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?

Pno.

159

Choir

Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin? Set your life on fire. When will you be-gin?

Pno.

163

Choir

Set your life on fire. Set your life, set your life on fire! *rit. fff*

Pno.

168

S. **II** *Lento e tranquillo* ♩ = 60 *Solo pp* *p*

ah, Your

Strings

172

S.

life, your life, your

Strings



176

S. fire, your flames.

Pno. *pp*

Strings

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the voice (S.), with lyrics 'fire, your flames.' The middle staff is for the piano (Pno.), featuring a piano (*pp*) dynamic marking and a pedaling ('Ped.') instruction. The bottom staff is for the strings (Strings), with a dynamic marking '8'. The score is in a key with one flat and a 4/4 time signature. The voice part has a long note on 'flames.' that spans across the end of the page.

Chertsey,  
Dec 2020 - Oct 2021