

COMPOSER JAMSHIED SHARIFI PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE AT MIT WORK RECOGNIZES THE ARAB SPRING

Sharifi's *Awakening* commissioned by and for MIT Wind Ensemble premieres March 17
Panel discussion on the Arab Spring with MIT community March 13

Media contact: Leah Talatinian
Arts Communication Manager, MIT Office of the Arts
617-253-5351, leaht@mit.edu, arts.mit.edu

February 27, 2012, Cambridge, MA – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) presents *Awakening the Arab Spring*, two programs about the revolutionary events of the Arab Spring, inspired by the March 12-17 residency of composer-in-residence, [Jamshied Sharifi](#) (MIT class of 1983). Sharifi will introduce the world premiere of *Awakening*, a new commission by and for the MIT Wind Ensemble, during a concert held in MIT Kresge Auditorium on March 17. He also will participate in an interdisciplinary panel *Awakening the Arab Spring* with members of the MIT community, including Associate Provost and Ford International Professor of History Philip S. Khoury; Obaidah Abuhashem, president of the MIT Arab Students' Organization; and Emily Jackson; president of the MIT Wind Ensemble, in MIT Killian Hall on March 13.

"I was, like many, moved by the events of the Arab Awakening," comments Sharifi. "For those of us with Persian heritage who watched the earlier political protests in Iran, initially with hope and then with bitter disappointment, the success of the civil movements in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya were especially gratifying. The labor of developing effective and responsive political systems in those three countries still remains. But something in the Middle East has undeniably changed. And I hope to honor that shift in my new piece, *Awakening*."

"With the goals of exploring the music of the Persian and Arab worlds and bringing more awareness to the Arab Spring, I asked Jamshied Sharifi to compose an original work that would reflect the struggles for freedom across the Middle East," says Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr., music director of the MIT Wind Ensemble. "Born in Topeka, Kansas to an Iranian father and an American mother, and having a history of composing music with world-view concepts, Jamshied Sharifi is uniquely qualified for this project."

Jamshied Sharifi's remarkable professional career as a composer and keyboardist, producer and arranger includes composing scores for motion pictures, his own world music ensemble, collaboration with artists such as Ray Charles, and arrangements for the Inauguration of President Obama. New York-based Sharifi is an alumnus of MIT '83 and the Berklee College of Music.

The MIT Visiting Artist Program brings internationally acclaimed artists to engage with MIT's creative community in ways that are mutually enlightening for the artists and faculty, students, and research staff at the Institute. Other MIT visiting artists in Spring 2012 include Robert LePage, Bang on a Can with Steve Reich, and Ben Houge. The full schedule of residencies and events is available at arts.mit.edu/va

Awakening the Arab Spring

Tuesday, March 13, 2012

5:30pm Panel | Killian Hall, MIT

Tickets <http://awakening-arab-spring-eorg.eventbrite.com/>

Free and open to the public, tickets must be reserved online

Panelists:

Philip S. Khoury, Associate Provost and Ford International Professor of History, MIT
Jamshied Sharifi '83, MIT Visiting Artist and Composer-In-Residence
Obaidah Abuhashem '12, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and President of the MIT Arab Students' Organization
Emily Jackson '12, Chemical Engineering, President of the MIT Wind Ensemble

The diverse panel *Awakening the Arab Spring* discusses the Arab Spring using history, music and personal experience to reflect on the extraordinary wave of demonstrations and protests that continue across the Arab world. Professor Philip Khoury opens the panel with an overview of the revolutionary events of the last year. Excerpts of *Awakening* will be presented by members of the MIT Wind Ensemble, including president and flute player, Emily Jackson '12, together with Jamshied Sharifi, composer-in-residence. Obaidah Abuhashem '12, president of the MIT Arab Students' Association, will discuss his perspective as a young person native to the Gaza Strip in Palestine.

World Premiere Concert: *Awakening*

Saturday, March 17, 2012

8:00pm Concert | Kresge Auditorium, MIT

Tickets <http://mitwe-jamshied-sharifi.eventbrite.com/>

General Admission \$5, MIT Community free in advance, \$5 at the door

Awakening is in three movements: I. Maghreb/Bouazizi/The Uprisings, II. Reflection: Let Each One Hear Her Own Thoughts, and III. Ahead: The Real Transformation Has Barely Begun.

The March 17 concert program for *Awakening*: A world premiere by Jamshied Sharifi, includes Bernard, *Divertissement for Winds*; Copland, *Variations on a Shaker Melody*; Schuman, *When Jesus Wept*; Bernstein, *Profanation* from Symphony no. 1; and Sharifi, *Awakening*, world premiere. Performed by the MIT Wind Ensemble; Frederick Harris, Jr., music director; Kenneth Amis, assistant conductor; introduced by Jamshied Sharifi, composer-in-residence.

About the MIT Wind Ensemble

Founded in 1999 by Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr., the MIT Wind Ensemble (MITWE) is composed of outstanding MIT students studying in wide variety of fields. The ensemble's mission is to enhance the musical education and artistic sensitivity of its members through performance of diverse styles of music and to foster the creation of new music for wind ensemble. Since 2001, the MITWE has commissioned 26 original works by MIT faculty, local, and internationally renowned composers. Gunther Schuller, John Harbison, and Michael Colgrass, all Pulitzer Prize-winning composers, have worked with MITWE.

Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr., is Director of Wind and Jazz Ensembles. He holds a M.M., New England Conservatory and Ph.D., University of Minnesota. He has served as acting music director of the MIT Symphony Orchestra and assistant conductor of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Wind Ensemble. He has commissioned 81 works, many of which have been recorded and performed internationally. Harris is the author of two books about music, including *Seeking the Infinite: The Musical Life of Stanisław Skrowaczewski*.

About Jamshied Sharifi

Jamshied Sharifi is a New York-based composer, producer, and keyboardist. He was born in Topeka, Kansas to an Iranian father and an American mother. Sharifi graduated from MIT with a degree in humanities, and *summa cum laude* from Berklee College of Music in Boston, with a degree in Jazz Composition and Arranging. At MIT and Berklee, he studied with the legendary Herb Pomeroy, who asked him at graduation to lead the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble. While in Boston, Sharifi studied piano with Charlie Banacos, and West African drumming with Godwin Agbeli and Abubakari Lunna. Sharifi's previous work ranges from composing scores for major motion pictures, performing and recording with his own world music ensemble to producing and arranging for other artists. He also served as an arranger for President Obama for the Inaugural Concert "We Are One". He has performed at many prestigious venues throughout the world, including Carnegie Hall and Radio City Music Hall in New York, the Hollywood Bowl and the Getty Center in Los Angeles, the Opera Theater in Sydney, Cité de la Musique in Paris, and Svetlanovsky Hall in Moscow.

Home page: <http://www.jamshiedsharifi.com/Site/Home.html>

About the Arts at MIT

The arts at MIT connect creative minds across disciplines and encourage a lifetime of exploration and self-discovery. They are rooted in experimentation, risk-taking and imaginative problem-solving. The arts strengthen MIT's commitment to the aesthetic, human, and social dimensions of research and innovation. Artistic knowledge and creation exemplify our motto — *mens et manus*, mind and hand. The arts are essential to MIT's mission to build a better society and meet the challenges of the 21st century. <http://arts.mit.edu>