



LINN

in the beginning

classical music by aaron copland and samuel barber

DUNEDIN CONSORT

directed by ben parry



In the Beginning

Aaron Copland
Samuel Barber

Dunedin Consort
Ben Parry *director*



In the Beginning

Dunedin Consort · Ben Parry *director*

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

1. In the Beginning 16:23
Sally Bruce-Payne *mezzo-soprano*

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

Reincarnations, Op. 16

2. No. 1 Mary Hynes 2:25
3. No. 2 Anthony O' Daly 3:03
4. No. 3 The Coolin' 3:55
5. To be sung on the water,
Op. 42 No. 2 2:49
6. A nun takes the veil:
Heaven-Haven 1:38
choral setting by the composer of
Four Songs, Op. 13 No. 1

7. Let down the bars,

O death, Op. 8 No. 2 1:55

8. The virgin martyrs, Op. 8 No. 1 3:08

9. Agnus Dei 7:27

transcribed for mixed chorus from

Adagio for Strings, Op. 11a

Copland

Four Motets

10. I. Help us, O Lord 2:27

11. II. Thou, O Jehova,
abideth forever 2:17

12. III. Have mercy on us,
O my Lord 3:39

13. IV. Sing ye praises to our king 2:14

Total Running Time: 54 minutes

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Susan Hamilton**

Mezzo-soprano

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Kate Mapp

Tenor

Tom Phillips
Paul Rendall
Warren Trevelyan-Jones*

Bass

Nigel Brookes
Colin Campbell*
David Porter-Thomas

*solos in track 13

**solo in track 9

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Vocal music by Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber

Ten years were all that separated the American composers Aaron Copland and Samuel Barber. Both made their mark on their country's twentieth-century musical development. But different backgrounds moulded very different musical styles: Copland, feisty and adventurous, at the cutting edge, and generally better known through such gutsy works as the ballet *Rodeo*, or the delicate Shaker variations in *Appalachian Spring*; Barber, safe and dependable, the lyrical traditionalist, but relatively unsung except through the universally popular *Adagio* from his String Quartet, made famous at the funerals of President Kohn F. Kennedy and Princess Grace of Monaco.

Copland, the older of the two, was born in New York on 14 November 1900. Growing up in downtown Brooklyn, the son of hard-working Lithuanian Jewish immigrants, he experienced – like George Gershwin – the harsh and fast side of life. He was one of the many 'Americans in Paris' during the 1920s eager to soak up the fashionable avant-garde teachings of Nadia Boulanger. Others

included Virgil Thomson, George Antheil and Melville Smith. The Boulanger circle also brought Copland into contact with writers like James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway and Ezra Pound.

His musical style evolved constantly; fused with jazz elements in his early Piano Concerto, painting the characteristically vivid New England landscapes in ballet scores like *Appalachian Spring* (written for the choreographer Martha Graham), or laced with the kind of flirtatious, exotic influences which abound in *El Salon Mexco*. Even when he ventured briefly into the austere world of serialism in the 1950s and 1960s, Copland's musical language remained clean, fresh and sincere. Copland spoke for America and promoted its music voraciously up to his death in 1990. Leonard Bernstein and the Japanese composer, Toru Takemitsu, were among his greatest admirers and followers.

Barber's background was very different and less intense. Born on the 9 March 1910 in a wealthy provincial Pennsylvanian town on the outskirts of conservative Philadelphia, he was the son of a local doctor and pastor's daughter. Photographs of the young sailor-suited Sam and his family, posed around the

piano in their comfortable West Chester house, paint a picture of cosy affluence.

His training was traditional; his composition tutor at the Curtis Institute of Music was the ardent Brahmsian, Rosario Scalero. Extended travel in Europe – no doubt fired further by his close long-term relationship with the fellow composer and Curtis student, Gian Carlo Menotti – intensified his allegiance to mainstream Romantic, predominantly European, culture. As a trained singer, he held a natural affinity to a lyrical and traditional style that, other than in one or two exceptions, pervades all of his music.

Barber could never be described as an innovator. Yet his work is distinguished, finely crafted and distinctive. Among others, Toscanini championed Barber's music, conducting his NBC Symphony Orchestra in the premiere of Barber's famous 1938 string orchestra arrangement of the *Adagio*. Above all, his music has a brilliant but easeful lyrical sheen in vocal works like *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and *Dover Beach*, and equally in other better known instrumental works like the 1940 Violin Concerto, the overture to *The School for Scandal*, or the cello and piano sonatas. Defending the outward

traditionalism of Barber's music, Menotti once posed the question: 'Must there be in art one "modern idiom"?'

Unlike Copland, Marc Blitzstein, Virgil Thomson, Roy Harris and others who were striving to discover an 'American sound' accessible to the broadest-based audiences, Barber wished to preserve a style comfortable with established audiences. 'I wrote as I wanted to myself,' he declared, confirming the Romantic spirit that remained within him until his death in 1981. Compare that to Copland's ardent wish 'to find a musical vernacular which, as language, would cause no difficulties to my listeners... my old interest in making a connection between music and the life about me.'

There can be no doubt that the sparkling angularity of Copland's 'cowboy ballets', *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo*, the folk-inspired purity of *Appalachian Spring*, or even the cool detached austerity of early works like the *Dance Symphony*, are a world away from the elusive warmth of Barber's *Summer Music* for wind quintet, the café-style suavity of his ballet, *Souvenirs*, or the many sympathetic solo vocal settings of Irish and English poetry.

Yet there is one area of composition where a touching commonality exists

between the two. As the Dunedin Consort's programme demonstrates, both Copland and Barber, in their settings for unaccompanied chorus, had an instinctive feel for the human voice, a natural gift for word-setting, and a pure style of writing that rarely, if ever, obscured its literary dimension.

Copland's ventures into the genre were fewer than Barber's. But they were fruitful, particularly in the biblical-inspired *In the Beginning*, a substantial setting for mixed voices composed in 1947 for performance at the Harvard Symposium on Music Criticism. The university's department of music had suggested a Hebrew text, but Copland opted ultimately for the version of the story as told in the King James Bible. It was first performed on 2 May 1947 by the Collegiate Choir of Massachusetts, conducted by the composer.

Beautifully simple in outline and texture, its inoffensive modal flavour and lilting Britten-like polytonality sit easily with infectious jazz rhythms and soft hints of blues. Recitative and antiphonal writing dominates in a work the composer suggested be sung 'in a gentle manner, like reading a familiar, oft-told story'. Before a performance in 1980

at Brown University, however, Copland told the student singers: 'Creation was quite a stunt, so make it grand. Don't be pathetic about it. What happened after creation is an entirely different story!'

Copland's only other biblical settings, the *Four Motets* for a cappella chorus, date from much earlier. Completed in 1921 during his student days in Paris, they were first heard publicly in performances in 1924 in Fontainebleau, conducted by Melville Smith and Nadia Boulanger. Copland reluctantly agreed to their publication some fifty years later, deeming them to be of curiosity value. 'Perhaps people want to know what I was doing as a student. The style is not really yet mine,' wrote the self-critical composer. Yet the beautifully French-flavoured 'Help us, O Lord', the rousing primitivism of 'Thou, O Jehova, abideth forever', the sumptuous harmonies of 'Have mercy on us, O my Lord' and the free-flowing jubilation of 'Sing ye praises to our king', are undoubted foretastes of the fast developing musical genius.

Barber was also in his twenties when he wrote *Reincarnations*. Like Copland, he was still then marginally self-critical about his own music, to the extent that he was seriously questioning his future

as a professional composer. None of that doubt seems to taint any of the three 'contemporary madrigals' that make up *Reincarnations* – settings of English adaptations by James Stephens of Gaelic verses by early Irish poets – which he completed by 1940 for performance by the Madrigal Chorus at the Curtis Institute. He had been invited to take over the 24-strong choir's directorship in 1938, a move that presented an interesting artistic challenge to which he ably rose. The syncopated energy of 'Mary Hynes', the dirge-like tolling of 'Anthony O'Daly' – the fated captain of an eighteenth-century Irish rebel peasant organisation – and the tender lilt of 'The Coolin' are the work of a musical craftsman with a keen ear for poetry.

In fact, Barber's choral works from the 1930s rank among his most inspired and expressive. 'The virgin martyrs' – a transcendent 1935 setting for women's chorus of Helen Waddell's translation of Sigebert of Gembloux from her collection of Medieval Latin lyrics – and the sublime 1936 SATB setting of Emily Dickinson's 'Let down the bars, O death', are delightful early examples. Of the latter he said to his parents: 'I wrote a little chorus the other morning, quite

good, it will be alright for someone's funeral.' It was, rather poignantly, sung at the memorial services held for Barber following his death in 1981.

Barber often turned to the magic of nature for direct inspiration. He found it in the Victorian poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, particularly in the solo voice setting he made of the Welsh poet's *Heaven-Haven*, which Barber set as one of the Four Songs, Op. 13, written between 1937 and 1940. Their success encouraged the composer to adapt two of them for unaccompanied chorus, including the simple and short 'A nun takes the veil: Heaven-Haven' (Barber, for whatever reason, reversed the title).

Sensitivity to the text never deserted Barber, as is evident from the two Op. 42 choral works of 1968. The second of these – a setting of Louise Brogan's *To be sung on water* – is an exquisite example of the composer's ability to enhance the text in musical terms; the softly lapping water ever-present in the throbbing three-note motif shifts smoothly and antiphonally between the male and female voices. But if Barber is to be remembered for anything, it will be his *Adagio for Strings*. Surprised, even himself, by its popularity, he had mixed

feelings about the various arrangements made from its original string quartet version. His own adaptation for chorus in 1967 set it – quite appropriately – to the words of the 'Agnus Dei'. Other than in its most famous version for string orchestra, arrangements exist for clarinet choir (by Lucien Caillet) and for organ (by William Strickland, head of the Army Music School at Fort Myer).

In a BBC broadcast in 1982, an admiring American voice described Barber's *Adagio* as coming 'straight from the heart, to use the old-fashioned term. The sense of continuity, the steadiness of the flow, the satisfaction of the arch that it creates from beginning to end. They're all very gratifying, satisfying and it makes you believe in the sincerity which he [Barber] obviously put into it.'

Flattering words...from none other than Aaron Copland.

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1. In the Beginning

Music by Aaron Copland

Text Genesis Chapter 1: 1l:7

CHAPTER 1

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3. And God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light.
4. And God saw the light, that it was good:
and God divided the light from the darkness.
5. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.
And the evening and the morning were the first day.
6. And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.'
7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
8. And God called the firmament heaven.
And the evening and the morning were the second day.
9. And God said, 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear' and it was so.
10. And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the seas: and God saw that it was good.
11. And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth' and it was so.
12. And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
13. And the evening and the morning were the third day.
14. And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day

- from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years’.
15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
 16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
 17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
 18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.
 19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.
 20. And God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven’.
 21. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
 22. And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth’.
 23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.
 24. And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so’.
 25. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
 26. And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth’.
 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
 28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29. And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.
30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.'
31. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

CHAPTER 2

1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.
4. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,
5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.
6. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.
7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Reincarnations, Op. 16

Music by Samuel Barber

Words by James Steptoens

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2. No. 1 Mary Hynes

She is the sky
Of the sun!
She is the dart
Of love!
She is the love
Of my heart!
She is a rune!
She is above
The women
Of the race of Eve
As the sun
Is above the moon!
Lovely and airy
The view from the hill
That looks down on Ballylea!
But no good sight
Is good, until
By great good luck
You see The Blossom Of Branches
Walking towards you,
Airily.

3. No. 2 Anthony O' Daly

Since your limbs were laid out
The stars do not shine!
The fish leap not out of the waves!
On our meadows the dew
Does not fall in the morn,
For O' Daly is dead!

Not a flow'r can be born!
Not a word can be said!
Not a tree have a leaf!
On our meadows the dew
Does not fall in the morn.
For O' Daly is dead.

Anthony!

After you
There is nothing to do!
There is nothing but grief!

4. No. 3 The Coolin'

Come with me, under my coat,
And we will drink our fill
Of the milk of the white goat,
Or wine if it be thy will.
And we will talk, until
Talk is a trouble, too,
Out on the side of the hill,
And nothing is left to do,
But an eye to look into an eye;
And a hand in a hand to slip;
And a sigh to answer a sigh;
And a lip to find out a lip!
What if the night be black!
And the air on the mountain chill!
Where the goat lies down in her track,
And all but the fern is still!

5. To be sung on the water, Op. 42 No. 2

Music by Samuel Barber

Words by Louise Bogan

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Beautiful, my delight,
Pass, as we pass the wave
Pass, as the mottled night
Leaves what it cannot save,
Scattering dark and bright.
Beautiful, pass and be
Less than a guiltless shade
To which our vows were said;
Beautiful, my delight,
Less than the sound of the oar
To which our vows were made,
Less than the sound of its blade
Dipping the stream once more.

6. A nun takes the veil: Heaven-Haven

Music by Samuel Barber

Words by Gerard M. Hopkins

© G. Schirmer, Inc. (ASCAP), 1939

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided
hail
And a few lilies blow.
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in
the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

7. Let down the bars, O death, Op. 8 No. 2

Music by Samuel Barber

Words by Emily Dickinson

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Let down the bars, O death!
The tired flocks come in
Whose bleating ceases to repeat,
Whose wandering is done.
Thine is the stillest night,
Thine is the securest fold;
Too near art for seeking thee,
Too tender to be told,

8. The virgin martyrs, Op. 8 No. 1

Music by Samuel Barber

Words by Helen W addell,

After the Latin of Siegbort of Gembloux

Therefore come they, the crowding
maidens,
Gertrude, Agnes, Prisca, Cecily, Lucy,
Thekla, Juliana, Barbara, Agatha,
Petronel,
And other maids whose names I have read
not,
But their souls and their faith were maimed
not,
Worthy of God's company.
Wandering through the fresh fields go
they,
Gathering flowers to make them a
nosegay,
Gathering roses for the passion
Lilies and violets for love.

9. Agnus Dei

Music by Samuel Barber

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Agnus Dei, qui tolis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.
Dona nobis pacem.

Four Motets

Music by Aaron Copland

10. I. Help us, O Lord

Help us, O Lord.
For with thee is the fount of life.
In thy light shall we see light.
Let us march and try our ways.
Turn to God.
It is good that man should wait.
It is good that man should hope for the
salvation of the Lord.

11. II. Thou, O Jehova, abideth forever

Thou, O Jehova, abideth forever.
God reigneth over all men and nations.
His throne doth last and doth guide all
the ages.
Wherefore wilt thou forsake us ever?
When wilt thou forget us never?
Thou, O Jehova, abideth forever
And all the length of our days will ever be
our saviour.

12. III. Have mercy on us, O my Lord

Have mercy on us, O my Lord.
Be not far from us, O my God.
Give ear unto our humble prayer.
Attend and judge us in thy might.
Uphold us with thy guiding hand.
Restore us to thy kindly light.
O my heart is sorely pained.
Cast me not away from thee.
Then shall we trust in thee,
Then we will bear our place.

13. IV. Sing ye praises to our king

Sing ye praises to our king and ruler.
Come and hear all ye men.
Come and hear my praises.
He doth bless all the earth,
Bringeth peace and comfort.
Shout unto God all ye men.
Shout unto God all your praises.
Sing ye praises to our king.
Come and praise him all ye men.
Shout and praise him all ye men.
He doth bless all the earth,
Bringeth peace to all men.

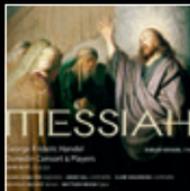
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