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SAMUEL BARBER: MEDEA

KNOXVILLE: SUMMER OF 1915 |

MEDEA (COMPLETE ORIGINAL BALLET) | A HAND OF BRIDGE

SAMUEL BARBER 1910-1981

KNOXVILLE: SUMMER OF 1915

MEDEA (COMPLETE ORIGINAL BALLET)

A HAND OF BRIDGE

MATTHEW DIBATTISTA tenor

ANGELA GOOCH soprano

DAVID KRAVITZ baritone

KRISTA RIVER mezzo-soprano

KRISTEN WATSON soprano

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

Gil Rose, conductor



[1] **KNOXVILLE: SUMMER OF 1915** (1947) 15:17

Kristen Watson, soprano

MEDEA (COMPLETE ORIGINAL BALLET) (1947)

[2] I. Maestoso *Parados (Jason, Princess, Medea)* 2:40

[3] II. Allegretto *Chorus: Jason and Princess* 2:15

[4] III. Allegretto – Largamente *Medea Solo* 4:00

[5] IV. Allegro ma non troppo, giocoso *Princess Solo* 1:13

[6] V. Andante sostenuto – Allegro moderato *Jason Solo* 2:04

[7] VI. Moderato *Chorus: Jason and Princess* 2:56

[8] VII. Sombre, with dignity – Sostenuto *Medea, Chorus, Jason and Princess: Medea's Dance of Vengeance* 6:41

[9] VIII. Minaccioso (with foreboding) *Chorus (Kantikos Agonias)* 2:39

[10] IX. Allegro molto *Exodus* 3:01

[11] **A HAND OF BRIDGE** (1959) 10:03

Angela Gooch, soprano

Krista River, mezzo-soprano

Matthew DiBattista, tenor

David Kravitz, baritone

TOTAL 52:50



MARTHA GRAHAM AS MEDUSA IN CAVE OF THE HEART. PHOTO BY PHILIPPE HALSWAN

By Samuel Barber

I was not a singer; I was seven years old when I began composing and improvising at the piano—the usual story. I was supposed to be a doctor, to go to Princeton; everything I was supposed to do I didn't! I was very lucky because the Curtis Institute opened its doors in 1924 when I was fourteen, and Mrs. Bok started that extraordinary school just thirty miles from my house. So I went there and had wonderful teachers. I was very lucky. I think I was very lucky always.

As for my own music, I've never written a book about it. I'm not pedagogical. I suppose if I'm writing music for words, then I immerse myself in those words, and I let the music flow out of them. When I write an abstract piano sonata or a concerto, I write what I feel. I'm not a self-conscious composer. I think that what's been holding composers back a great deal is that they feel they must have a new style every year. This, in my case, would be hopeless. In fact, it is said that I have no style at all but that doesn't matter. I just go on doing, as they say, my thing. I believe this takes certain courage.

Why haven't I changed? *Why should I?* There's no reason music should be difficult for an audience to understand, is there? Not that I necessarily address the audience when I compose or, for that matter, the players. Or posterity. I write for the present and I write for myself. Myself and Helen [Mrs. Elliott] Carter. Why Helen Carter? Well, she's the judge. She announced once that all American composers are dead except for Elliott, so we have to take our music to her, and she tells us what to do.

I can also tell you that one of the physical nurturing components that make my music sound as it does is that I live mostly in the country. I like being surrounded by nature. I have always

believed that I need a circumference of silence. As to what happens when I compose, I really haven't the faintest idea. The point is, I'm not an analyzer, and I don't surround myself with other composers. It seems to me that the most practical thing is simply to write your music in the way you want to write it. Then you go out and find the interpreters who will give it voice. The point is, composers have never helped me. Performers have always helped me.

I had always admired Mr. Agee's writing, and this prose poem, "Knoxville: Summer of 1915," particularly struck me because the summer evening he describes in his native southern town reminded me so much of similar evenings when I was a child at home. I found out after setting this that Mr. Agee and I are the same age, and the year he describes, 1915, was when we were both five. The motto on the score, "We are talking now of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee, and the time that I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child" seemed to set the mood for the piece. You see, it expresses a child's feeling of loneliness, wonder, and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep.

I think I have been very, very lucky in general and especially for symphonic or concert pieces. I've had perfectly marvelous conductors, pianists, and singers. I think that my operas have had ups and downs. Opera is the most slippery thing that you can get into. There are more excuses for not doing it or doing it badly. But I've always been a sucker for opera. It's terribly exhilarating when you finally hear and see it onstage, with all the costumes and lights.

I guess, for better or for worse, I am an American composer, and I've had a wonderful life being exactly that. It's true I've had little success in intellectual circles. I'm not talked about in the *New York Review of Books*, and I was never part of the Stravinsky 'inner circle.' In Aaron Copland's book, *Our American Music*, my name appears in a footnote.

These quotes appear in the collected interviews and essays of Samuel Barber Remembered: A Centenary Tribute (Boydell & Brewer, 2010) reprinted with permission.



Knoxville, Tennessee, circa 1905. "Looking north on Gay Street from near Clinch Avenue."

Detroit Publishing Company

KNOXVILLE: SUMMER OF 1915, scored for soprano soloist, solo winds, two horns, trumpet, percussion, harp, and strings, received its premiere on April 9, 1948, Serge Koussevitzky, conductor, at Symphony Hall, Boston, MA.

MEDEA (choreographed as CAVE OF THE HEART) is scored for wind quintet, piano, and strings. It was premiered on May 10, 1946, by the Martha Graham Dance Company, at the McMillin Theater of Columbia University, New York, NY.

A HAND OF BRIDGE, scored for four solo voices, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, percussion, piano, and string quintet, was premiered on June 17, 1959, conducted by Robert Feist, at the Teatro Caio Melisso, Spoleto, Italy.

By Barbara Heyman

Samuel Barber had read James Agee's prose-poem, "Knoxville: Summer of 1915," in *The Partisan Reader: Ten Years of Partisan Review, 1934–1944: An Anthology* and was arrested as much by its lyrical prose style—which broke easily into poetic fragments, with persistent alliterations and word repetitions—as by the impressionistic but faithful reverie of childhood Agee had portrayed. Barber reflected: "The summer evening he describes in his native southern town reminded me so much of similar evenings when I was a child at home You see, it expresses a child's feeling of loneliness, wonder, and lack of identity in that marginal world between twilight and sleep."

The intensity of Barber's identification with Agee's reverie coincided with Roy Barber's impending death and may be the reason he dedicated *Knoxville* to his father. The genesis of Agee's poem reveals a parallel to Barber's experience. Agee, too, was so overwhelmed with nostalgia that the writing was rapidly accomplished:

I was sketching around, vaguely, on a possible autobiographical novel (about 1937), and was so much involved and interested in early childhood memories. I was greatly interested in improvisatory writing, as against carefully composed, multiple-draft writing: i.e., with a kind of parallel to improvisation in jazz, to a certain kind of "genuine" lyric which I thought should be purely improvised. This text turned up more out of both states of mind, than anything else.

For Barber, Agee's text may well have been an idealization of the comfort he never had. In diary entries from his 17th year, loneliness is a recurring theme: "No one pays any attention to me"; "How lonely I am!"; "All my work is solitary, and all my play is lonely," he wrote.

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 [1] is completely lyrical and displays a strong predilection for instrumental tone painting. It is, however, a mature expression of Barber's artistry in setting texts, bringing into focus his strongest creative powers as a musical poet and master of orchestral color. The work is in one movement (fifteen minutes long), and moves naturally through three major tempo changes without abrupt breaks—*adagio ma non troppo*, *allegro agitato*, and *tempo primo*. It is in a rondelike form with a thrice-recurring refrain. The music is characterized by shifting major-minor modes and hints of blues. The middle section has frequent metrical shifts and hemiola rhythms, increasingly intrinsic to Barber's style.

The imagery of Agee's text provides abundant opportunity for musical word painting: "Talking casually"; the "increasing moan" of the trolley car; "the bleak spark crackling and cursing ... the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen;—faints;—halts". Alliterations create an irresistible rhythmic momentum: "the faint swinging bell rises again,—still fainter; fainting,—lifting;—lifts."

As early as February 1947, Eleanor Steber had asked Barber to write something for her voice and orchestra. Up to that time no American singer had ever commissioned an orchestral

work for voice, and the idea of promoting a singer's career through performance of American music was unusual during the 1940s.

When Serge Koussevitzky first broached the subject of a piece for voice and orchestra to Barber, he apparently had in mind a three-movement symphony. Barber, however, who began work on *Knoxville* before Steber confirmed her commission and with no particular singer in mind, said his conception of the piece involved a more intimate orchestration. Once he realized Steber might sing it, he continued with a more expansive version:

I suspected that what she really wanted was a big, whooping thing to do with Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony, but of course, *Knoxville* is not that kind of piece. I also knew Koussevitzky preferred the full orchestra, so I continued with the original scoring, and it was premiered that way.

From the beginning of their rehearsals, Barber was pleased with the progress and the way Steber worked. Only a few changes were required, primarily adjustments that allowed the voice to be heard over the orchestra. At Steber's suggestion, for example, one of the most difficult passages, beginning "Now is the night one blue dew," was moved to a higher register. The difficulty of this passage lies in the placement of the tessitura. Steber also urged that Barber change to a higher register the substantial passage at the end, "May God bless my people . . ." She pointed out to him that it was too low for a singer's voice to be heard above an orchestral accompaniment.

A commitment to work at the American Academy in Rome prevented Barber from attending the first performance of *Knoxville*, which was scheduled for April 9, 1948, in Boston. Before he left, at his insistence, arrangements were made for the complete text of "Knoxville" to be printed in the program—"not in tiny italics which they always do, but so that people can *follow* the words."

A chamber version of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* had its debut on April 1, 1950, at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., with Steber and a small orchestra of about twenty players conducted by William Strickland.

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 is considered to be the most "American" of Barber's works, not only because of the text—wherein Agee's nostalgic reflections identify with the folklore of growing up in America—but also because the music so accurately evokes the emotions of these reflections. "That was *exactly* my childhood!" declared Steber, recalling growing up in Wheeling, West Virginia.

The musical style of *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* is sometimes compared to that of Aaron Copland. Comparisons aside, Barber's setting of the quintessentially American text is "as clear and original and American as anything yet written ... the pinnacle beyond which many a composer will find it impossible to go."

* * *

In the early 1940s, the dancer Martha Graham was invited by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University to premiere a new ballet for the Second Annual Festival of Contemporary Music, to be held in May 1946. At the suggestion of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, she offered her friend Samuel Barber a commission of \$1,000 for the score, twice as much as Graham received for the choreography.

Dancer and composer agreed on Euripides's *Medea* for the subject of the ballet. The music Barber composed was to undergo two transformations before he was satisfied with the score as an expression of the myth.

The ballet *Cave of the Heart* centers on four roles—Choros, Medea, Jason, and the Princess—and focuses on events leading up to Medea's murder of the Princess (the ballet substitutes

a poisoned crown for the gown of the legend). Graham and Barber agreed that they did not want to present a literal portrayal of the legend in the ballet; in their words, "These mythical figures served rather to project psychological states of jealousy and vengeance which are timeless." In a television interview Graham described the story as dealing with "a passion that we all understand, because we all possess the impulse: envy, covetousness, maliciousness.... It's the unnamable thing of fire that dominates when the laws of the heart and the body are interfered with."

Graham's usual method of working with composers, as described by Gian Carlo Menotti:

To work with Martha was both very exciting and very frustrating.... She begins by giving you a very detailed scenario of what the dance is going to be ... vivid descriptions of the general mood. Martha has the extraordinary gift of inspiring her composers by throwing them all sorts of visual images. Often she does this in a rather inarticulate way, but somehow through her great effort to express herself, the ideas become even more expressive.

Barber began work on the ballet late November 1945, having just finished orchestrating his Cello Concerto. The urgency of a February deadline completely consumed him. To his mentor and uncle, Sidney Homer, in November, he wrote: "Art takes so long, one never allows enough time.... Now I must do a ballet score for Martha Graham for small orchestra of twelve instruments. She is our greatest dancer and it will be interesting to do—but it must be ready by February, alas!" In mid-January he was still "sunk" in the music for *Medea*. "I must force myself to remain in a deep Medea-gloom for the Martha Graham score," he wrote.

One month before the premiere Barber presented Graham with what was to become the first of three versions of the score. Scored for a chamber orchestra of thirteen instruments (flute, piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, piano, violins I and II, viola, cello I and II, and contrabass), the ballet is in nine sections [2-10].

Medea's world premiere was on May 10, 1946, at Columbia University's McMillin Academic Theater on the opening program of the festival. The ballet was titled *Pain and Wrath are the Singers* (a line from Robinson Jeffers's translation of *Medea*); the characters were the Barbarian, a Hero, a King's Daughter, and the Choragus. A program note explained:

This dance is a re-telling of the myth of the jealous act. Within the cave of the heart is a place of darkness, plunging far into the earth of the past. This cave is peopled with shadows of acts of violence, terror, and magic.

At the last minute before the first performance, Graham changed the name of the ballet to *Serpent Heart* and renamed the characters as follows: "One like Medea; One like Jason; Daughter of the King; and the Chorus." The new program more explicitly connected the psychological plot to the Medea legend:

This is a dance of possessive and destroying love, a love which feeds upon itself, like the serpent heart, and when it is overthrown, is fulfilled only in revenge. It is a chronicle much like the myth of Jason, the warrior hero, and Medea, granddaughter of the Sun. The one like Medea destroys that which she has been unable to possess and brings upon herself and her beloved the inhuman wrath of one who has been betrayed.

The dancers included Yuriko Kikuchi as the young princess (in her first leading role), May O'Donnell as the Chorus, Erick Hawkins as "One like Jason," and Graham, who, as the Medea character, was reported to have created "one of the most venomous parts in her repertory." In his biography of Graham, Don McDonagh described the electrifying climax of the ballet:

Her solo, in which she extracted a long red ribbon from herself, simulated the spewing up of a vile liquid having the corrosive power of acid. For decor, Noguchi prepared a rough gray, textured block for the chorus to stand on and a brass harness with

quivering brass rays emanating from it, which Medea took upon herself after the murder. Moving about the stage in it, she was like a glittering, malevolent presence.

Barber's friend, the poet Robert Horan, viewed Barber's score as "brilliant, bitter and full of amazing energy. The alternation of parts, like the swing of a pendulum, between relaxed lyrical flow and tense angularity, make wonderful scaffolding for the tragedy."

Although there was critical agreement that Barber's music had vividly portrayed the anguished, tormented Medea, what seemed lacking was the usual "sense of long line and the broad period" associated with Barber—"his lyrical gift"—for which were substituted "an interminable series of nervous, gasping phrases." These comments suggest that Barber's music embodied Graham's choreographic philosophy at that time: "Life today is nervous, sharp and zigzag. It often stops in midair. It is what I aim for in my dances."

Graham revised the ballet for the following season. Renamed *Cave of the Heart*, it was performed in New York on February 27, 1947, at the Ziegfeld Theater and remains in her repertoire under that title to the present time.

Although there have been other choreographies of Barber's *Medea* music, mostly in classical styles, it is Graham's that continues to be performed. Early in 1947 Barber rearranged the ballet score into a twenty-three-minute, seven-movement suite for full orchestra, *Medea*. The new (second) version of *Medea*, while using much the same musical content of the ballet, merges the original nine sections into seven and uses a greatly expanded orchestra. Dedicated to Martha Graham, the score was published by G. Schirmer in 1949. In 1955 Barber rescored the suite into one continuous movement, renaming it *Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance* (Op. 23a).

* * *

In 1958 composer Gian Carlo Menotti founded the Festival dei due Mondi in Spoleto, Italy. He instituted cabaret-style presentations called *Album Leaves* for which numerous artists wrote brief works lasting from three to fifteen minutes in various genres—operas, short overtures, theater pieces, and poems. Artists who contributed to these "intellectual cabarets" produced during the early years of the festival included Jean Cocteau, Thornton Wilder, W. H. Auden, Robert Rauschenberg, Larry Rivers, Donald McKayle, Italo Calvino, Aaron Copland, and Hans Werner Henze, among others.

For the 1959 season, Barber and Menotti (Barber's partner) collaborated on *A Hand of Bridge* [11], a biting witty nine-minute opera. With settings and costumes by Jac Venza and conducted by Robert Feist, it was presented on June 17, 1959, at the Teatro Caio Melisso. Scored for four soloists and chamber orchestra, including piano, the opera unfolds around a card game played by two suburban couples "acutely alienated from one another, each living in his or her own private world." The characters—Sally, Bill, Geraldine, and David—play out the situation on two levels, through the conversation over the bridge table and through glimpses into each of their private thoughts. For the formalities of the card game, the vocal lines assume a recitative style accompanied by a solo piano. As the inner monologues of the players are expressed, their vocal lines become increasingly melodic, each player in turn having a solo "arietta," as it were. The opera climaxes with a counterpoint of themes representing each of the four characters' subconscious thoughts. The rhythm is occasionally touched with jazz syncopations.

In *A Hand of Bridge*, there are several conscious allusions to Menotti's and Barber's circle of friends. The character Bill is modeled after a businessman neighbor of the composers' who had pretensions of being very religious. In the opera he fantasizes about his secret lover Cymbaline, enumerating a list of names of men with whom he imagines her. Only those initiated into Barber's and Menotti's personal life would recognize the names: Christopher (Barber's nephew Christopher Beatty), Manfred (Ibel), Chuck (Charles Turner),



Photo of Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti in 1936.

Collection of Samuel Barber Materials, 1936-1937-038, Curtis Institute of Music Archives.

Tommy (Thomas Schippers, conductor and close friend of Menotti who helped organize the first Spoleto festival and who eventually would conduct Barber's next opera *Antony and Cleopatra*), Dominic (the son of Barber's and Menotti's Mount Kisco neighbor, Hoime Chereau), Oliver, and Mortimer. Geraldine, who fantasizes about her ailing mother, is modeled after Sara, Barber's sister.

The American premiere was performed by the Opera Production Workshop and Orchestra of the Mannes College of Music on April 6, 1960, at the Fashion Institute of Technology Auditorium. The opera, conducted by Carl Bambrugger, was part of a triple bill that included Milhaud's *Fiesta* and Ibert's *Angelique*.

Critic Victor Yellin pointed to Barber's music as "jazzy, funny, sensual, psychoanalytical, and vulgar," as the drama demands. Appropriately, the cover of the G. Schirmer edition was designed by Andy Warhol.

A Hand of Bridge has been extremely popular with college and conservatory groups because it is effective without requiring large performance forces or elaborate staging, and perhaps also because it carries a well-known composer's name. Crucial to the success of a chamber opera of brief duration, however, is a cast of singers who are able to establish characterization rapidly and who are vocally adept at conveying changes of mood.

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Barbara B. Heyman, musicologist and editor, has written and lectured extensively about Samuel Barber. Her book Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music won the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award and is considered the definitive biography of the composer.

KNOXVILLE: SUMMER OF 1915

Music by Samuel Barber | Text by James Agee

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It has become that time of evening
 When people sit on their porches
 Rocking gently and talking gently
 And watching the street
 And the standing up into their sphere
 Of possession of the trees,
 Of birds' hung havens, hangars.
 People go by; things go by.
 A horse, drawing a buggy,
 Breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt:
 A loud auto: a quiet auto:
 People in pairs, not in a hurry,
 Scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body,
 Talking casually,
 The taste hovering over them of vanilla,
 Strawberry, pasteboard, and starched milk,
 The image upon them of lovers and horsemen,
 Squared with clowns in hueless amber.
 A streetcar raising its iron moan;
 Stopping;
 Belling and starting; stertorous;
 Rousing and raising again
 Its iron increasing moan
 And swimming its gold windows and straw seats
 On past and past and past

The bleak spark crackling and cursing above it
 Like a small malignant spirit
 Set to dog its tracks;
 The iron whine rises on rising speed;
 Still risen, faints; halts;
 The faint stinging bell;
 Rises again, still fainter;
 Fainting, lifting, lifts,
 Faints foregone;
 Forgotten.
 Now is the night one blue dew;
 My father has drained,
 He has coiled the hose.
 Low on the length of lawns,
 A frailing of fire who breathes.
 Parents on porches:
 Rock and rock.
 From damp strings morning glories hang their
 ancient faces.
 The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all
 the air
 At once enchants my eardrums.
 On the rough wet grass
 Of the backyard
 My father and mother have spread quilts

We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle,
 my aunt,
 And I too am lying there.
 They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet,
 Of nothing in particular,
 Of nothing at all in particular,
 Of nothing at all.
 The stars are wide and alive,
 They seem each like a smile
 Of great sweetness,
 And they seem very near.
 All my people are larger bodies than mine,
 With voices gentle and meaningless
 Like the voices of sleeping birds.
 One is an artist, he is living at home.
 One is a musician, she is living at home.
 One is my mother who is good to me.
 One is my father who is good to me.
 By some chance, here they are,
 All on this earth;

And who shall ever tell the sorrow
 Of being on this earth, lying, on quilts,
 On the grass,
 In a summer evening,
 Among the sounds of the night.
 May God bless my people,
 My uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father,
 Oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble;
 And in the hour of their taking away.
 After a little
 I am taken in
 And put to bed.
 Sleep, soft smiling,
 Draws me unto her;
 And those receive me,
 Who quietly treat me,
 As one familiar and well-beloved in that home:
 But will not, oh, will not,
 Not now, not ever;
 But will not ever tell me who I am.

A HAND OF BRIDGE

Music by Samuel Barber | Libretto by Gian Carlo Menotti

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David, a florid businessman
Geraldine, his middle-aged wife
Bill, a lawyer
Sally, his wife

David Kravitz, baritone
Angela Gooch, soprano
Matthew DiBattista, tenor
Krista River, mezzo-soprano

BILL One heart.	DAVID Pass.
GERALDINE Two clubs.	GERALDINE Pass.
SALLY Two hearts.	DAVID You play!
DAVID Pass.	SALLY Once again I'm dummy, forever dummy.
BILL Four hearts.	BILL Don't boast. Put down your cards.
GERALDINE Five clubs.	(<i>to Geraldine</i>) Your lead. <i>They play.</i>
SALLY Five hearts.	SALLY (<i>to herself</i>) I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!
BILL Pass.	I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers! I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers

I saw this morning at Madame Charlotte's.
Of course there is the red one with the tortoise
shell rose.
And then there is the beige with the fuchsia ribbon.
Still, still, I think I'll buy that hat of peacock
feathers!
(*to Bill*) From the table, darling!

BILL
I'm sorry, dear.

BILL (*to himself*)
I wonder what she meant by "always being dummy."
Has she found out about Cymbaline?
Cymbaline, Cymbaline, where are you tonight?
Where are you tonight?
On whose mouth are you murmuring senseless
night words with your geranium scented breath?
On whose black shoulder will you strew your blond
hair,
To whose pleading violence will your breasts
surrender?
Is Christopher, Oliver, Mortimer, Manfred, Chuck,
Tommy or Dominic?

SALLY (*to herself*)
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!

BILL (*to himself*)
Cymbaline, Cymbaline! Oh, if only you were my wife,
playing cards with me ev'ry night!

SALLY (*to herself*)
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!

BILL (*to himself*)
If it only were you I might take home with me at the
end of each game
And strangle in the dark!

SALLY (*to herself*)
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!
(*to Bill*)
The Queen, you have trumped the Queen!

GERALDINE (*to herself*)
What is he thinking of that he plays so distractedly?
Surely not of his wife, the long discarded Queen;
Surely not of me whose foot he no longer seeks
under the card table.
Who is there to love me?
Who is there for me to love?
Not he, the foolish knave of hearts, not my father's
faded photograph, not my stock market husband,
nor my football son.
Only my mother could have loved me had I but let
her!
But there she lies in her pain, cocooned in her
illness, an indiff'rent stranger, hatching for
herself the
black wings of death.
Do not die, Mother, do not die yet.
Let me see your pleading eyes once more.
Now that, at last, I am learning to love you.

SALLY (*to herself*)
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!

BILL (*to himself*)
Cymbaline, Cymbaline, where are you tonight?
They play.

SALLY
Ace of hearts.

DAVID
Nine of spades.

GERALDINE
Your trick.

BILL
Out of trump!

GERALDINE
The King of diamonds, David!
The hand is yours.

DAVID
Okay!
(*to himself*)
And this will be my epitaph:
"Worked for Mister Pritchett ev'ry day and ev'ry
night played bridge with Sally and Bill."

GERALDINE
Deuce of spades.

BILL
Six of clubs.

SALLY
Hearts.

DAVID (*to himself*)
If rich as Morgan;
If I were only rich as the Aga Khan, a maharajah,
A Rockefeller!

SALLY (*to herself*)
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!

DAVID (*to himself*)
If I could be a King, the King of Diamonds, the
Sultan of America!
An alabaster palace in Palm Beach.
Twenty naked girls, twenty naked boys tending to
my pleasures.

BILL (*to himself*)
Cymbaline, Cymbaline!

DAVID (*to himself*)
Lying on a bed of naked bodies, drinking scented
wine from cups of Steuben glass inlaid with
silver;
Ev'ry day another version of ev'ry known perversion
Like in that book of Havelock Ellis I keep hidden in
the library behind the *Who's Who*.
To whip a lovely Nubian slave for fun;
Or, better still, Mister Pritchett, the bastard!
Ev'ry one afraid of me, like Tamerlane or Genghis
Khan!

GERALDINE (*to herself*)
Do not die, Mother, do not die yet!

DAVID (*to himself*)
But no, it could not be like that;

If I were rich as Morgan I'd still play bridge each
evening with Sally and Bill.
Or Mister Pritchett!
Oh, never, never would I own twenty naked boys or
twenty naked girls...

SALLY (*to herself*)
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!
I want to buy that hat of peacock feathers!

BILL (*to himself*)
Cymbaline, Cymbaline!

GERALDINE (*to herself*)
Do not die, Mother, do not die now.

BILL
Hearts.

SALLY
Hearts.

DAVID
Trump!



Samuel Barber's music, masterfully crafted and built on romantic structures and sensibilities, is at once lyrical, rhythmically complex, and harmonically rich. Born March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Barber wrote his first piece at age 7 and attempted his first opera at age 10. At the age of 14 he entered the Curtis Institute, where he studied voice, piano, and composition. Later, he studied conducting with Fritz Reiner.

At Curtis, Barber met Gian Carlo Menotti with whom he would form a lifelong personal and professional relationship. Menotti supplied libretti for Barber's operas *Vanessa* (for which Barber won the Pulitzer) and *A Hand of Bridge*. Barber's music was championed by a remarkable range of renowned artists, musicians, and conductors including Vladimir Horowitz, John Browning, Martha Graham, Arturo Toscanini, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Jennie Tourel, and Eleanor Steber. His *Antony and Cleopatra* was commissioned to open the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center in 1966.

Barber was the recipient of numerous awards and prizes including the American Prix de Rome, two Pulitzers, and election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His intensely lyrical *Adagio for Strings* has become one of the most recognizable and beloved compositions, both in concerts and films (*Platoon*, *The Elephant Man*, *El Norte*, *Lorenzo's Oil*).



JONATHAN HARTT

Matthew DiBattista, a tenor described as “brilliant” by *Opera News*, is continually in demand on some of the world's most prestigious stages, having performed opera and concert works throughout the United States and Europe. He has sung with such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Seiji Ozawa, Keith Lockhart, Sir Andrew Davis and Andris Nelsons.

Known for an exceptionally varied repertoire, Mr. DiBattista has performed over 60 different roles to date spanning the entire operatic repertoire. He has been on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera and performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Glimmerglass

Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati May Festival, Florida Grand Opera, New Orleans Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Opera Boston, Virginia Opera, Opera Colorado, Tanglewood Music Center, Long Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Minnesota Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theatre, Odyssey Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Dayton Philharmonic, Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, and has appeared for eight out of nine straight seasons as a principal artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Mr. DiBattista has taught voice and masterclasses at Boston University, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, the Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music, DeSales University, Lehigh University, and Boston College High School. He maintains a private voice studio in Boston.

A recent Grammy nominee for Best Performance in Opera for his portrayal of the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* with Michigan Opera Theatre, he can be heard as soloist in Ned Rorem's *Our Town* (New World Records) and as the title role in Kamran Ince's *Judgment of Midas* (Albany Records).



Angela Gooch has spent a great deal of her career as an operatic soprano. From Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito* to Verdi's *Ermani*, she has performed and covered a variety of roles in operas including *Der Freischütz*, *Fidelio*, *The Nose*, *The Bartered Bride*, *Candide*, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *Le Grande Duchesse of Gérolstein*, the world premiere of Zhou Long's *Madame White Snake*, and Robert Ward's Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *The Crucible*. Other credits also include *Gianni Schicchi*, *Don Pasquale*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *The Telephone*. Ms. Gooch performed as the Voice of the Fountain in Golijov's

GRAMMY® Award-winning *Ainadamar* under the direction of Peter Sellars. She also created the role of Mary Lincoln in the world premiere of Eric Sawyer's *Our American Cousin* with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project and can be heard on the BMOP/sound label.

Ms. Gooch has performed with various symphonies and festivals including the Tanglewood Festival, the Monadnock Festival, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Red Mountain Chamber Orchestra, and with the Florestan Recital Project. She has also appeared as a featured performer at international venues including Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, the United States Presidential Yacht, the U.S.S. Sequoia, and in Italy at the Casa Verdi.

Ms. Gooch has served on the faculties at Boston University, Boston Conservatory, the Longy School of Music of Bard College, and the Walnut Hill School for the Arts, for which she served ten years as the head of the voice program. She has also served on the faculty at Boston University Tanglewood Young Artist Vocal Program and has committed many years of her work to teaching young students the exciting, dramatic world of opera. She has been honored by the NFAA and named in the Who's Who Among American Teachers as one of the art's most distinguished teachers.

Ms. Gooch is also an accomplished pianist. She has served as music director/conductor for Birmingham Summerfest, Birmingham Children's Theatre, the Walnut Hill School and the

Opera Theatre of Weston, where she recently music directed the east coast premiere of Nolan Gasser's opera *The Secret Garden*.



David Kravitz has been hailed as "a charismatic baritone" by *The New York Times*, "magnificently stentorian and resonant" by *Opera News*, and "a first-rate actor" by *Opera* (UK). His opera roles include Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* (Chautauqua Opera), The Forester in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Opera Santa Barbara), Scarpia in *Tosca* (Skylight Music Theatre), Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Jacksonville Symphony), Don Pizarro in *Fidelio* (Grand Harmonie), Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* (Opera Saratoga), Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* (Emmanuel Music), Duke Bluebeard in *Bluebeard's Castle* (Concord Orchestra), Wozzeck in *Wozzeck* (New

England Philharmonic), and Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* (Charlottesville Opera). He created the lead role of Davis Miller in *Approaching Ali* with Washington National Opera; other contemporary opera roles include Abraham in *Clemency* with Boston Lyric Opera and Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby* with Emmanuel Music. His many concert appearances include the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, the Virginia Symphony, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Emmanuel Music, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and Boston Baroque. An exceptionally versatile artist, Mr. Kravitz's repertoire ranges from Bach to Verdi to Sondheim to cutting-edge contemporary composers such as Matthew Aucoin, Mohammed Fairouz, Paul Moravec, and Elena Ruehr. Mr. Kravitz has recorded for the Naxos, BIS, Sono Luminus, Koch International Classics, BMOP/sound, Albany Records, and New World labels. His distinguished legal career has included clerkships with the Hon. Sandra Day O'Connor and the Hon. Stephen Breyer.



Krista River, mezzo-soprano, has appeared as a soloist with the Boston Symphony, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the North Carolina Symphony, the Cape Cod Symphony, the Santa Fe Symphony, Handel & Haydn Society, the Florida Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, Odyssey Opera, Baltimore Choral Arts Society, and Boston Baroque. Winner of the Concert Artists Guild International Competition and a Sullivan Foundation grant recipient, her opera roles include Dido in *Dido and Aeneas*, Sesto in *La clemenza di Tito*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Anna in Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*,

Nancy in Britten's *Albert Herring*, and the title role in Handel's *Xerxes*. Ms. River made her Tanglewood debut in the role of Jordan Baker in John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*. Other notable performances include the International Water and Life Festival in Qinghai, China, and recitals at Jordan Hall in Boston and the Asociación Nacional de Conciertos in Panama City, Panama. For Ms. River's solo recital at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, *The New York Times* praised her "shimmering voice...with the virtuosity of a violinist and the expressivity of an actress." Ms. River appears on numerous recordings, including *Wasting the Night: Songs* (music of Scott Wheeler), and Boston Modern Orchestra Project's recording of Tobias Picker's *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*, for which she won a GRAMMY® Award. Ms. River began her musical career as a cellist, earning her music degree at St. Olaf College. She resides in Boston and is a regular soloist with Emmanuel Music's renowned Bach Cantata Series.

Kristen Watson, soprano, has been hailed by critics for her "blithe and silvery" tone (*Boston Globe*) and "striking poise" (*Opera News*) and has made solo appearances with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, American Classical Orchestra, Mark Morris Dance Group, Handel & Haydn Society, and Boston Baroque at such venues as Walt Disney Concert Hall, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Boston's Symphony Hall. Opera audiences have heard Ms. Watson in productions with Odyssey Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera New England, Opera Boston,



Opera Providence, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Five College Opera, Intermezzo Opera, and Boston University Opera Institute in such roles as Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Voice of the Fountain in Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar*, directed by Peter Sellars. Praised for her "keen musicianship, agility and seamless control" (*San Antonio Express-News*), Ms. Watson has been recognized by the Concert Artists Guild, Oratorio Society of New York, Joy in Singing, American Bach Society, and Louisville Bach Society competitions and was awarded both the Lorraine Hunt Lieberson Fellowship with Emmanuel

Music and the Virginia Best Adams Fellowship at the Carmel Bach Festival. She has received particular acclaim for her interpretations of Baroque repertoire, performing as soloist for the Boston Early Music Festival, San Francisco Early Music Society, Trinity Wall Street, North Carolina Symphony, Masterwork Chorus of New Jersey, Duke Chapel Choir, Aston Magna Festival, Handel Society of Dartmouth, Sarasa, Arcadia Players, and Musicians of the Old Post Road, and has made frequent appearances with New England-based organizations such as the Boston Landmarks Orchestra and A Far Cry. An advocate of contemporary music, Ms. Watson has premiered works by composers such as Julian Grant, Eric Sawyer, and Francine Trester. As a versatile crossover artist she has made several solo appearances with the Boston Pops under Keith Lockhart, performed as a featured soprano alongside Greek tenor Mario Frangoulis, and shared the stage with veteran actress Shirley Jones in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*. Originally from Kansas, Ms. Watson holds degrees from Carnegie Mellon University and Boston University.



Gil Rose is a musician helping to shape the future of classical music. Acknowledged for his “sense of style and sophistication” by *Opera News*, noted as “an amazingly versatile conductor” by *The Boston Globe*, and praised for conducting with “admiral command” by *The New York Times*, over the past two decades Mr. Rose has built a reputation as one of the country’s most inventive and versatile conductors. His dynamic performances on both the symphonic and operatic stages as well as over 75 recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP has won fourteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming and was selected as Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra to receive this distinction. Mr. Rose serves as the executive producer of the GRAMMY® Award–winning BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, Cantaloupe, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

In September 2013, he introduced a new company to the Boston opera scene, Odyssey Opera, dedicated to eclectic and underperformed operatic repertoire. Since the company’s inaugural performance of Wagner’s *Rienzi*, which took the Boston scene by storm, Odyssey Opera has continued to receive universal acclaim for its annual festivals with compelling themes and unique programs, presenting fully staged operatic works and concert performances of overlooked grand opera masterpieces. In its first five years, Mr. Rose has brought 22 operas to Boston, and introduced the city to some important new artists. In 2016 Mr. Rose founded Odyssey Opera’s in-house recording label with its first release, Pietro Mascagni’s

Zanetto, followed by a double disc of one-act operas by notable American composer Dominick Argento in 2018 and the world premiere recording of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 2020.

From 2012 to 2019, he was the Artistic Director of the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, New Hampshire. Mr. Rose conducted several premieres as well as cycles of the symphonies of Beethoven and Mendelssohn. He made his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento as well as conducting, directing, and producing a production and world premiere recording of Ned Rorem’s opera *Our Town* in the historic Peterborough Townhouse.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 he debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz’s *Béatrice et Bénédict*, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center. He has since returned to City Opera in 2017 (as Conductor and Director) in Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall and 2018 conducting a double bill of Rameau’s & Donizetti’s settings of *Pigmalione*. In 2019, he made his debut conducting the Juilliard Symphony in works of Ligeti and Tippett.

As an educator, he has served on the faculty of Tufts University and Northeastern University, and has worked with students at a wide range of colleges such as Harvard, MIT, New England Conservatory, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of California at San Diego, among others.



TINA TALLOW

The **Boston Modern Orchestra Project** is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Described by *The New York Times* as “one of the most artistically valuable” orchestras in the country, BMOP is a unique institution in today’s musical world, disseminating exceptional orchestral music “new or so woefully neglected that it might as well be” via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span over a century. Each season, Rose brings BMOP’s award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory’s historic Jordan Hall, with programming that is “a safe haven for, and champion of, virtually every *ism*, and every genre- and era-mixing hybrid that composers’ imaginations have wrought” (*Wall Street Journal*). The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP’s distinguished and adventurous track record includes premieres and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison’s ballet *Ulysses*, Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and Lei Liang’s *A Thousand Mountains, A Million*

Streams. The composers performed and commissioned by BMOP contain Pulitzer and Rome Prize winners, Grawemeyer Award recipients, and MacArthur grant fellows.

From 1997 to 2013 the orchestra won thirteen ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming. BMOP has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, Concerts at the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization’s history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge’s Club Oberon and Boston’s Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP’s independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP’s extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today’s most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has released over 75 CDs on the label, bringing BMOP’s discography to 100 titles. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of a 2020 GRAMMY® Award for *Tobias Picker: Fantastic Mr. Fox*, nine GRAMMY® Award nominations, and its releases have appeared on the year-end “Best of” lists of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, National Public Radio, *Time Out New York*, *American Record Guide*, *Downbeat Magazine*, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical “night at the symphony.” Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.

FLUTE

Sarah Brady (piccolo) [1-2]
 Jessica Lizak [3]

OBOE

Jennifer Slowik
 (English horn) [1-2]
 Catherine Weinfield [3]

CLARINET

Amy Advocat [2]
 Michael Norsworthy [1, 3]

BASSOON

Ronald Harountunian [2]
 Jensen Ling [3]
 Adrian Morejon [1]

HORN

Neil Godwin [2]
 Kenneth Pope* [1]
 Lee Wadenpfuhl [1]

TRUMPET

Terry Everson [1, 3]

PERCUSSION

Craig McNutt [1]
 Brian O'Neil [3]

HARPE

Ina Zdorovetchi [1]

PIANO

Linda Osborn [2-3]

VIOLIN I

Piotr Buczek [1-2]
 Gabriela Diaz* [1]
 Oana Lacatus [1]
 Shaw Pong Liu [3]
 Miguel Perez-Espejo [1]
 Amy Sims* [2]
 Sarita Uranovsky [1]

VIOLIN II

Krista Buckland Reisner* [1]
 Julia Cash [1]
 Lois Finkel [1]
 Rohan Gregory [1]
 Sean Larkin [2]
 Nivedita Sarnath [3]
 Zoya Tsvetkova* [2]

VIOLA

Nathaniel Farny [1]
 David Feltner [1]
 Noriko Futagami* [2]
 Emily Rome [2]
 Emily Rome [3]
 Kate Vincent* [1]

CELLO

Egor Antonenko* [2]
 Holgen Gjoni [1]
 Rafael Popper-Keizer* [1, 3]
 Shay Rudolph [2]

BASS

Anthony D'Amico* [1]
 Scot Fitzsimmons [1]
 Adrian Phipps [3]
 Bebo Shiu [2]

KEY:

[1] Knoxville
 [2] Medea
 [3] Hand of Bridge

*Principals

Samuel Barber

Knoxville: Summer of 1915
 Medea
 A Hand of Bridge

Producer: Gil Rose

Recording engineer (Knoxville, Medea): Joel Gordon

Recording engineer (A Hand of Bridge): Antonio Oliart

Assistant engineer (Medea): Peter Atkinson

Editing, mixing, and mastering engineer: Joel Gordon

SACD authoring: Brad Michel



All works on this disc are published by G. Schirmer, Inc.

Knoxville: Summer of 1915 was recorded August 29, 2009, at Distler Hall, Tufts University, Somerville, MA. *Medea* was recorded on July 16, 2015, in Fraser Hall at WGBH studios, Boston, MA. *A Hand of Bridge* was recorded July 19, 2017, in Fraser Hall at WGBH studios.

This recording was made possible in part through the generosity of an anonymous donor.

Cover image: Germán Hernández Amores, *Medea, con los hijos Muertos, huye de Corinto en un carro tirado por dragones*, 1887. Oil on canvas.

Quilt pattern adapted from a photo by Rossana Ramani of a modern quilt created to resemble and pay tribute to the 1863 quilt created by Jane Stickle.

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 Editor: Chuck Furlong

