

# REINCARNATIONS

Samuel Barber was one of the few composers of the twentieth century who was able to make a living from composition for nearly his entire adult life. Though he expressed guilt about it later in life, he was not a teacher of music. Only for a brief period of three years did he reluctantly teach at his alma mater, the Curtis Institute of Music. Randall Thompson, a noted composer in his own right, became the new director of Curtis in 1939. He asked Barber to create a new choral ensemble at the school, the Curtis Madrigal Chorus, comprised of the 25 best singers at the institute. The previous year, the great conductor Arturo Toscanini had enthusiastically premiered Barber's *Adagio for Strings* and his *First Essay for Orchestra* to great popular and critical praise. Barber's international career as a composer should have been established, but the commissions were not forthcoming. Teaching at Curtis became a necessity. Each Monday, Barber would travel from his home in New York to Philadelphia to conduct rehearsals. He found the experience both rewarding and trying. He wrote to an Italian friend, Suso Cecchi, in March of 1939:

The only amusing thing has been my chorus, started last month . . . At first I was frightened of them and came into the first rehearsal with trembling hands. Until I saw that they were afraid of me and that the accompanist's hands were trembling; so this put me in a splendid humour and pleased me immensely. Now I have them in *my* hands, and in case my hands betray me and I beat wrong, have learned the right tone of gentle arrogance with which to blame it on them. I am told—*uniche conquiste dell'inverno*—that most of the 1st and 2nd sopranos are overfond of me: but could you see their pinched and stupid faces out of which such lovely voices issue, you would realize that, alas, the fruits of these barren and futile amours can be only musical. (This sounds terribly conceited, but I have a rehearsal today at 4 P.M. and am trying to encourage myself: as you see I am still rather scared of them.)<sup>1</sup>

Barber's mixed feelings about teaching, and his suitability to the task, are evident. Ironically, almost immediately after accepting the position at Curtis, Barber received a commission to write a violin concerto, which was the beginning of a never-ending request for new pieces. Although he was admittedly not passionate about conducting the Curtis group, he wrote some of his most profound and beautiful music for the ensemble, including "The Virgin Martyrs," "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map," and the final two pieces of *Reincarnations*. Though "Mary Hynes" was written prior to Barber's time at Curtis, it was premiered by the Curtis Madrigal Chorus.

A collection of 28 poems by Irishman James Stephens (1882–1950), *Reincarnations* was first published in 1918 and dedicated to Irish historian Alice Stopford Green. Stephens intended an anthology of poems about everyday heroes whom Irish poets of the past had immortalized. Stephens created

1 Heyman, Barbara. *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 181.

# CRITICAL NOTES

The following indicate differences between the first draft manuscripts [M1], the second draft manuscripts [M2], the second draft manuscripts edited for publication by both Barber and the Schirmer editor [M2B], and the 1942 first editions [E1].

## MARY HYNES

Most dynamics were later added by Barber in a very heavy, dark pen to M1 and transferred to M2.

*Measure 1:* The first note was a dotted quarter in M1 and M2 in all voices, changed to quarter tied to eighth on M2B by the Schirmer editor (also under the word "sun" of second measure, "love" in the third measure, and similar passages).

*Measure 9:* The last note in the bass voice has no canceling accidental in M1, changed on M2 (also m. 28).

*Measure 10:* The staccatos appear only in the soprano part in both M1 and M2.

*Measure 14:* The tenutos were added to M2 (also mm. 30 and 34).

*Measure 15:* There is no canceling accidental in the alto voice in M1, changed in M2.

*Measures 16–18:* The slurs are different on each copy: M1 has no slurs; M2 has only shorter slurs; E1 has short and long slurs. We have kept the slurs from E1.

*Measure 17:* In the tenor voice, the fifth eighth note is a D in M1, changed in M2.

*Measure 18:* *Crescendo* markings were changed to the abbreviation *cresc.* in all voices from M1 to M2.

*Measure 28:* A *crescendo* and *mf* in the alto, tenor, and bass voices appear in M1 but have been omitted in M2.

*Measure 29:* Note the lack of *mf* in the alto, tenor, and bass voices as in measure 10. The markings appear in M1, but not in M2.

*Measure 29:* No staccato markings in this measure in any source; intentionally different from the same material in measure 10.

*Measure 30:* The *tenuto* markings appear on the first note in all voice and only the soprano voice on the second beat in M2. The additional markings that appear in E1 were probably added to the final proof.

*Measure 34:* In M1, Barber indicates that only the soprano and tenor voices crescendo to fortissimo. Sopranos do not diminuendo as do the other voices in the next measures. This was changed in M2.

*Measures 34–35:* The markings *allarg.* and *a tempo* were added to M2.

*Measure 36:* Barber added an extra measure of the sustained note in M2. It is possible that this was an error as there is a system break between the second and third measure in that copy. Because he draws word extensions through all three measures and does not comment on it in M2B, it is likely he intended the extra measure.

*Measure 37:* The *più tranquillo* was added to M2.

*Measure 39:* No dynamic markings after this measure appear in M1.

*Measure 42:* In the tenor voice, there is no B-flat in M1. Barber does not include barlines during this section and may have considered that the B-flat from what would become measure 41 should carry over. In M2, both barlines and flat signs are present.

*Measure 45:* In the alto voice, there is no B-flat in M1. See note for measure 42.

## REINCARNATIONS

## 1. Mary Hynes

James Stephens  
(after the Irish of Raftery)Samuel Barber  
Op. 16, No. 1

**Allegro** *f*

Soprano  
She — is the sky Of the sun! — She is the

Alto  
She — is the sky Of the sun! — She is the

Tenor  
She — is the sky Of the sun! — She is the

Bass  
She — is the sky Of the sun! — She is the

**Allegro**

Piano  
(for rehearsal purposes only)

3

dart Of love! — She is the love Of my heart!

dart Of love! — She is the love Of my heart!

dart Of love! — She is the love Of my heart!

dart Of love! — She is the love Of my heart!

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## 2. Anthony O'Daly

James Stephens  
(after the Irish of Raftery)Samuel Barber  
Op. 16, No. 2

*mf espr.*  
♩ = 76

Soprano

Since your limbs were laid out The stars do not

Alto

Tenor

Bass

*mf*  
An - tho - ny, An - tho - ny,

Piano  
(for rehearsal purposes only)

♩ = 76

shine! The fish leap not out In the waves!

*mf espr.*  
On our mead

*mf espr.*  
On our mead - ows the

— An - tho - ny, An - tho - ny, An -

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## 3. The Coolin

(The Fair Haired One)

James Stephens  
(after the Irish of Raftery)Samuel Barber  
Op. 16, No. 3

Andante con moto ♩ = 50-54

*mf tenderly*

Soprano  
Come with me, un - der my coat, ———— And

Alto  
Come with me, un - der my coat, ———— And

Tenor  
Come with me, un - der my coat, ———— And

Bass  
Come with me, un - der my coat, ———— And

Piano  
(for rehearsal purposes only)

Andante con moto ♩ = 50-54

3

we will drink our fill Of the milk of the white goat, — Or

we will drink our fill Of the milk of the white goat, — Or

we will drink our fill Of the milk of the white goat, — Or

we will drink our fill Of the milk of the white goat, — Or

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