

Origins

Saturday, October 5, 2019 • 7:30 p.m.

First Free Methodist Church

Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
William White, conductor



CARLOS GARCIA (*1991)

Vast Array — WORLD PREMIERE

Changer Story

Roger Fernandes, storyteller

DARIUS MILHAUD (1892–1974)

La Création du monde, Op. 81a

Overture — Chaos before creation — The birth of the flora and the fauna —
The birth of man and woman — Desire — Spring (Coda)

— intermission —

CAROL SAMS (*1945)

The Earthmakers

Prelude

Procession: Tyger Tyger, Burning Bright

Orchestral Interlude I

In the Very Earliest Times

Father Raven

Sunflower

Orchestral Interlude II

The Three Realms

And God Laughed Seven Times

The Clay Jug

All Hallows

Na Areau the Elder (Part I)

Stone

Na Areau the Elder (Part II)

The Great Sea

In the Beginning of Things

Jessica Milanese, soprano • **Sarah Mattox**, mezzo-soprano

Les Green, tenor • **Ryan Bede**, baritone • **Mara Wald**, soprano

Seattle Girls Choir • **Jacob Winkler** and **Alex Gagliu**, directors

Please silence cell phones and other electronics, and refrain from the use of cameras and recording devices during the performance.

Special thanks to First Free Methodist Church and Ron Haight for all of their assistance in making this concert possible.

Refreshments will be available in the Fine Center during intermission.

Orchestra Seattle • Seattle Chamber Singers

William White, music director • George Shangrow, founder

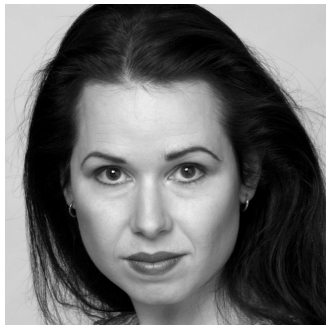
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Solo Artists

Soprano **Jessica Milanese** has been critically acclaimed for the depth and sparkle she brings to the concert and opera stages. *The News Tribune* called her performance of Mozart's *Exsultate, Jubilate* "all that could be wished for. [Her] voice rang like liquid gold, and she produced some goosebump coloratura." Ms. Milanese has performed with many of the region's leading arts organizations, including Seattle Opera, Seattle Symphony, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Northwest Sinfonietta, Symphony Tacoma and OSSCS (with whom she has sung the world premieres of Huntley Beyer's *Songs of Illumination* and *The Turns of a Girl*, as well as Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*). Recent operatic roles include Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Stella (*A Streetcar Named Desire*), Sister Constance (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*) and Miss Wordsworth (*Albert Herring*), all with Vashon Opera, and the title role in Tacoma Opera's production of *The Merry Widow*. Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*) is one of her favorite characters, a role she has sung with Tacoma Opera, Washington East Opera, Skagit Opera and Opera Pacific.



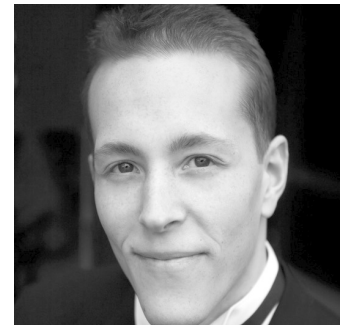
Mezzo-soprano **Sarah Mattox** has sung principal roles with Seattle Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Lyrical Opera Cleveland, Amarillo Opera, Eugene Opera, Tacoma Opera and many others. Favorite roles include the title characters in *Carmen* and *Cendrillon*, Dorabella in *Così fan Tutte*, Ottavia in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. She received special acclaim from *The Seattle Times* for her debut as Feodor in Seattle Opera's *Boris Godunov*: "newcomer Sarah Elouise Mattox... raised eyebrows all over the Opera House with her believable, lifelike acting and her well-schooled voice." In Cleveland, the *Beacon Journal* called her "a rich-toned mezzo-soprano who came to life as Dorabella." Also at home on the concert stage, Ms. Mattox has made several appearances at Benaroya Hall with the Seattle Symphony. She has also been a soloist with the Northwest Sinfonietta, Cascade Festival of Music, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Helena Symphony, Bainbridge Symphony, Pacific Northwest Ballet, the Walla Walla Symphony, Portland Chamber Orchestra, Eugene Concert Choir and OSSCS. As a composer, Ms. Mattox was won awards for her chamber opera *Heart Mountain* and her song cycle *Rumpelstiltskin and the Falcon King*.



Tenor **Les Green** is in high demand as a soloist throughout the Pacific Northwest. Highly praised for his seemingly effortless, expressive singing, Mr. Green performs a wide variety of literature, from Bach arias to contemporary art songs. He has appeared with many of the region's finest ensembles, including Oregon Repertory Singers, Portland Symphonic Choir, Annas Bay Music Festival, Mount Angel Abbey, Willamette Master Chorus, Eclectic Orange Festival, Rose City Chamber Orchestra, Cascade Music Festival, Northwest Mahler Festival, Salem Chamber Orchestra, Festival Chorale Oregon and Columbia Chorale. Recent engagements with Cappella Romana have included the Utrecht Early Music Festival in Holland and subsequent tours to Boston, New York and Ottawa, as well as the world premiere of Maximillian Steinberg's *Passion Week*. He has sung several highly praised performances of Handel's *Messiah*, an enthusiastically received presentation of Schubert's *Winterreise*, a "brilliant" recital of Beethoven and Schumann with pianist Jean-David Coen, the role of Victory in Hildegard von Bingen's *Ordo Virtutum* and the lead role of the Stage Manager in the Northwest premiere of Ned Rorem's opera *Our Town*.

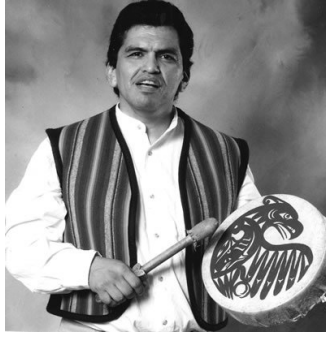


Baritone **Ryan Bede** made his Seattle Opera solo debut as the Second Priest in *The Magic Flute* during May 2017, followed in the 2017–2018 season by Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, Jim Crowley in *An American Dream* and Fiorello in *The Barber of Seville*, as well as Moralés in *Carmen* in May 2019. Recent concert engagements have included Handel's *Messiah* with both the Bremerton Symphony and Federal Way Symphony, Spectrum Dance Theater's acclaimed production of *Carmina Burana* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Early Music Vancouver/Pacific Musicworks, conducted by Stephen Stubbs. He has been a frequent soloist with OSSCS in such masterpieces as the Fauré and Durufié *Requiems*, Haydn's *Die Jahreszeiten* and Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. Other recent performances have included the role of the Land Speculator in the premiere of Sarah Mattox's *Heart Mountain* with Vespertine Opera and Samuel Barber's *Dover Beach* with the Bella Sala Ensemble. Upcoming engagements include a role debut as Belcore in *The Elixir of Love* (conducted by Clinton Smith) with Tacoma Opera and Mozart's *Requiem* with Symphony Tacoma and conductor Sarah Ioannides. He teaches voice at the University of Puget Sound and Tacoma Community College, as well as maintaining a private studio in the Tacoma area.



Guest Artists



Storyteller **Roger Fernandes** is a Native American artist and educator whose work focuses on the culture and arts of the Coast Salish tribes of Western Washington. He is a member of the Lower Elwha S'Klallam Tribe and has a B.A. in Native American Studies from The Evergreen State College and an M.A. in Whole Systems Design from Antioch University. Mr. Fernandes has worked in a variety of arenas, including Native education, social work, arts and culture. As an artist, he practices and teaches Coast Salish design and as a storyteller he shares storytelling as a foundational human process for teaching and healing. He currently teaches courses on storytelling and art at the University of Washington, Northwest Indian College and other learning institutions.



Founded in 1982 by Jerome L. Wright, **Seattle Girls Choir** provides a comprehensive choral education with an emphasis on vocal technique, musical literacy and ensemble performance for girls in grades K-12. The choir regularly collaborates with other Seattle-area arts organizations, performing regionally and internationally. Its 180 members from around the Puget Sound region are divided among six choir levels, Prime Voci and Cantamus being the top two.

**Comprehensive
Choral
Education**

**Grades
K-12**



seattlegirlschoir.org

A promotional graphic for the Seattle Girls Choir. It features a background image of a city skyline and a group of girls in black dresses performing on a grassy hill with umbrellas. The text includes 'Comprehensive Choral Education', 'Grades K-12', the SGC logo, and the website 'seattlegirlschoir.org'.

SGC artistic director **Jacob Winkler** grew up singing in the Northwest Boychoir under the direction of Joseph Crnko, performing in the world premiere of *The Earth-makers* in 1987. He attended the University of Washington, where he studied piano with Holly Herrmann and Marc Seales, ultimately earning his Master of Music in orchestral conducting under Peter Erös. He also studied film composition with Hummie Mann and is an instructor at the Pacific Northwest Film Scoring Program.



SGC Cantamus conductor **Alex Gagi** began his career with the Seattle Girls Choir in the year 2000. Born in Romania, he has been living in the United States since 1986. He received his Bachelor in Music (Piano Performance) from The Juilliard School while studying with Seymour Lipkin, majored in Choral Conducting under Joseph Flummerfelt at the Westminster Choir College, and is a Choral Conducting doctoral candidate at the University of Washington.



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View all upcoming choral performances
or find a choir to sing with by visiting
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or scan the code below.

A promotional graphic for Seattle Singings. It features a background of a city skyline. The text includes 'seattlesings', 'A project of the Greater Seattle Choral Consortium', 'This choir is a proud member of the greater seattle CHORAL consortium', 'View all upcoming choral performances or find a choir to sing with by visiting www.seattlesings.org or scan the code below.', and a QR code.

Maestro's Prelude

To celebrate OSSCS's 50th birthday, this season we're telling our story, concert by concert. Tonight's is about the creation of OSSCS. It's also about the creation of the world.

OSSCS was founded in 1969, although to use a word as lofty as "founded" might mischaracterize its origins. What happened in 1969 was that a bunch of Roosevelt High School and University of Washington students got together to sing madrigals and chorales around a piano. I doubt any of them could have known then that the Seattle Chamber Singers (later joined by Orchestra Seattle) would become one of Seattle's major community music institutions, giving dozens of world premieres, sell-out concerts at Benaroya Hall, and even local premieres of pieces by Bach and Handel.

If there was one person who might have had an inkling of what was to come, it would have been the group's leader, George Shangrow. Just 18 years old when he brought those singers together, he was a young man of talent, ambition and vision. The same could be said of his young colleagues, many of whom would go on to prominent musical careers as composers, conductors and performers. What's amazing is that nearly all of them maintained collaborative relationships with George and with the group.

One of those founding members was Carol Sams (known then and now as "Kia"). As a first-year doctoral student in music composition at the UW, her first teaching assignment was young George Shangrow's sight-singing class. In 1975, she became one of the very first women to earn her doctorate in composition in the U.S., and over the next several decades she devoted many of her finest talents to composing music for OSSCS, everything from small *a cappella* choral works to operas and symphonies. Of all those, *The Earthmakers* is her magnum opus.

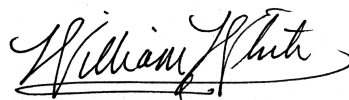
I started hearing about *The Earthmakers* when I arrived here as music director last year. You can only imagine my thrill when I first listened to it, and it dawned upon me that here was a masterpiece, one of the greatest oratorios composed in the past 50 years. I've called this season "Monuments," and it's hard to imagine a piece more monumental than this one. Its scope is epic, its sound palette vast. And yet it all hangs together, unified by Kia's innate sense of drama and her compelling musical imagination.

The Earthmakers takes as its subject the formation of the universe, as does *La création du monde*, an audacious ballet score by Kia's composition teacher, Darius Milhaud. Milhaud was fascinated by the jazz idioms that were sweeping European capitols in the early 1920s, and *La création du monde* reflects his interest in the most modern music as well as the most ancient mythology, gleaned from a variety of African folk traditions.

Opening our program is *Vast Array*, a piece that we commissioned to open our 50th season—after all, what could be more original than a world premiere? When choosing a composer for this assignment, I wanted to continue the tradition established by George of fostering working relationships with composers who had a real connection

to the group, so I turned to Carlos Garcia, a young multi-instrumentalist and composer (and, I might add, a most excellent Instagram follow: @carlosgarsizzle) who began playing violin with Orchestra Seattle last season. Expect to hear more from Carlos in the future.

I would close by telling you to sit back and enjoy the concert, but the fact is, you're going to have to stay on your toes this evening. There are all sorts of surprises in store, and *The Earthmakers* even calls on the audience to sing and clap along, so please do practice your parts and be prepared for rehearsal at the end of intermission.



Program Notes

Carlos Garcia

Vast Array

Garcia was born October 20, 1991, and now lives in Everett. He composed this work, which receives its first performance this evening, during the summer of 2019 on commission from OSSCS. The score calls for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes (one doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, strings and wordless chorus.

A native of the Pacific Northwest, Carlos Garcia began his musical training at age seven, when he started playing piano and violin. Inspired by classic films, classical music, and *Looney Toons*, he decided his passion was music in film. This led to an undergraduate degree in music composition and violin performance from Western Washington University, as well as a masters degree in film scoring from Seattle Film Institute, where he studied with Emmy-winning composer Hummie Mann. After working as an assistant for TV composer Ron Jones (*Family Guy*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), he opened his own studio in Seattle. His film scoring credits include the soon-to-be-released horror/adventure film *They Reach*.

"*Vast Array* is a short, fanfare-style work for orchestra and chorus that tries to capture no small concept: the creation of the universe," says its composer. The biblical account of creation provided inspiration, with Genesis 2:1 supplying the title: "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array."

"Although the work itself does not strictly follow the events of the six-day creation," continues Garcia, "it encompasses each day within the three main sections of the piece. In the beginning (no pun intended), we hear the initial big bang, followed by an aftermath of chaotic energy. As the first theme unfolds, more colors and textures emerge as the underlying pulse maintains momentum.

"The second section is a more down-to-earth perspective on the creation process (days three, five and six) in which living creatures, plants and mankind—the pinnacle of God's creation—are brought into existence. 'Earthier' tones dominate, set up by the strings and woodwinds, cre-

ating a more intimate — and even emotional — character. The familiar $\frac{9}{8}$ rhythm from the opening ushers in the final section, a recapitulation of sorts, but also a last look at the now-completed creation after the sixth day. The fanfare ends with the same intensity as it began, but with more order and a sense of completeness and wonder. In a way, this represents the seventh day, the day of rest — but not yet for the musicians! A final swell on an E \flat -major chord concludes the work with every voice and instrument, signifying the unity and harmony of the perfectly completed universe in all its wonder.

“You will no doubt hear influences by composers such as Gustav Holst, John Williams, and others known for their ability to write epic orchestral music of cosmic proportions. The work is also very much inspired by my love of creation and the beauty and design of the universe.”

Darius Milhaud

La Création du monde, Op. 81a

Milhaud was born in Marseille on September 4, 1892, and died in Geneva on June 22, 1974. Composed during 1923, this ballet had its premiere in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on October 25 of that year. The score calls for 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), oboe, 2 clarinets, alto saxophone, bassoon, horn, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, percussion, piano, 2 violins, cello and bass. Orchestra Seattle has performed this work twice previously: in January 1989 and April 2005.

Darius Milhaud grew up in Aix-en-Provence, where his family had lived for many generations. At age 17 he enrolled at the Conservatoire de Paris to study violin, soon switching to composition. A disciple of Erik Satie, he became identified as a member of “Les Six” (a group that also included composers Francis Poulenc, Arthur Honegger, Georges Auric, Louis Durey and Germaine Tailleferre), although he would later complain that the French critic who coined the moniker “chose six names absolutely arbitrarily . . . because we knew each other and we were pals and appeared on the same musical programs, no matter if our temperaments and personalities weren’t at all the same! Auric and Poulenc followed ideas of Cocteau, Honegger followed German Romanticism, and myself, Mediterranean lyricism!”

Milhaud’s compositional output varied from highly dissonant writing to works influenced by South American music (he served at the French embassy in Brazil during World War I) and jazz (which he experienced firsthand during a 1922 visit to the United States). In the summer of 1940, with the Nazis invading France, the Jewish composer fled to America, landing in Oakland, California, where he began teaching composition at Mills College. After the war, Milhaud split his time between Mills and the Conservatoire de Paris, all the while remaining highly prolific in a variety of genres (he numbered his last composition Op. 443), including 12 symphonies, 18 concertos, 15 operas, 19 ballets and 25 film scores. “Others write music to express themselves,” said Aaron Copland. “Milhaud, like no other composer I know, writes music to celebrate life itself.”

Milhaud’s first exposure to authentic jazz came during June 1920 in London, where he attended a performance by Billy Arnold’s American Novelty Jazz Band. “I had the idea of using these timbres and rhythms in a work of chamber music,” Milhaud wrote in his autobiography, “but first I had to penetrate more deeply into the arcana of this new musical form, whose technique still baffled me.” Other European composers (Satie, Auric, Stravinsky) “who had already made use of jazz had confined themselves to what were more or less interpretations of dance music.”

A 1922 trip to the United States provided Milhaud the opportunity for deeper study of jazz. In New York he heard Paul Whiteman’s Orchestra and another jazz orchestra “conducted by a young violinist named Reismann, who got from his instrumentalists an extreme refinement of pianissimo tones” including “barely formulated moans from the saxophone, which had a highly individual flavor.” In Harlem he heard music “absolutely different from anything I had ever heard before. . . . Its effect on me was so overwhelming I could not tear myself away.”

Upon his return to Europe, Milhaud sought out Fernand Léger and Blaise Cendrars, with whom he had been commissioned to create a work for Rolf de Maré’s Ballets Suédois. “Cendrars chose as his subject the creation of the world,” with a scenario inspired by a creation story of the Beti-Pahuin peoples from the rainforests of Equatorial Africa. “At last, in *La Création du monde*, I had the opportunity I had been waiting for to use those elements of jazz to which I had devoted so much study. I adopted the same orchestra as used in Harlem, 17 solo instruments, and I made wholesale use of the jazz style to convey a purely classical feeling. . . . Léger’s contribution helped to make it an unforgettable spectacle. The critics decreed that my music was frivolous and more suitable for a restaurant or a dance hall than for the concert hall. Ten years later the self-same critics were discussing the philosophy of jazz and learnedly demonstrating that *La Création* was the best of my works.”

With de Maré planning to take *La Création* on a U.S. tour and wanting “an authentic American” work as a companion piece, Milhaud suggested Cole Porter, who turned out *Within the Quota* (orchestrated by Charles Koechlin).

The scenario of *La Création* evolved between its first 12-performance run and subsequent engagements, but one account, according to Sally Barnes, has the overture playing to a darkened stage filled with “a tangled mass of bodies. Three enormous creation gods (Nzame, Medere and N’kva) move around it slowly, reciting incantations. The mass begins to move, a tree grows, drops a seed, and another tree grows. As leaves of trees touch the ground, they tremble and swell and turn into animals. . . . During a round dance of the creatures, a man and woman are born, execute a dance of desire, and couple. All the creatures . . . join the dance, which reaches a frenzy. Finally it dies down, and the couple remains isolated in their kiss.”

Although the ballet is rarely staged today, *La Création du monde* has continued to be one of Milhaud’s most frequently performed concert works.

Carol Sams

The Earthmakers

Sams was born November 25, 1945, in Sacramento, California. She composed this oratorio in 1986 with support from the King County Arts Commission (now 4Culture) and the Seattle Arts Commission. George Shangrow conducted Orchestra Seattle (then the Broadway Symphony), the Seattle Chamber Singers and the Northwest Boychoir in the first performance on November 17, 1987, at Meany Hall. OSSCS reprised the work in 1990 and again in 2004. In addition to vocal soloists, chorus and children's chorus, the score calls for pairs of woodwinds (including piccolo, English horn and bass clarinet, plus alto saxophone), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, large percussion battery (bass drum, snare drum, marimba, vibraphone, temple blocks, tomtoms, wood block, triangle, tambourine, suspended cymbal, güiro, bamboo wind chimes, glass wind chimes, chimes, cowbell, steins, rocks, hose, finger cymbals, sandpaper block, rattle and log drum), synthesizer and strings.

Carol Sams began composing when she was a young child, writing some four-part hymns at age six, "just from going to church and listening and taking piano lessons." In high school she sang in the chorus and in 1959 became so entranced with the movie version of *Porgy and Bess* that she decided to write an opera of her own. (Another followed, although they were never performed.)

At Sacramento State College, where she went to study mathematics, Sams first became acquainted with music theory. "I fell in love with theory: all those things inside music that I knew existed had *names* all of a sudden. So after three years, convinced that math was not my field, I transferred to the University of California at Santa Barbara, got a degree in music, went up to Mills College in Oakland to study with Darius Milhaud, got another degree, came to the University of Washington because I thought it was a small school (which of course it wasn't) and because I wanted to study with a particular teacher (who I found out wasn't there any more because they had fired him), stayed anyway, and got *another* degree" (the first-ever doctorate in composition awarded to a woman by the University of Washington).

Shortly after arriving in Seattle, Sams made the acquaintance of young George Shangrow. She and her husband, Jerry, joined Shangrow's nascent Seattle Chamber Singers, with whom they sang soprano and tenor solos, respectively, in dozens of Bach cantatas and other works over the ensuing decades. (Jerry Sams is singing tonight in the SCS tenor section, of which he has been a member for 50 years!) Along with Huntley Beyer and Robert Kechley, Carol Sams became part of a celebrated "triumvirate" of Seattle composers who would eventually write dozens of works premiered by OSSCS. ("They write music that people enjoy listening to—a hallmark in modern music," Shangrow would wryly remark.) At first these were short choral works or pieces for chamber orchestra, but before long came symphonies, operas and large-scale oratorios.

By 1986, Sams "had been talking to George Shangrow for a long, long time about doing a big piece for soloists and chorus and orchestra about the Creation." She set about

creating a libretto with the assistance of Rev. Rebecca Parker (then a cellist in the Broadway Symphony), originally titling the work *The Creation*, then *Myths of Creation*, and finally *The Earthmakers*. The oratorio was scheduled to debut in June 1987, but the advent of Performa '87, a "festival of new works" (in the fields of music, dance, theater and performance art) to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the King County Arts Commission in the autumn of 1987, resulted in the premiere being moved to November of that year.

Unlike Haydn's famous oratorio *The Creation* (performed by OSSCS in 1979 and 2003), *The Earthmakers* does not draw upon "the version of Creation as told in the Bible, or any one creation story, but all kinds of creation myths from all over the world, from a Zuni Indian myth right up to the Big Bang Theory," says Sams. "I've always had a hard time being exclusive, saying this thing is acceptable, another one's not. What's easy for me is saying, 'Let's celebrate being human, all the amazing things we're capable of experiencing.'"

"The great thing about creation myths is that when someone is making up a story *about* creation, they are creating something themselves at the same time. So that in writing about the beginnings of the world you're writing about the beginnings of anything creative. The whole idea of creation seems to bring out the playful in people, because creating is basically a playful act: it's experimenting with your ability to be expressive without necessarily having to be profound. I think that's tremendously liberating."

The Earthmakers is more than just an oratorio, in that it involves certain theatrical elements and some audience participation. "I want it to be more like a party than anything else," Sams said in 1987, "a celebration of the way things happen. There are so many fun things you can do. In one of our texts, God laughs the whole world into existence. I know exactly how he feels."

Reviewing the premiere in *The Seattle Times*, Melinda Bargreen called the oratorio "a big, sprawling piece, bringing together a large number of forces, musical styles and influences, and mythic texts" that "tries to make a real connection with listeners, and it falls gratefully upon the ear in an era when so many composers seem to be operating in a world of their own."

"*The Earthmakers* begins and ends in darkness," Sams and Parker wrote in the program for the first performance. "The opening section starts with the words 'Sometimes at night' and the work closes with the poetry of Galway Kinnell: 'half my life belongs to the wild darkness.' Wildness and darkness frame the oratorio, just as they frame the imagination of storytellers, adventurers, the curious and the creative. Between the wild and dark is a collection of mythic tales and poetry from diverse cultures, with the work of contemporary poets interspersed. The myths are panoramic: cosmic and objective. The poems are close-ups: subjective, detailed, particular, intense. Each illumines the other.

"The music does the same thing. Smaller orchestral groups typically accompany the poems, with one sung *a cappella* in order to lend it an intimate character. The myths

employ a variety of compositional techniques that mirror the essential character of each story.”

The opening **Prelude** “represents, in some mysterious way, the music of the spheres somehow singing to us all,” says Sams, “enabling us to be created in some mysterious sense.” The orchestra establishes a texture for the beginning of creation, then the chorus—from afar—sings an aleatoric cell (each voice part repeating specified notes at quasi-random intervals). Vocal soloists take up a melody introduced by English horn and repeated by other wind instruments, yielding to a child soprano and leading without pause to the second movement, **Tyger Tyger, Burning Bright**, a processional consisting of a set of variations on a tune (setting a famous text by William Blake) stated by chorus and answered canonically by the soloists.

An ensuing **Orchestral Interlude** “relates to those little teeny animals that people don’t pay much attention to: insects, frogs, snails, Northwest slugs and caterpillars.” This leads without pause to **In the Very Earliest Times**, in which the youth choir sings an inverted canon (the second voice being an upside-down version of the first) in duple meter over a ground bass in triple meter.

“The **Father Raven** story is improvisational in character—as if the storyteller were making it up as he goes along—and contains a story within a story. Likewise, the music is improvisational in style and contains a contrasting middle section framed by a solo baritone,” who sings the role of Father Raven, and “improvises a story that sounds so rational and plausible. In the beginning was the Earth-maker: what could be more rational than that? And then he goes on. He was sitting in space: where else could he sit?” (In 1987 pop-culture terms, everything is like Jon Lovitz’s pathological liar from *Saturday Night Live*: “Yeah, that’s the ticket.”) In the middle of the movement the tempo briefly slows as the other solo voices join in, then quickens again, culminating with a rumble (“the earth shakes”) that leads to **Sunflower**, in which tenors and basses, along with synthesizer and strings, repeat an ostinato pattern, reminding us of a sunflower. The sopranos and altos (divided into as many as six parts) sing the text of Rolf Jacobson’s poem over this ostinato, “essentially railing against the fact that everybody has to die. They’re singing of their sorrow and their grief at the inevitability of death. And whether they rail or whether they accept it, the sunflower still grows, and the inevitable still happens.”

A second **Orchestral Interlude** consists of three bird-song-inspired passages in six solo wind parts; strings and solo violin take over, personifying human passion. This leads without pause to **The Three Realms**, a drinking song largely in $\frac{7}{8}$ time, in which the audience is invited to join with the chorus in clapping a rhythm at specified junctures.

And God Laughed Seven Times features the most prominent tone-painting in the entire work. When God laughs the first time, light appears (“a tentative, curling sound in the high violins, lonely and delicate like some small thing in the dark cosmos”). Next comes water (“aleatoric chorus and woodwinds evoke water as ripples, a wave ac-

tion”). “When God laughed for the third time,” says Sams, “bitterness was created, and through it the whole universe could finally be seen, which I find an incredibly poetic idea. The way I demonstrated this was by using deep male voices divided in three parts, with a baritone solo,” colored by horns switching between open and stopped notes. No one knows what happened when God laughed the fourth time; Sams presents a military march that frequently stops and starts, as if a military band doesn’t know which direction to march. Fate results when God laughed for the fifth time; here woodwinds play in Middle Eastern modes (shades of the musical *Kismet*). The sixth segment features Chronos (the god of time), portrayed by a driving fugue. When God laughs for the seventh and final time, the soul appears (marked “meditative” in the score).

Off-kilter clarinets and bassoons introduce **The Clay Jug**, a choral setting of a poem by Kabir, a 15th-century Indian mystic. Next **All Hallows** “reminds us that we are still assembling our own landscape and we have a choice to do it for good or for evil.” Solo trumpet and strings introduce the first section, which features the youth chorus; trumpet remains prominent in the animated (and Copland-influenced) second part, with the adult chorus eventually joining in.

“The third myth is the story of **Na Areau the Elder**, divided into two sections. In the first, Na Areau creates a woman, Nei Teakea (depicted by a Polynesian dance—graceful, tonal and rhythmic), and a man, Na Atibu (described by a timpani solo). Their lying together creates Na Areau the Younger. The father makes a toy for his son, which turns out to be the world. But in order for the son to play with his toy, he must open the world, which is like a rock. Here an *a cappella* chorus interrupts the myth narrative, singing ‘Go Inside a **Stone**,’ the intimacy of the unaccompanied voices comparing the discovery of a new world with self-discovery. The final section of Na Areau’s myth introduces people into the world and invites the audience to sing along. At that point I really wanted the audience to emerge from under the stone too, and all of the birds of the forest and the animals in the open as well” (depicted by the orchestral accompaniment to this hymn).

The mood calms for **The Great Sea**, in which a duet for English horn and bassoon accompanies the solo mezzo-soprano. The final movement, **In the Beginning of Things**, juxtaposes two stories, the Big Bang Theory and a Zuni Indian myth, which share several common elements. “To present them as if they were the same ideas from different sides of the brain, the Zuni myth features wide vocal leaps and an unstable tonality, while the Big Bang theory is spoken by a professorial type who had been used to listening to scientific things all his life and had decided to figure out this whole proceeding—this whole oratorio—with his statement of how things really occurred, but finds himself somehow caught up in the story and begins to sing. The oratorio comes to a close with a final, intimate, personal invocation to those particular creative powers of darkness within all of us.”

— Jeff Eldridge

Vocal Texts

Prelude

Sometimes at night, when I look up at all the stars in the sky, I wonder how it began, the sky, the stars, the sea . . .

Sometimes at night, when I look out, and see the lights in the sky, I wonder how it began, the sky, the stars, the sea, the whole wild universe crying out: Here am I!

Here am I.

Sometimes at night, when I look out and see the lights in the sky, the moon and the stars, and the big tree outside my window, the wind moving through its branches, the shadows moving on the walls and the floor, and the white clouds and the moon, all these things, everything, I wonder, I wonder how . . .

— Carol Sams

Tyger Tyger, Burning Bright

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

— William Blake (from “The Tyger”)

Orchestral Interlude I

In the Very Earliest Times

In the very earliest times
when both people and animals lived on Earth,
a person could become an animal if he wanted to,
and an animal could become a human being.
Sometimes they were people
and sometimes animals
and there was no difference.

All spoke the same language.
That was the time when words were like magic.
The human mind had mysterious powers.

A word spoken by chance
might have strange consequences.
It would suddenly come alive
and what people wanted to happen could happen—
all you had to do was say it.

Nobody can explain this:
That’s the way it was.

— Inuit woman shaman

Father Raven

In the beginning was the Earth Maker, and he was sitting in space. When he came to consciousness, he knew there was nothing elsewhere. He did not know who he was or how he began. But he breathed and had life. Everything around him was in darkness, he could see nothing. His name was Father Raven.

Father Raven went about and planted herbs and flowers. From a flower came a pod, and as he looked, it opened, and from the pod, there came a human being, beautiful and completely grown.

And the Raven was so bewildered, that he threw his bird mask off, and became a human being.

He went laughing to the newborn man and said: “Who are you and where do you come from?”

“I came out of this pod. I did not want to lie there anymore, so I pushed with my feet and jumped out.”

“Well, well, you are an odd creature. I myself planted this pod, not knowing what would come out of it. But the earth on which we walk is not yet finished. Do you not feel how it shakes?”

— based on an Inuit story told by Apatac of the Noatak River

Sunflower

What sower walked over earth,
which hands sowed
our inward seeds of fire?
They went out from his fists like rainbow curves
to frozen earth, young loam, hot sand,
they will sleep there
greedily, and drink up our lives
and explode it into pieces
for the sake of a sunflower that you haven’t seen
or a thistle head or chrysanthemum.

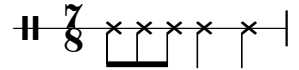
Let the long rain of tears fall.
Let the calm hands of grief come.
It’s not all as evil as you think.

— Rolf Jacobsen (translation: Robert Bly)

Orchestral Interlude II

The Three Realms

audience should clap when directed:



While drinking, all at once I saw
Why nature’s made of three realms.
Animals and people both drink and love,
Each according to its urges.
The dolphin and eagle, the flea and the dog,
Experience affection, and use their mouths.
So whatever can drink and love both,
Those in the first kingdom have their place
Vegetation, then, makes up the second realm.
That falls far short of the higher one.
Leaves have no love, but they can drink,
When the dripping clouds sink low.
The cedar drinks, the clover drinks,
the grapevine and the aloe tree.
So whatever drinks, but cannot love,
Those in the second kingdom all belong.

The kingdom of stones makes up the third.
Diamonds we have, and also gravel.
Stones feel no thirst, no tender urges;
a stone grows without rain or love.
Well then whatever can neither drink nor love
those in the third kingdom have their place.
And, human, tell me, if you have neither
Love nor wine — what are you? A stone.
— Gotthold Lessing (translation: Alfred Baskerville)

And God Laughed Seven Times

And God laughed seven times: ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!
God laughed and from these seven laughs seven gods sprang up:
Seven gods who embraced the whole universe, these were the first gods.

When God first laughed, light appeared, the god of the cosmos
and of the fire: Bessen Berrithen Berio.

When God laughed for the second time, water appeared. The earth
heard the sound and was moved, and was astonished and divided
into three, and the god of the abyss appeared, whose name is
Eschakelo: you are the eternal Bethlee!

When God tried to laugh for the third time, bitterness came up in his heart, whose name was Hermes. Through bitterness the whole universe could finally be seen.

And when God laughed for the fourth time, nobody knows what happened.

Then God laughed for the fifth time and while he was laughing he became sad, and Fate, whose name was Moira, appeared, holding the scales of Justice in her hand. So you see Justice comes from a place between laughter and sadness.

When God laughed for the sixth time, he was terribly pleased and Chronos appeared with his scepter, the god of power. And God said to him that he should have the glory and the light.

Then God laughed for the seventh time, drawing breath, and while he was laughing he cried, and thus the soul was born.

— Hellenistic Egyptian myth

The Clay Jug

Inside this clay jug there are canyons and pine mountains
and the maker of canyons and pine mountains!

All seven oceans are inside and hundreds of millions of stars.

The acid that tests gold is there, and the one who judges jewels.

And the music from the strings that no one touches,
and the source of all water.

If you want the truth, I will tell you the truth:
the God whom I love is inside.

— Kabir, 15th century Indian mystic (translation: Robert Bly)

All Hallows

Even now this landscape is assembling.

The hills darken. The oxen

sleep in their blue yoke,

the fields having been

picked clean, the sheaves

bound evenly and piled at the roadside

among cinquefoil, as the toothed moon rises:

This is the barrenness
of harvest or pestilence.

And the housewife leaning out the window

with her hand extended,

as if in payment, and the seeds

distinct, gold, calling

Come here

Come here, little one.

And the soul creeps out of the tree.

— Louise Glück

Na Areau the Elder (Part I)

Na Areau the Elder was the First of All. Not a man, not a beast, not a fish, not a thing was before him. He could not sleep, for there was no sleep; he could not eat, there was no hunger. Long he sat, and there was only he, there was only Na Areau sitting in the Void.

Then Na Areau said in his heart, "I will make a woman." And behold, a woman grew out of the Void: Nei Teakea.

Then Na Areau said, "I will make a man." And a man grew out of his thigh: Na Atibu, the Rock. And Na Atibu lay with Nei Teakea. Behold their child, Na Areau the Younger.

Then Na Areau the Elder spoke unto his son: "I will make thee a thing in the midst of the Void for to work on."

Within the Void, the thing was fashioned. And it was called darkness and the cleaving. The sky and earth were both within it, clinging together in the Void, and darkness was between them.

Na Areau the Younger walked on the side of the sky that lay on the land. The sky was rock, and lay against the land. He knelt on the sky and began to tap it with his fingers. "Open, Sir Rock! Open, Sir Stone!" It is open!

— Melanesian story as told by an old man
on an island in Vanuatu

Stone

Go inside a stone

That would be my way.

Let somebody else become a dove

Or gnash with a tiger's tooth.

I am happy to be a stone.

From the outside the stone is a riddle:

No one knows how to answer it.

Yet within, it must be cool and quiet

Even though a cow steps on it full weight,

Even though a child throws it in a river;

The stone sinks, slow, unperturbed

To the river bottom

Where the fishes come to knock on it

And listen.

I have seen sparks fly out

When two stones are rubbed,

So perhaps it is not dark inside after all;

Perhaps there is a moon shining

From somewhere, as though behind a hill—

Just enough light to make out

The strange writings, the star-charts

On the inner walls.

— Charles Simic

Na Areau the Elder (Part II)

And at the third striking, the sky opened under his fingers and he looked down into the hollow place. And Na Areau heard the sound of snoring in the darkness. And Na Areau heard the sound of breathing in the darkness. And he stood up. He rubbed his fingertips together. And behold, out of them came a bat, the first creature. And his name was: Tiku tiku tuomuomaa.

And he sent the bat into the cave to see what was there. Then the bat said, "I see people lying in the darkness. They don't move, they don't speak, they are all asleep."

Then Na Areau said, "It is the company of fools! Tell me their names, land on their foreheads in the darkness and tell me their names."

Uka the Blower

Na Awabawe the Sweeper

Karitoro the Roller-up

Kotekateka the Sitter

Kotei the Stander

And Na Areau sang,

Chorus sings first time through. After the small repeat, the entire piece is repeated, with the audience joining in:

There is ne-ver a ghost nor a land nor a man, there is on - ly the bread of
the first mo - ther. There is ne - ver a ghost nor a land nor a man, there is
on - ly the bread of the first fa - ther. There is on - ly the first
na - ming of names, and the first ly - ing to - ge - ther, there is on - ly the
first ly - ing to - ge - ther of Na A - ti - bu and Ne - i Te - a - ke - a.

And we are flung down into the waters of the western sea.

The Great Sea

The great sea
Has sent me adrift,
It moves me as the weed in a great river,
Earth and the great weather move me,
Have carried me away,
And move my inward parts with joy.
— Inuit woman shaman, quoted by Rasmussen

In the Beginning of Things

In the beginning of things Awonawilona was alone.
There was nothing beside him in the whole space of time.
Everywhere was black darkness and void.
Then Awonawilona conceived in himself a thought.
The thought took shape and got out into space.
And through this it stepped out into the void, into outer space.
And from them, came nebulae of growths and mist,
full of the power of growth.

After the mist and nebulae came up, Awonawilona changed himself through his knowledge into another shape and became the sun, who is our father, and who enlightens everything and fills everything with light.

And the nebulae condensed, sank down, and became water and thus the seas came into existence.
— North American Zuni Indian

The Big Bang Theory tells us about a creationary explosion from which matter came into being — a fireball racing outward in all directions at incredible speeds. At first it wasn't even matter; it was

pure radiation, energy, in which matter formed as a contamination in the way that ice will form on a pond in winter.

As the primeval nebula swirled tumbling through space, its fabric tore apart, radiated, and condensed anew. Tatters collected around cores, and from the cores gravitation reached out; whirlpools of starry tincture swept up the matter from space around them until they were all that was left, fiery beacons in a cold winter desert, only the thinnest of radioactive veils to settle over the rest of time and space.

— from *The Night Sky* by Richard Grossinger

I leave my eyes open,
I lie here and forget our life,
All I see is we float out
Into the emptiness, among the great stars,
On this little vessel without lights.

I know that I love the day,
The sun on the mountain, the Pacific
Shiny and accomplishing itself in breakers,
But I know I live half alive in the world,
I know half my life belongs to the wild darkness.

— Galway Kinnell

The myths from various native peoples and ancient texts were adapted by Rebecca Parker and Carol Sams from versions included in Creation Myths by Marie-Lousie von Franz (Spring Publications, 1972). Sir Arthur Grimble records the Na Areau story in A Pattern of Islands (London, 1952). Knud Rasmussen reports the Father Raven story in Die Gabe des Adlers (The Eagle's Gift), translated by Isobel Hutchinson. The composer gratefully acknowledges Robert Bly for permission to reprint "Magic Words," "Sunflower," "The Three Kingdoms of Nature," "The Clay Jug" and "The Great Sea" from News of the Universe: Poems of Twofold Consciousness (Sierra Club Books, 1980), and Richard Grossinger for permission to quote from The Night Sky (Sierra Club Books, 1981).

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