

EARTHMAKERS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2004 – 3:00 PM
MEANY HALL – UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Catherine Haight, soprano
Carol Sams, soprano
David Farris, boy soprano
Emily Lunde, mezzo-soprano
Howard Fankhauser, tenor
Jerry Sams, tenor
Brian Box, baritone
Michael Drumheller, baritone
NORTHWEST BOYCHOIR
Joseph Crnko, director
ORCHESTRA SEATTLE
SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
George Shangrow, conductor

CAROL SAMS (1945*)

The Earthmakers

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Please disconnect signal watches, pagers and cellular telephones. Thank you.
Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

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 earth, the stars, the sky,
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 stars and the big tree outside my window, the wind blowing 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...

Processional

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

—William Blake, excerpt from "The Tyger"

Orchestral Interlude**Magic Words**

In the very earliest time,
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.

—after Nalungiaq

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
there 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 Eskimo 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 a 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, translated by Robert Bly

Orchestral Interlude**The Three Realms**

While drinking, all at once I saw
Why nature's made of three realms.
Animals and people drink and love,
Each according to his 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 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 (1753)
adapted by Robert Bly from the
translation of Alfred Baskerville

God Laughed

And God laughed seven times. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!
God laughed and from these seven laughs seven gods sprang up which
embraced the whole universe. Those were the first gods.

When God first laughed, light appeared, the god of the cosmos
and of the fire. "Bessen berithen, 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 Eschakleo:
you are the eternal Bethelée!

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.

When 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, version by 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 wife 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 Gluck

Melanesian Myth (Part 1)

Naareau 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 Naareau sitting in the void.

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

Then Naareau 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,
Naareau the younger.

Then Naareau 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.

Naareau 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 the New Hebrides

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

Melanesian Myth (Part 2)

And at the third striking the sky opened under his fingers and he looked
down into the hollow place. And Naareau heard the sound of snoring in the
darkness. And Naareau 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 tuoumau.

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 Naareau 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
Nabawe the sweeper
Karitoro the roller up
Kotekateka the sitter
Kotei the stander

And Naareau sang,
There is never a ghost, nor a land, nor a man
There is only the breed of the first mother,
And the first father.
There is only the first naming of names, and the first
Lying together in the void.
There is only the first lying together of Na Atibu and Nei Teakea,
And we are flung down in the waters of the western sea.

—Melanesian story

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.

—Eskimo Woman Shaman, quoted by Rasmussen

Zuni Myth

In the beginning of things Awonawilona was alone.
There was nothing beside him in the whole space of time
Everywhere there 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 growth 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
sea came into existence.

—North American Zuni Indian

Big Bang Theory

The Big Bang Theory tells us about a creationary explosion from which
matter came into being and continued to expand and dissipate—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 suffocate a pond in a severe winter.

Summer ended for the original farmlands and vineyards of light, and in
almost all areas of the cosmos they withered and died. But their seeds
became the loom of a new cosmos. Intrinsic forces—gravitation, and within
that, electromagnetism, and within that intra-atomic nuclear forces—
combined and still combine giving shape to a present order of things we call
the universe.

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 stary 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

Middle of the Way

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, concluding stanzas

The poems used in *The Earthmakers* can all be found in *News of the Universe: Poems of
Twofold Consciousness*, chosen and introduced by Robert Bly (Sierra Club Books,
1980). The myths are from various native peoples and ancient texts and are adapted
here from versions included in *Creation Myths*, by Marie-Louise Von Franz (Spring
Publications, 1972). Sir Arthur Grimble records the Naareau story in his book *A Pattern
of Islands* (London, 1952). The Father Raven story is reported by Knud Rasmussen in *Die
Gabe des Adlers (The Eagle's Gift)*, translated by Isobel Hutchinson. Grateful
acknowledgment is made to 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, Sierra Club Books, 1980; and to Richard Grossinger for
permission to quote from *The Night Sky*, Sierra Club Books, 1981.

CAROL SAMS

The Earthmakers

Carol Sams was born in Sacramento, California, in 1945. She composed her oratorio *The Earthmakers* on a commission from the King County Arts Commission in 1986. The first performance was given in Meany Hall on November 17, 1987, by Orchestra Seattle (then the Broadway Symphony), the Seattle Chamber Singers and the Northwest Boychoir, under the direction of George Shangrow. The composer revised the orchestration prior to this performance. In addition to vocal soloists, chorus and children's chorus, the work calls for 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (one doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), alto saxophone, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, large percussion battery (bass drum, snare drum, marimba, vibraphone, temple blocks, tom-toms, 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 is a well known Seattle composer and soprano whose works have been performed by many area ensembles, including Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers, Washington Composers Forum, and the University of Washington Contemporary Group. A student of Darius Milhaud, her compositions have been performed throughout the United States and in Europe. Her full-length opera *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, commissioned by the Tacoma Opera, was premiered in 1993. Along with many songs, choral pieces, and a symphony, Ms. Sams has a total of twelve operas to her credit. She holds a DMA degree in composition from the University of Washington, an MA from Mills College, and is currently on the music faculty at North Seattle Community College.

The Earthmakers is an oratorio that relates creation myths from a variety of different cultures around the world; it is set to a libretto selected by Dr. Rebecca Parker. For the 1987 premiere, the composer and librettist provided the following program notes:

The Earthmakers begins and ends in darkness. The opening introductory section starts with the words "Sometimes at night" and the work closes with the words of poet Galway Kinnell, "half my life belongs to the wild darkness." Wildness and darkness frame the oratorio as they frame the imagination of storytellers, adventurers, the curious, and the creative. Between the wild and the 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. Usually for the poems, smaller orchestral groups are used, including one *a cappella* setting, in order to give an intimate feeling. For the myths, different compositional techniques are employed that mirror the essential character of each story.

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 middle contrasting section framed by a bass solo. The "God Who Laughed Seven Times" story has seven contrasting, illustrative sections, each described differently by the music. The recurrent laugh is the element that holds them together. In this myth particularly, the

music is used to create sound pictures. Light is set as a tentative, curling sound in the high violins, lonely and delicate like some small thing in the dark cosmos. Water is set as ripples, as wave action, with an aleatoric chorus and woodwinds. When bitterness appears the images become much more subjective. Bitterness is pictured with tone colors — the dark sound of the male voices with baritone solo.

The third myth is the story of Naareau and it divides into two sections. In the first section Naareau creates a woman and a man. The creation of the woman, Nei Teakea, is set like a Polynesian dance — graceful, tonal, and rhythmic. Na Atibu, the man, is described by a timpani solo. Their lying together creates Naareau 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 it he has to open the world, which is like a rock. Here the myth narrative is interrupted by a *cappella* chorus singing "Go inside a stone." Through the intimacy of the *a cappella* sound the discovery of a new world is compared with self-discovery. The final section of Naareau's myth introduces people into the world, and invites the audience to sing along.

The Big Bang theory and the Zuni Indian myth share several common elements. To show them as if they were the same ideas from different sides of the brain, the Zuni myth is sung with wide vocal leaps and an unstable tonality. In contrast, the Big Bang Theory is spoken in a pompous way by a stuffy university professor who becomes carried away by the poetry in his own concepts and begins to sing. These two stories are superimposed so that their similar images occur at the same time, and comment on each other.

The piece comes to a close with a final, intimate, personal invocation to those particular creative powers of darkness within all of us.

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Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37
Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major (*Eroica*), Op. 55

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Under the direction of Joseph Crnko, the **NORTHWEST BOYCHOIR** has become one of the leading children's choirs in the United States, combining professional performance experience with outstanding musical training. Officially designated the "Singing Ambassadors" of Washington State by Governor Gary Locke, the Northwest Boychoir has performed around the world and throughout the United States. In 2001, the choir's tour of the northeastern United States included concerts at Saint John the Divine and the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Last year's tour brought them to California, and included concerts at Grace Cathedral (San Francisco) and Saint Anthony's (Santa Barbara). The Northwest Boychoir frequently performs with Seattle's leading musical ensembles. In 2002, the choir collaborated with the Seattle Symphony for the premiere of *Eudora's Fable: The Shoe Bird*, by composer Samuel Jones, and Daniel Brewbaker's *Fields Of Vision*. Last November, the choir joined the SSO for Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish*; in June, the choir will be heard in Orff's *Carmina Burana*. The Northwest Boychoir has also made several holiday recordings and can be heard on many movie soundtracks.

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Classical KING FM 98.1
Columbia Winery
Gerard & Dominique Seafood

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