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# The Chorus Newsletter

Published for and about the NOVA Community Chorus  
[www.nvcc.edu/alexandria/visual/music](http://www.nvcc.edu/alexandria/visual/music)

## Messiah at Epiphany

The NOVA Community Chorus sang the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah at the Church of the Epiphany, Washington, DC on 3 December 2006.

Dr. Mark Whitmire conducted the chorus and a reduced Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, augmented by Chris Hagan on the keyboard.

Soloists consisted of Grace and Aurelius Gori, Jennifer Lopez, Jon Lackey and Terri LaGoe.

The chorus mounted the risers following the presentation of the Barber Violin Concerto, op 14, performed by the 16 year old violinist, Erin Phelps.

Phelps had won the Virginia Music Teachers Association Concerto Competition, the Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association (NVMTA) Concerto Competition, the NVMTA Caurine Easterling Achievement Awards, the Washington Music Teachers Association Gretchen Hood Strings Competition, and the Frederick Orchestra Concerto Competition.

Her performance on this occasion demonstrated her maturity in mastering this difficult work.

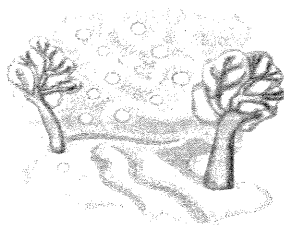
The program will be presented again on Sunday, 10 December 2006 at Schlesinger on the Nova Alexandria campus.

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Musical  
Humor

Samuel Barber



## MUSICAL HUMOR

## Samuel Barber

### Top Ten Ways a Church Choir Director Can Tell Someone He/She Can't Sing

10. I'm sorry. We've run out of robes.
9. We need strong singers like you in the congregation to help them sing the hymns.
8. I wouldn't want you to strain your voice.
7. Did you know singing can aggravate sinus problems?
6. We still need good people for the handbell choir.
5. Here's a book on spiritual gifts. Why don't you look through it, and we can find another place in the church for you to minister effectively ?
4. It's a shame composers don't write more songs in your style.
3. You have a unique range - you hit both notes well.
2. Did you know there is a new Bible study starting the same night as choir practice? I think you'd get a lot from it.
1. You have excellent posture.

From the Web

To our sound bite generation, Barber's life is devoid of any excitement. He was never a minor subsidiary figure in even a mildly lurid scandal, he shunned the glamour of partisan musical and non-musical politics, he gave no lectures, he wrote no books, he was not a performer — although he began his career as a singer — and he did not teach, except for two years at Curtis which he said he heartily disliked. He went his own merry (some would say morose) way. He did nothing but compose, a rare privilege in a profession that does not allow for any overabundance of luxuries.

Certainly in the early years he was in many ways the spoiled darling of the gods. He was born into a comfortable, educated, social, and distinguished American family (he was related to Robert Fulton) in West Chester, Pennsylvania on 9 March 1910. He was spared the virtues of poverty and never enjoyed the values of starving in a garret. His father was a doctor, an Episcopalian pillar of society, his mother was a sensitive amateur pianist; his aunt, Louise Homer, a leading soprano at the Metropolitan Opera, was married to Sidney Homer, a respectable composer of American art songs. Perhaps more than anybody it was Homer who molded the integrity and aesthetic values of his nephew. When he died in 1953 Barber was profoundly grieved.

Barber, an uncommonly bright boy, was unduly pampered and spoiled. He retained the art of playing stage center; he never fully outgrew these years, and remained a master of attracting friends who, as he did, indulged in caviar and champagne. In his teens at Curtis he was a triple threat prodigy of composition, voice, and piano and became a favorite of Mary Louise Curtis Bok, founder of the school. It was she who introduced him to the Schirmer family (his only publisher) and later helped him to acquire Capricorn, his home in Mount Kisco, New York. At this time he met Gian Carlo Menotti, a 17-year-old Italian youth, recommended to the school by Toscanini. In 1928 his winning a prize from Columbia University for his Violin Sonata financed a trip to Europe. His interest in European life and culture now blossomed into a full blown love affair. Forever after he felt equally at home on two continents.

Excerpted from "Samuel Barber: An Improvisatory Portrait"  
*Essay by Paul Wittke*

The Chorus Newsletter welcomes news, articles and photographic contributions. Are you planning a recital? Tell us when and where and we will get the word out. Call the editor, Bob Trexler at 703 978-9171 or e-mail at [Retrex@aol.com](mailto:Retrex@aol.com).

The Chorus Newsletter contains information about and for members of the NOVA Community Chorus. It is privately published monthly except during June and July. The College has no responsibility for its content. Members are encouraged to contribute articles and news about musical offerings and musical topics to Robert Trexler, editor and publisher, at [Retrex@aol.com](mailto:Retrex@aol.com)