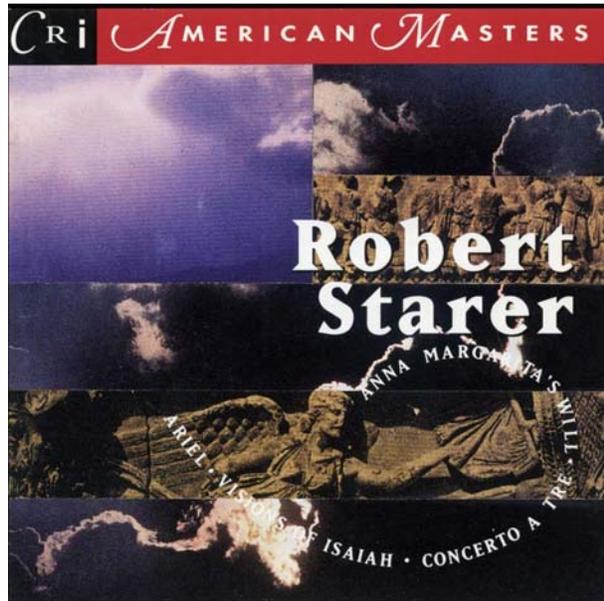


Robert Starer



- Ariel, Visions of Isaiah* (1959) (29:08)
1. I. Woe to Ariel (5:32)
 2. II. The Earth Mourneth (4:51)
 3. III. The Daughters of Zion are Haughty ... (2:20)
 4. IV. Fear, and the Pit, and the Snare (8:03)
 5. V. The Lord Shall Give Thee Rest (3:47)
 6. VI. Break Forth into Joy (4:36)
- Roberta Peters, soprano; Julian Patrick, baritone; Camerata Singers and Orchestra; Abraham Kaplan, conductor
- Concerto a Tre* (1954) (17:33)
7. I. – Allegro (4:50)
 8. II. – Andante (7:07)
 9. III. – Molto Allegro e Giocoso (5:37)
- Joseph Rabbai, clarinet; Gerard Schwarz, trumpet; Per Brevig, trombone; Camerata String Orchestra; Abraham Kaplan, conductor
10. *Anna Margarita's Will* (1979) (16:56)
- text by Gail Godwin; Phyllis Bryn-Julson, soprano; Karl Kraber, flute; Stephen Kates, cello; Paul Ingraham, horn; Donald Sutherland, piano

Total playing time: 63:56

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Notes

Ariel, Visions of Isaiah, for soprano, baritone, chorus, and orchestra was commissioned by the Interracial Fellowship Chorus in 1959 and given its premiere on May 15, 1960 in New York City under the direction of Harold Aks. *Ariel* (literally: “Lion of God”) is generally understood to be a symbolic name for Jerusalem (“the city where David dwelt”), but may be interpreted in a much wider sense.

In the opening dirge, “Woe to Ariel,” Isaiah warns that “a people laden with iniquity shall be brought down... and shall whisper out of the dust.” In the second movement, “The Earth Mourneth,” the baritone, who represents Isaiah, asks the people “to hide themselves until this indignation to be overpast.” The third, a mordant *scherzo*, describes the wantonness of the daughters of Zion with their mincing steps and tinkling ornaments. The work arrives at a dramatic climax and turning point in the fourth movement, “Fear, and the Pit, and the Snare.” After a tender lament by the solo soprano asking, “Look away from me,” different groups of voices are heard from the chorus in response to imminent destruction, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die” or “Who seeth us? Who knoweth us?” or “Whither shall we flee, how shall we escape?” The turning point is reached when the baritone sings, “Be strong, fear not. The Lord will save you.” The lyrical fifth movement, “The Lord Shall Give Thee Rest,” is scored for large chorus and small chorus *a cappella* and the orchestra returns in the jubilant finale, “Break Forth into Joy.” *Concerto a Tre* for clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and strings was composed in 1954 and premiered on November 22nd of the same year by the Little Orchestra Society under the direction of Thomas Scherman.

The opening Allegro has elements of the concerto grosso in the juxtaposition of the solo trio against the string orchestra. The second movement, an Andante, treats the solo

instruments more in their individual capacities. Each of them has its own thematic material, derived from its particular quality of sound and technique. In the finale, *Molto allegro e giocoso*, there is a cadenza-like section near the end called “Triologue.” It could be compared to a vocal *terzetto* in that the three instrumentalists enter into purposeful conversation with each other.

In 1962, Martha Graham created a dance work to the music of *Concerto a Tre* called *Secular Games*. This is one of the rare instances in her life that she choreographed to an existing score. (*Ariel* and *Concerto a Tre* were originally recorded on a Desto LP).

Anna Margarita's Will (text by Gail Godwin) for soprano, flute, horn, cello, and piano was composed in 1979 and recorded by CRI under a grant from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1980.

Anna Margarita's Will may be considered a dramatic monologue or a continuous song cycle. Anna, a woman of wealth, not yet old, has decided to make her will since she has no natural heirs except her frivolous cousin Loulie in Alabama. She speaks of people, dead and alive, who have shaped her. She reads from her mother’s diary, quotes her father, who gave her courage and nerve, and remembers Sister Ursula, who sat with her the night her father died. In a less somber mood, she imagines what would happen if she left her house to a married love. What his wife would say when she opens the letter. She speaks of her college love who often said, “Drink deep, Anna Margarita, or don’t drink at all,” and cousin Loulie, who would say, “What good to me is a house in the north, with all that snow and all that crime?” Having disposed of all her possessions in fantasy and having said a last farewell to her dearest ghosts, she discovers to her surprise that she is ready to begin life anew.

Anna Margarita's Will is Robert Starer's fourth collaboration with Gail Godwin. The others are *The Last Lover* (Caramoor Festival 1975), *Journals of Songmaker* (Pittsburgh Symphony under William Steinberg 1976), and *Apollonia* (Minnesota Opera 1979). Their most recent collaboration is *Remembering Felix* (Chamber Music PLUS 1987). Gail Godwin is the author of eight novels and two collections of short stories.

Robert Starer (d New York, 2001) was born in Vienna in 1924 and entered the State Academy of Music at the age of thirteen. Soon after Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938, he went to Jerusalem and continued his musical studies at the Palestine Conservatoire. During World War II, he served with the British Royal Air Force. In 1947, he came to New York for post-graduate study at Juilliard and also studied with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood in 1948. He became an American citizen in 1957. He taught at Juilliard from 1949 to 1974 and at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center of the

City University of New York from 1963 to 1991. He was named a distinguished professor in 1986. Among his honors are two Guggenheim Fellowships and an award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

His works for the stage include three operas and ballets for Martha Graham and Anna Sokolow. His orchestral works have been performed by major orchestras here and abroad under such conductors as Mitropoulos, Bernstein, Steinberg, Leinsdorf, and Mehta. Interpreters of his music include Roberta Peters, Leontyne Price, and Janos Starker. The recording of his Violin Concerto (Itzhak Perlman with the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa) was nominated for a Grammy award in 1986. His book, *Continuo: A Life in Music*, was published by Random House in 1987. Excerpts from it have appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Musical America*, and the *London Times*.

Ariel, Visions of Isaiah

1. I. Woe to Ariel

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! Add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

Yet I will distress Ariel, there shall be heaviness and sorrow; and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

I will camp against thee, I will lay siege against thee, and will raise forts against thee.

And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and their speech shall whisper out of the dust.

- Isaiah 29:1-4

Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land strangers devour it in your presence, a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked Him unto anger.

- Isaiah 1:4.7

2. II. The Earth Mourneth

The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away.

- Isaiah 24:4

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

- Isaiah 26:20

Woe unto them that join house to house. Woe unto them that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.

- Isaiah 5:8

3. III. The Daughters of Zion are Haughty

The daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion.

Therefore the Lord will take away the tinkling ornaments about their feet, their cauls and chains and bracelets and mufflers,

Their rings and bonnets and headbands and jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, the mantles and wimples and crisping pins,

The bracelets and mufflers and bonnets and earrings, the tablets and jewels and headbands and linen, the hoods and veils.

Instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of beauty, burning.

- Isaiah 3:16-24

4. IV. Fear, and the Pit, and the Snare

Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, inhabitant of the earth.

- Isaiah 24:17

Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

It is a day of trouble, and of perplexity, and of crying to the mountains.

- Isaiah 22:4-5

Behold joy and gladness, eating flesh and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die. Who seeth us? Who knoweth us? Whither shall we flee? How shall we escape?

- Isaiah 22:13, 29:15, 20:6

Say to them that are of a fearful heart: Be strong, fear not: the Lord will come and save you. The haughty are brought to naught. All that watch for iniquity are consumed. The meek, and the poor among men shall also rejoice in the Lord.

- Isaiah 35:4

O Lord, I will praise thee: though Thou was angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me.

- Isaiah 12:1

5. V. The Lord Shall Give Thee Rest

The Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.

- Isaiah 14:3

The Lord will wipe away tears from all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from all the earth.

- Isaiah 25:8

6. VI. Break Forth into Joy

Break forth into joy, sing together; for the Lord hath comforted his people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem.

- Isaiah 52:9

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem.

- Isaiah 51:17

Awake, stand up: put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments: shake thyself from the dust.

- Isaiah 52: 1, 2

The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

- Isaiah 55: 12

Come ye, come and let us go up to the mountains of the Lord; He will teach us of his ways and we will walk in His paths.

- Isaiah 2:3

let us walk in the light of the Lord.

- Isaiah 2:5

10. *Anna Margarita's Will*
by Gail Godwin

I, Anna Margarita Wells, of 17 Schoonmaker Lane, hereby make my will and testament. I am not about to die. I am not even old, yet; I am, as they say, of sound body and mind. I don't have any children; nor brothers and sisters. And since I do have property, some acquired and much inherited, I am troubled by the thought that it would all go to my cousin Loulie in Alabama who does not need it and would feel more inconvenienced than grateful.

Often lately, at the sunset hour, I look out at the hills tintured orange with the fading light and I call up the people in my life to whom I would like to leave something of myself, people who have given me what can never be returned.

Some of those who gave the most are already gone. I scarcely remember my mother who gave me life, the most precious gift of all. She left me a box of photographs chronicling her beauty and a diary in which she wrote in purple ink:

"I'll just die if he does not come.
I'll just die if he does not love me.
I'll just die if he does not marry me."

He came. He loved. He married her. She died anyway.

My father gave me courage. My father gave me nerve:

"Go at your fences straight, girl.
Don't slow down, once you've started.
Look up. That's right, never look down.
And when it comes time for the leap, go forward to meet it.
And never flinch."

The night my father died, Sister Ursula sat at my bed all night. The other nuns filed in, one by one.

"Remember you still have god," they chanted, each in turn. "Remember you still have me," Sister Ursula said and stroked my head. She is still alive but there is nothing I may leave her; her vocation precludes possessions.

It would be fun, and wicked, to leave Rudolf a thing or two. His wife would open the letter:

"Oh Rudy, dear, who is this Anna Margarita Wells?
I don't believe I know this Anna Margarita Wells."
No, dear lady, but I know you. Many is the time I've driven by your house at night and seethed at the two of you in there, sitting on top of all your history. You, unaware of your husband's forays into "timelessness," as he puts it, with me. It

would be fun to leave you a valuable house, on the condition that you live in it and see things from my side.

And Franklin, my college love, with his rich eloquent voice and dangerous high ideals. He walked me up and down the botanical gardens.

"Drink deep, Anna Margarita.
Drink deep, or don't drink at all.
Refuse to accept anything less than your best self."

But at age forty Franklin had drunk so deep he reached the bottom of the well, where he saw his own reflection. It was the reflection of a second-best self. He went to the corner bar, bought everyone a drink and announced,

"Time, gentlemen, time,"

went to his room and took his life. Poor Franklin, you would not have been consoled by my mundane bequests.

Who then? Who among the living would welcome a legacy from Anna Margarita Wells?

Small bequests are easy: My library to John who lives in books. My paintings to Natalie, who loves them for themselves; not to Clare, who covets them as an investment. My boat to Jeremy, on the condition that, for once in his life, he'll sail someplace he's never dared to go. My harpsichord to Nicholas; my cat to Andre, on the condition she will not alter him.

That still leaves Cousin Loulie with the bulk of everything. I can hear her now:

"Oh, Lordie, look at what Cousin Anna's done. Cousin Anna's left me her estate.

That's sweet of her, but really, that emerald necklace would have been enough. What good to me are houses in the North, with all that snow and all that crime? I'm touched, of course, but really, that emerald necklace would have been enough. Poor Cousin Anna, sitting up there through those cold, lonely winters with all her ghosts. Poor Cousin Anna. I had the news of her passing just when I got back from my world cruise. In Leningrad I cut off a man's necktie in a restaurant. 'It's much too wide for fashion,' I said; 'waiter, bring the scissors.' I almost died laughing."

That's enough now, Loulie is right: I've lived too long with ghosts, with those who are no more, with things that did not come to pass.

But while there is still light left, and there is some, yet, I will go down to the stream and plant a willow tree, in hopes of all that still might be, so I can watch it grow while I live.

Production Notes

From Desto Stereo DC-7135; *Ariel, Concerto a Tre*
Recorded by Paul Goodman at RCA studios, NYC, in 1972.

From CRI SD 453; *Anna Margarita's Will*
Produced by Carter Harman.

Recorded by David Hancock, NYC, in October 1980. The original recording was made possible by a Composers Award grant from the American Academy & Institute of Arts & Letters.

All published by MCA Music (ASCAP).

CRI American Masters

Executive Producer: Joseph R. Dalton

Digitally remastered by Joseph R. Dalton and Charles Harbutt, engineer, at Sony Classical Productions, Inc., NYC using the DCS 900 20-bit a/d converter.

Special thanks to Janet Golovner.

The purchase of the recordings originally released on the Desto label was made possible by a generous contribution to CRI from Walter Rosenberry.