

Bassoon

Charlie Barber

An aerial photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense forest. The path is light brown and leads from the bottom center towards the top of the frame. The surrounding trees are mostly green, with some purple foliage visible on the right side. Overlaid on this image is the title 'Songs from an Old World' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The text is a light blue color with a subtle, darker blue pattern inside the letters, making it stand out against the forest background.

Songs
from an
Old World

for chamber orchestra

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Instrumentation:

2 Flutes
 2 Oboes (+ Cor Anglais)
 2 Clarinets in B flat
 2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F
 2 Trumpets in B flat

Timpani

Percussion (one player): Large Tam-tam, Orchestral Bass Drum, Guiro, Tambourine

Violin 1
 Violin 2
 Viola
 Violoncello
 Contrabass

Score in C

Duration:

c. 8 minutes

Programme note:

Songs from an Old World bridges two distinct musical universes, weaving the oral traditions of Hindustani classical music into the structural and harmonic frameworks of the Western orchestra. The melodic material for this work is drawn from transcriptions of vocal improvisations by some of the great classical singers of northern India.

At the heart of the piece is the concept of the *raag*—the foundational melodic framework of Indian classical music. While comparable to a Western mode or scale, a *raag* is far more complex, encompassing prescribed ornamentations, characteristic phrases, and deeply rooted emotional and temporal associations. Each *raag* is traditionally bound to a specific time of day or season, a quality that dictates the narrative arc of the work's three movements:

- 1 Late morning / Raag Desi
- 2 Nocturne / Raag Bageshri
- 3 Monsoon rains / Raag Gaud Malhar

Through this synthesis, *Songs from an Old World* does not merely contrast East and West, but seeks a shared expressive space where ancient vocal lineages and contemporary orchestral textures illuminate one another.

Charlie Barber, September 2026

Songs from an Old World

1. Late Morning / Raag Desi

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A Tempo comodo ♩ = 92

8 *mp* < *f* **B** *mp* < *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* <

14 *f* *mp* < *f* **C** *mp* < *f* *p* <

20 *f* *mp* < *f* *p* **D** *mp* *mp*

26 *cresc.* *mf* *pp* *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* <

32 *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* <

37 *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* **E** *mp* <

41 *p* *mf* *pp* *mf* **F**

45 *p* *pp* *a niente*

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2. Nocturne / Raag Bageshri

Tranquillo ♩ = 80

51 *pp* *legato*

58 *pp*

64 1. *p* *pp*

71 **A** 1. *p*

80 *cresc.* *mf* *> p*

87 **B** 1. *p* *mp*

95 *p* *mp* *cresc.* *f* *>*

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103 **C**

mf *p* *p*

110

p *f* **Rit.**

119 **D** 1.

pp

3. Monsoon Rains / Raag Gaud Malhar

Allegro animato ♩ = 120

127 **A**

f *deciso*

133 **B**

mf *p* *mp* **a 2**

139 **C**

p

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145 **D**

mp cresc. mf dim. p

151 **E**

f p cresc.

157 **F**

f cresc.

163 **G**

f p cresc.

170 **H**

mf mp cresc. f

176 **I**

mp

182 **J**

mf mp

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188 **K**

f *dim.* *p* *pp*

194 **L**

mf *p* *mf* *p*

200 **M**

p *a 2*

206 **N**

f *2*

213 **O**

f *2* *f* *f*

220 **P**

f *p* *f* *p* *a 2* *p* *cresc.*

227

sf *f* *sf* *sf* *sf* *ff*