

**Copland**

Appalachian Spring – Suite

**Barber**

Knoxville, Summer of 1915

**Dvořák**

Symphony No.9 in E minor, Op.95 (From the New World)

Barbara Bonney (soprano)

London Symphony Orchestra

François-Xavier Roth

## LSO/Roth Barbara Bonney – Appalachian Spring ... Knoxville ... New World Symphony

Sunday, April 25, 2010 Barbican Hall, London

*Reviewed by Bob Briggs*

Shares



André Previn should have conducted but illness forbade this. François-Xavier Roth replaced him. We lost Previn's "Miss Sallie Chisum remembers Billy the Kid" but retained the soloist – Barbara Bonney – for Samuel Barber's radiant "Knoxville, Summer of 1915" (which had been originally advertised). Also gone was Richard Strauss's An Alpine Symphony, replaced by the 'New World' Symphony. Roth knows the LSO well, having been assistant conductor after winning the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition in 2000.

The Suite from Appalachian Spring started and ended with the most beautiful of pianissimos, and it was this attention to detail that marked the concert. Roth clearly had the work whole in his mind as he started the journey, each episode growing easily, and naturally, from the one before. Although Roth favoured slightly faster tempos than we may have become used to, there was never a sense of haste, except in the dance for the Bride, where the poor lady would have been left breathless. Otherwise, Roth never put a foot wrong. The same was true of Barber's "Knoxville", Roth and the LSO giving admirable support to Barbara Bonney, at her very best. Delicacy informed the start and the finish, with its gentle rocking motion beautifully conveying the childlike awe of the words. The slight agitation of the middle section was well realised and the mention of love gloriously conveyed.

The 'New World' Symphony was no less insightful, and after a rather too hurried first movement, which was graced with the exposition repeat, the performance settled down with a well-paced slow movement – sonorous brass chords, lyrical cor anglais, and playful middle section – a scherzo that boasted a trio in which one could really sense the peasants dancing in the fields, and a finale of fire and passion. This was a performance to delight in, created for the moment, and one to relish.

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