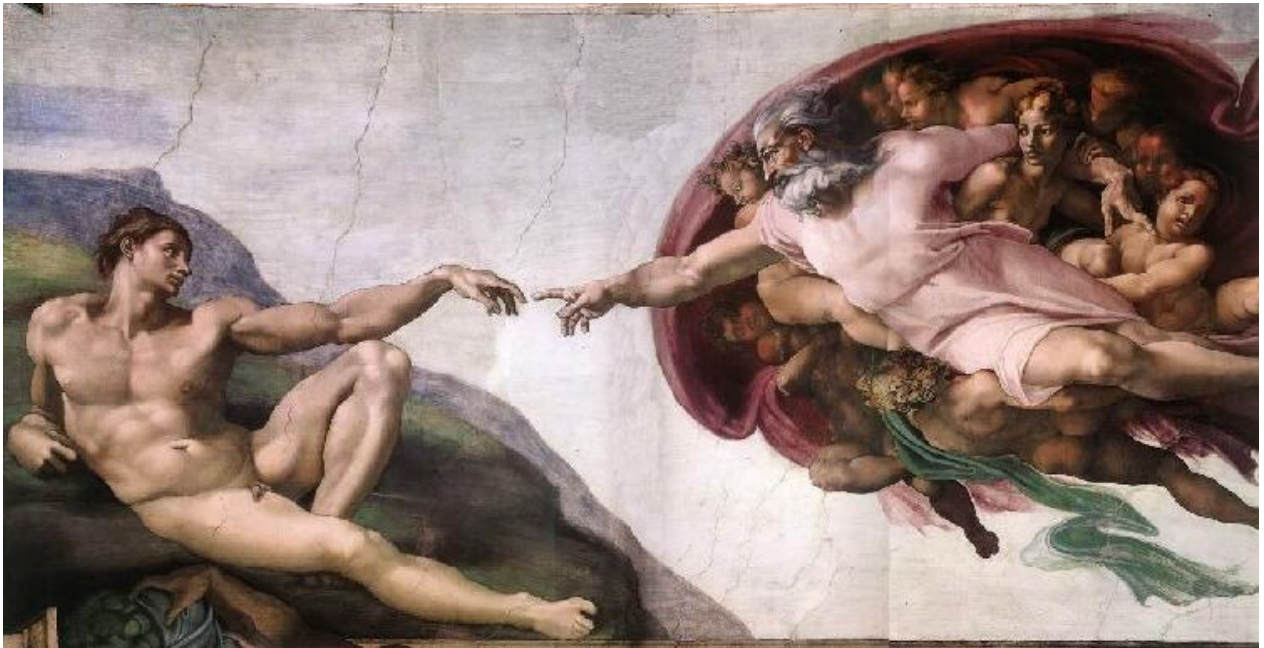


# In the beginning

Michael Winikoff



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## Program Notes

When selecting text to set I'm always drawn to text that has vivid imagery. To me the start of Genesis is one such text: I find the image of "the spirit . . . hovering over the surface of the waters" quite vivid.

The very start of the piece includes Hebrew text (transliterated below, with CAPITALS being used to indicate the emphasised syllable of each word), but the rest of the piece is in English.

The piece is not religious, so much as spiritual. The first movement is intended to convey mystery and awe. The second energetically depicts the emergence of the wondrous cacophony of life, in all of its forms, and the emergence of a complex ecosystem from a barren rock. The third movement is a gentle contrast, and presents humanity's "mandate" to govern the earth. Gentleness in this movement grows to swelling love and passion<sup>1</sup>. This is followed by an increasingly urgent warning about neglecting our assigned stewardship of the earth. The warnings of rains not coming (droughts), the earth drying up and lying polluted are apt, given the climate change consequences that are being observed today.

This piece was begun in 2010, with the first three movements taking form fairly quickly. However, an initial version of the final movement proved unsatisfying, and was thrown out, and a completely different middle section and ending were written, with the piece finally being completed (prompted by the ROCCC!) in early 2016.

### Hebrew Transliteration: (Genesis 1:1-2)

berESHIT baRA eloHIM et hashaMAyim ve'et ha'Aretz. בְּרֵאשִׁית, בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ.  
veha'Aretz haiTA TOhu vaVOhu, veKHOsekh al P'NEI teHOM. וְהָאָרֶץ, הִיְתָה תְהוֹ וְבִהוּ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ, עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם;  
veRUakh eloHIM meraKHEfet al p'nei haMAyim. וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם.

## Performance Notes

Note: throughout the piece, when changing between simple and compound time, the pulse of *quavers* remains constant.

### I

In the opening bars the sopranos and altos produce the sound of wind by exhaling individually.

Bars 2-5 are repeated as many time as needed to allow for the text to be read. When bar 2 is reached for the second time the Hebrew text is cued. The Hebrew text should be read by a male voice, and should be strong until the end of the first line ("ha'Aretz"). At this point it should continue quietly, and the English, preferably read by a female voice, should begin ("In the beginning . . ." until "Then God said"). The English reading should pause before "Then God said". Once this point is reached, the conductor should cue the (female) reader when bar 5 is reached, and the text should be read towards the end of the bar, so that when the choir then continues to bar 6, the overall text is "[read] Then God said [sung] let there be light".

The piece grows in volume and strength from the initial quiet (and mysterious) opening, with a slow but steady crescendo from bar 16 through to the start of bar 20.

The text "for the Lord God had not yet sent rain . . ." should be sung somewhat freely (like a recitative).

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<sup>1</sup>As in the love of a parent for their children, not the love of, oh, get your minds out of the gutter, er, gutter.

## II

This movement must be sung energetically, but not too fast (lest chaos return!)

The middle section should give the impression of a cacophony of animals emerging (fish, bird, etc.). In singing some of the rhythms (especially “let the earth produce every sort of animal”) it might be easier to not watch the conductor too closely (since the rhythm is off the beat). No matter what happens, the choir should come together at bar 54 (the 7/4).

The closing (bar 56 onwards) should be joyous and celebratory.

## III

This movement is gentle at first, and then (from the key change onwards) should be sung with growing energy and passion. Bar 80 onwards should be sung with a feeling of love, as in the love of a parent for their children, with the climax of the movement being bar 85.

Note that if the choir does not have enough sopranos and tenors to manage the extended divisi, then the first soprano part could be sung by a solo or a few sopranos, and the first tenor could be sung by a solo, or a few tenors, leaving the rest of the sopranos (respectively tenors) to sing the second soprano part (respectively second tenor).

## IV

The opening should be sung somewhat freely (recitative). The first “but the Lord God warned him” (bars 95-96) should be abruptly loud and harsh (helped by the high A from the tenors), and the second (bars 96-97) a quiet echo.

The warning (“If you break ...”) from bar 98 onwards should be firm and dark in tone. Initially quiet (*mp*), but steadily growing in volume until around bar 104. The slight diminuendo in bar 105 should not drop too far down, and then the crescendo resumes in bar 107, continuing through to the anguished cry of “failed” (bars 112-113). The tuning in bars 102 and 103 requires care.

In my mind I picture the initial phrase (“If you break ...”) as being the voice of God. However, after “I will punish you”, the text “That’s why the spring rains have failed” is the voice of humanity, lamenting the failure of their crops, and the ensuing famine.

The next section (“the earth mourns and dries up, the crops waste away and wither”) should be mournful. The crescendo to the cry “wither” (bar 126, echoed in 127 and 128) should not be too strong. It is an echo of the much stronger cry at 112-113.

The ending of the piece (from bar 130) should begin very quietly, and perhaps be a little slower than the preceding section. It then grows and strengthens, reaching its climax with a firm, but not strident, *ff* at bar 134 (“you will eat your fill and live securely in your own land”). Note that the dynamic remains strong until the end up bar 136, and then *begins* to reduce – don’t drop the volume too fast.

The soloist for bars 118-120 and 122-124 should be one of the sopranos in the choir.

It may prove advisable to have some of the second sopranos join the first altos in bars 133-136. Alternatively, if the choir is too small to comfortably divide into 7 parts on the final page then the parts could be divided as: S=soprano solo, A1=rest of sopranos, A2=altos, T1=tenor solo, T2=rest of tenors.

## **Text**

(New Living Translation)

### I

(Genesis 1:1-3) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

(Genesis 2:4-5) ... When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the Lord God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil.

### II

(Genesis 1:11,20,24,25) Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. ... Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind ... Let the earth produce every sort of animal” ... And God saw that it was good.

### III

(Genesis 1:27-28) So God created human beings in his own image. ... Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals ...”

### IV

(Genesis 2:15-16) The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the Lord God warned him, ...

(Leviticus 26:15-16) ... if you break my covenant ... I will punish you.

(Jeremiah 3:3) That’s why [even] the spring rains have failed.

(Isaiah 24:4) The earth mourns and dries up, [and] the crops waste away and wither.

(Leviticus 26:3,5) If you follow my decrees and ... obey my commands, ... You will eat your fill and live securely in your own land.

# In The Beginning

Michael Winikoff

## I

*Largo* ♩ = 50  
(unpitched wind sound)

(\*\*) Hebrew, then English text

cue: "then God said"

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass

(unpitched wind sound)

*pp, hushed*

*mm*  
*p*

Aw

Let there be

Let there be

Aw

7

S  
A  
T  
B

light

light

*mp*

Aw

*mp*

Aw

when the Lord God made the earth and the

when the Lord God made the earth and the

when the Lord God made the earth and the

12

S  
A  
T  
B

hea - vens

hea - vens

when the Lord God made the earth and the

when the Lord God made the earth and the

when the Lord God made the earth and the

hea - vens

nei - ther

when the Lord God made the earth when the

(\*) bereSHIT baRA eloHIM et hashaMAYim ve'et ha'Aretz. [softer, cue English (below)]  
veha'Aretz haiTA TOhu vaVOhu, veKHOsekh al P'NEI teHOM. veRUakh eloHIM meraKHEfet al p'nei haMAYim.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters.  
And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. [wait for cue] Then God said ...

15

S wild plants nor grains were grow-ing on the earth nei-ther wild plants nor

A Lord God made the earth and the hea - vens nei-ther wild plants nor grains were grow-ing on the

T

B

19 *rit.* *mf, slower, freely*

S grains were grow-ing on the earth, for the Lord God had not yet sent rain to wa-ter the earth

A earth, grow-ing on the earth, for the Lo(rd) and

T for the Lo(rd)

B for the Lo(rd)

23

S aw

A there were no peo-ple to cul-ti-vate the soil

T

B

*rit.* *a tempo*

*p* *Aw* *p*

Aw

## II

28 cue: "Then God said" *mf* *Allegro* ♩ = 133, energetic

S Let the land sprout with ve - ge - ta - tion e - very

A *mf* Let the land sprout with ve - ge - ta - tion e - very

T *mf* Let the land sprout with ve - ge - ta - tion e - very

B *mf* Let the land sprout with ve - ge - ta - tion e - very

Let the land sprout with ve - ge - ta - tion e - very

33 ♩ = ♩

S sort of seed bea - ring plant and trees that grow seed bea - ring fruit

A sort of seed bea - ring plant and trees that grow seed bea - ring fruit let the wa - ters swarm with

T sort of seed bea - ring plant and trees that grow seed bea - ring fruit

B sort of seed bea - ring plant and trees that grow seed bea - ring fruit

sort of seed bea - ring plant and trees that grow seed bea - ring fruit

37

S fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the

A fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the

T let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters

B let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters

fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters



41

S let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the

A wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters

T 8 swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters swarm with

B

let the

44

S wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters

A swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters swam with fish

T 8 fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther

B

wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life let the wa - ters

47

S let the sky be filled with birds of e - very kind let the sky be filled with birds of

A and o - ther life let the wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther

T 8 life let the wa - ters swam with fish and o - ther life

B

swarm with fish and o - ther life let the earth - pro - duce ev - ery sort of a -

50

S e - very kind let the sky be filled with birds of e - very kind let the sky be filled

A life let the earth pro-duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal let the earth pro-duce e -

T let the sky be filled with birds of e - very kind let the sky be filled with birds of

B ni - mals let the earth pro-duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal let the earth pro-duce e -

53

S - with birds of e - very let the earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal let the

A very sort of a - ni - mal let the earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal let the

T e - very kind let the earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal let the

B very sort of a - ni - mal let the earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal let the

55

*sp*

S earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal and God saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

A earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal and God *sp* saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

T earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal and God *sp* saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

B earth pro - duce e - very sort of a - ni - mal and God *sp* saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

(5/4 = 6/8 + 2/4)

58

S saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

A saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

T saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

B saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God saw that it was good and God

61

S saw that it was good and God saw that it was saw that it was saw that it was

A saw that it was good and God saw that it was

T saw that it was good and God saw that it was

B saw that it was good and God saw that it was

*Rit.*

65

S good. And God saw that it was good

A good. And God saw that it was good

T good. And God saw that it was good

B good. And God saw that it was good

*Slower* *Rit.*

# III

Spoken: "So God created human beings in his own image. Then God blessed them and said:"

70 *Lento* ( $\text{♩} = 58$ ), *gentle*  
*mp*

Soprano  
be fruit ful and mul ti ply fill the

Alto  
be fruit ful and mul ti ply fill the

Tenor  
fill the

Bass  
fill the

74

S  
earth and go - vern it, fill the earth and go - vern it

A  
earth and go - vern it, fill the earth and go - vern it

T  
earth and go - vern it, fill the earth and go - vern it

B  
earth and go - vern it, fill the earth and go - vern it

78

S  
reign o - ver the birds in the sky and a(II)

A  
*mf (trumpet-like)* reign o - ver the fish in the sea  
*f* reign o - ver the birds in the sky let the

T  
*mf (trumpet-like)* reign o - ver the fish in the sea  
*f* reign o - ver the birds in the sky

B  
*mf (trumpet-like)* reign o - ver the fish in the sea  
*f* reign o - ver the birds in the sky and all

80 *a little slower* ( $\text{♩} = 55$ )

Soprano 1 (Aw) Aw

Soprano 2 (Aw) *with Love ...*

Alto *with Love ...* wa - ters swarm with fish and o - ther life wa - ters swarm with

Tenor 1 *with Love ...* all the a - ni - mals all let the sky be filled with birds of e - very

Tenor 2 *with Love ...* all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals

B *with Love ...* all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals

— the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals

83 *rit.*

S1 Ah

S2 Ah

A *Aw* fish and o - ther life with fish and o - ther li(fe)

T1 kind let the sky be filled with birds of e - very ki(nd)

T2 all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals Ah

B all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals

all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals all the a - ni - mals

86 *mp* *slower* *Rit.*

Soprano: Ah

Alto: be fruit - ful

Tenor: and mul - ti - ply

Bass: Ah

# IV

90 *Andante* ♩ = 55

Soprano: to tend and watch o - ver

Alto: *mp* the Lord God placed the man in the gar-den of e - den to tend and watch o - ver

Tenor: *mp* the Lord God placed the man in the gar-den of e - den to tend and watch o - ver

Bass: *mp* the Lord God placed the man in the gar-den of e - den to tend and watch o - ver

95 *sf* *mp* (*Dark rich tone*)

Soprano: it but the Lord God warned him If you break my

Alto: *sf* it but the Lord God warned him If you break my

Tenor: *sf* it but the Lord God warned him, but the Lord God warned him: If you break my

Bass: *sf* it but the Lord God warned him, but the Lord God warned him: If you break my

99

*mf* *f*

S co - ve - nant, If you break my co - ve - nant I will pu - nish you I will pu - nish you

A co - ve - nant, If you break my co - ve - nant I will pu - nish you I will pu - nish you, I will

T co - ve - nant, If you break my co - ve - nant I will pu - nish you I will pu - nish you

B co - ve - nant, If you break my co - ve - nant I will pu - nish you I will pu - nish you

104

S That's why the spring rains have failed

A pu - nish I will pu - nish I will pu - nish you That's why the spring rains have failed

T pu - nish I will pu - nish I will pu - nish you That's why the spring rains have failed

B pu - nish pu - nish I will pu - nish you That's why the spring rains have failed

110

*rit.* *(Largo ♩ = 50)*  
*p (echo)*

S That's why the spring rains have failed, failed failed

A That's why the spring rains have failed, failed failed *p (echo)*

T That's why the spring rains have failed, failed failed *p (echo)*

B That's why the spring rains have failed, failed failed *p (echo)*  
*(unpitched wind sound)*

116 (unpitched wind sound) *solo mp* *tutti p*

S the earth mourns and dries up, the earth mourns and

A (unpitched wind sound) *p*

T *Aw p*

B *Aw*

122 *solo* *tutti* *mf*

S dries up, the crops waste a - way and wi-ther, the crops waste a - way and wi-ther

A the crops waste a - way and wi-ther, the crops wi-ther

T the crops wi-ther

B the crops wi-ther

127 *mp* *p* *A little slower (♩ = 47)* *pp*

S wi - ther wi - ther fol-low my de-crees and o -

A wi - ther wi - ther If you fol-low my de-crees, if you fol-low my de-crees and o -

T wi - ther wi - ther

B wi - ther wi - ther



132 *ff*

S bey my com-mands o - bey my com-mands you you will eat your fill and  
o - bey my com-mands you will eat your fill and

A bey my com-mands o - bey my com-mands you will eat your fill and  
you will eat your fill and

T If you fol-low my de-crees and o-bey my com-mands you will eat your  
fill and live se-cure-ly in your own land.

B If you fol-low my de-crees and o-bey my com-mands you will eat your  
fill and live se-cure-ly in your own land.

135 *pp (echo) slower*

S live se-cure-ly in your own your own land. And God  
live se-cure-ly in your in your own land. And God

A live se-cure-ly in your in your own land. And God  
fill and live se-cure-ly in your own land. And God

T fill and live se-cure-ly in your own land. And God  
fill and live se-cure-ly in your own land. And God

B fill and live se-cure-ly in your own land. And God  
fill and live se-cure-ly in your own land. And God

139 *rit. a tempo*

S saw that it was good  
saw that it was good

A saw that it was good  
saw that it was good

T saw that it was good  
saw that it was good

B saw that it was good  
saw that it was good