



S a m u e l B a r b e r (1 9 1 0 - 1 9 8 1)

A m e r i c a n C o m p o s e r
W e s t C h e s t e r P u b l i c H i g h S c h o o l A l u m n u s
C l a s s o f 1 9 2 6

Samuel Barber was among the leading figures in 20th-century American music and is perhaps best known for his *Adagio for Strings*, which has become one of the most recognized pieces in contemporary orchestral music.

Samuel Barber was born on March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania. His musical studies started early, and he began composing at the age of seven. In 1924 he entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he remained for nine years, studying composition and piano. He also studied voice, which undoubtedly influenced the cultivation of a strong lyrical style in his musical composition. It was at Curtis that Barber began a lifelong friendship with Gian Carlo Menotti, a newly arrived student from Italy. Although Barber made frequent trips to Europe (as a recipient of the Prix de Rome he spent several years at the American Academy in Rome), he was among the first American composers trained in his own country. Except for a brief period of teaching at the Curtis Institute, he maintained his independence, primarily through grants, commissions, and royalties.

Barber graduated from West Chester Henderson High School, in 1926, and is the composer of the School's Alma Mater.

Adapted from: "Samuel Barber." *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. Detroit: Gale, 1998. *Gale Biography In Context*.