

Andrea REINKEMEYER, DMA (b. 1976)

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Patrick WOHLMUT, libretto (b. 1976)

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Performance Materials:

[contact me](#)

Purchase Recording:

n/a

Youtube:

<https://www.rhymeswithopera.org/triptych>

Perusal Score:

[contact me](#)

Triptych: THREE DISASTERS

17:00 (Grade 6)

for Two Sopranos, Baritone, Piano, and Two-Channel Fixed Media (2020)

1. *Gales Creek*
2. *Vanport*
3. *Manzanita*

Patrick Wohlmutter (b. 1976), libretto / Andrea Reinkemeyer, music (Sherwood, Oregon - 2020)

* *Commissioned by Rhymes with Opera for the 2020 New Music Gathering, "Local Action"*

Video >>

RHYMES WITH OPERA

Elisabeth Halliday Quan, soprano

Bonnie Lander, soprano

Robert Maril, baritone

Christopher Wilson, piano

Andrea Reinkemeyer, electronics

PROGRAM NOTES, by Patrick Wohlmüt:

Triptych: Three Disasters, a Chamber Opera Scene for Two Sopranos, Baritone, Piano, and Two-Channel Fixed Media, was commissioned by Rhymes With Opera for inclusion in the 2020 New Music Gathering. Initially intended to take place in Portland, Oregon, the New Music Gathering was moved online due to health concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and to comply with Governor Kate Brown's restrictions on large gatherings during that time.

When contemplating the theme of the 2020 Gathering, "Local Action," Andrea and Patrick became intrigued with the history of natural disasters in the Pacific Northwest, and the ways in which those disasters reflected both positive and negative forms of local action. After some discussion, they decided to focus on three events:

The four fires known collectively as the Tillamook Burn ignited, and then reignited, at six-year intervals, from 1933 to 1951. The first Burn consumed, on its own, approximately 240,000 acres of forest. It started when a logging crew near Gales Creek, Oregon, attempted to harvest one more log after receiving a late message to cease the day's efforts, due to high temperatures and tinder dry conditions. The log in question rubbed against another fallen tree, and the friction caused a spark that set fire to the forest. Following the last Burn, in 1951, the total number of acres of forest destroyed was close to 350,000.

The city of Vanport, constructed in 1942, was initially conceived as a temporary city to house Kaiser Shipyard workers during World War II. It was the most racially integrated community in Oregon at the time. Continuing past the World War as the city became home to returning veterans, as well as the site of Vanport College (the future Portland State University), the city was destroyed in 1948 when the Columbia River overflowed a 200 foot railroad berm, flooding Vanport and destroying it. It is thought that the dangers of potential flood were underplayed by government officials, probably due to racism.

The Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake is a disaster that has not yet happened. This subduction zone is a fault in the Earth's crust that lies about 700 miles off of the Pacific Northwest coast. In recent years, seismologists discovered that this faultline has a history of shifting at particular points in history; that the earthquakes it produces tend to be devastating; and that we are coming due for another shift. Scientists anticipate that the next quake will be at least as powerful as anything the San Andreas fault has caused, and will probably be more so, having the potential to destroy much of the land and many of the communities west of the I-5 corridor and creating a tsunami that would only add to the tragedy. It is generally agreed that the communities on the Pacific Coast, and in the Pacific Northwest, are currently unprepared for this eventual disaster, in spite of the knowledge that it is almost certainly coming.

Though some of these events featured positive action in their aftermaths - the Tillamook Burn forever changed the way the State of Oregon manages its forested lands and timber industry, and Vanport was the start of greater racial integration and tolerance statewide - each of these disasters, historical or future, is characterized by missed opportunities to do the right thing. Whether through greed, prejudice, or simple lack of foresight, they stand as reminders of what can happen when businesses and governments don't take appropriate action, or when they take the wrong action. In that way, these Three Disasters speak to each other across time, sounding a warning of lives forever lost and altered.

– Notes by Patrick Wohlmüt

For More Information:

Abbott, Carl. "Vanport" The Oregon Encyclopedia, 6 June 2019.

<https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/vanport/#.XsWvdRNKjQQ>

Legacy of Fire: The Story of the Tillamook Burn. Directed by Eric Slade, narrated by Tobias Andersen, Oregon Department of Forestry, 2006.

“Vanport.” *Oregon Experience*, season 11, episode 1101, produced and written by Nadine Jelsing, Oregon Public Broadcasting and the Oregon Historical Society, 14 Nov. 2016.

<https://watch.opb.org/video/oregon-experience-vanport/>

Schulz, Katherine. “The Really Big One.” *The New Yorker*, 20 July 2015.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/07/20/the-really-big-one>

Steele, Bill. “Getting Ready For The Next Great Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake.” *Seismo Blog*, Pacific Northwest Seismic Network, 27 Jan. 2020.

<https://pnsn.org/blog/2020/01/27/getting-ready-for-the-next-great-cascadia-subduction-zone-earthquake>

Wells, Gail. *The Tillamook: A Created Forest Comes of Age*. 2nd ed., Corvallis, Oregon State University Press, 2004.

Abbreviated notes (248 words):

Triptych: Three Disasters is a Chamber Opera Scene commissioned by Rhymes With Opera for the 2020 New Music Gathering, “Local Action.” Intrigued with the history of natural disasters in the Pacific Northwest, and the ways in which those disasters reflected both positive and negative forms of local action, librettist Patrick Wohlmüt and composer Andrea Reinkemeyer focused on three events:

The four fires known collectively as the Tillamook Burn ignited, and then reignited, at six-year intervals, from 1933 to 1951; the total number of acres of forest destroyed was close to 350,000.

The city of Vanport, constructed in 1942, was conceived as a temporary city to house Kaiser Shipyards workers during World War II. It was the most racially integrated community in Oregon. The city became home to returning veterans and Vanport College (the future Portland State University), but was destroyed in 1948 when the Columbia River overflowed a 200-foot railroad berm, flooding Vanport and destroying it. It is thought that the dangers of potential flood were underplayed by government officials, probably due to racism.

The Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake is a disaster that has not yet happened. This subduction zone is a fault in the Earth’s crust that lies about 700 miles off of the Pacific Northwest coast. It is generally agreed that the communities on the Pacific Coast, and in the Pacific Northwest, are unprepared for this disaster, in spite of the knowledge that it is almost certainly coming. To learn more about this project, visit:

<https://www.rhymeswithopera.org/triptych>

REVIEW:

Rozanoff, Seth. Computer Music Journal, Volume 43, Number 4, Winter 2019, pp. 84-85 (MIT Press).

“... The underlying theme in this work was local action. It could be viewed as site-specific as well, working with the environmental recordings that accompanied the other players. An interesting sonic feature heard in *Manzanita* was a minimal noise layer produced by analog synthesis. This sound paired alongside a recording of the seaside.”

PERFORMANCES:

2020 New Music Gathering “Local Action”

Monday, June 15, 2009 at 9 pm (EDT)

New Music Gathering on Zoom and Facebook

Originally scheduled for live performance on Friday, June 19, 2020 at 8:00 pm (PDT)

RHYMES WITH OPERA

Bonnie Lander, soprano (Samantha)

Elisabeth Halliday, soprano (Gladys)

Robert Maril, baritone (Aaron)

Chris Wilson, piano

Andrea Reinkemeyer, electronics

Ruby Fulton and George Lam, directors

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we needed to pivot our presentation.
Each part was recorded individually in wildly different recording spaces.

2021 National Conference of the Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI)

Details forthcoming

RHYMES WITH OPERA

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