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A GLACIER’S REQUIEM

2 EXCERPTS
THE OPEN SECTIONS
A Glacier’s Requiem is a music-drama written for soprano and ensemble sextet. The piece is in many ways a theatre of thought rather than of characters. With the soprano as the Glacier’s Avatar we explore the effect of global warming on a glacier in western Iceland (Snæfellsjökull), which is melting so fast that it will have completely disappeared within a few decades, if nothing changes. The opera explores this warning.

The soprano who first developed the role of the Glacier’s Avatar was Rannveig Káradóttir. She has performed two different versions of the piece in London to date. The first in the Platform Theatre, Central Saint Martins, 29th May 2013; and the second at the Kings Head, Islington on the 21st September 2014 as one of the shortlisted pieces for the Flourish opera competition, hosted by the OperaUpClose opera company.

Yfir sofandi jörd hef í flutt bina hvítu fregn
og örd mìn fellu í ísblátt vatnið
éins og varnatur regn.
Sólun, sólun var hjá mér eins og grannnaxin kona
á galum skólm.
A brennheiti andlit fellur blátt regn
hinna blævvanginu daga.
Og timinn og vatnið renna voglaust til þurbar.
Og timinn beraf eins og lár,
sem fellar á hvíla bón.
Rennandi vatn, riðlir dagar, raddlaus nött.

Í nött mun íg sofa undir göstiruddum hinni
við hinn övarða ós.
Íg finn móitipnum timans falla máttvuna
gegnum mjökt vatnins.
Íg hef báið mér hvílu í hálfluktu anga
eilfiðarinnar.

Over reposing ground I bore the white tidings
and my words fell into the ice-blue water
like rain in the night of spring.
The sun, the sun was with me like a petit lady
in yellow shoes.
On a burning face falls blue rain
of aerated days.
And the time and the water flow aimlessly to depletion.
And the time vanished like a tear,
that falls on a white hand.
Running water, ascent-blue day, speechless night.

Tonight I shall sleep beneath the Pleiades sky
by the unwadeable river-mouth.
I feel the resistance of time descend feebly
through the water’s softness.
I have forged my resting place in the half-shut eye of
eternity.
The soprano’s part is found on a stand-alone script-part, which supports a flexible kind of dramaturgy and allows for a type of dramatic improvisation. In her script-part, the soprano’s musical material is divided into individual chronological mobiles. These are mobiles in the sense that they are floating bars with less obvious temporal relationship with the accompaniment than is the case in traditional scores. The soprano performs them without considering a strict vertical beat-to-beat relationship with the score accompaniment, and approaches her part much like an actor would in script-based theatre. I.e. in free time, senza misura. In fact, she should actively try not to sync up to the beats, rhythm or tempo of the ensemble. She should experiment with several ways to perform her mobiles, exploring the drama of the music by e.g. changing tempi and dynamics as necessary. Each exploration and each performance using the script-part takes place as a type of open-form composition; each performance is likely to be different depending on the soprano’s dramatic and musical interpretation of her role. As a result, her mobiles and the accompaniment will not always align in the same way.

The soprano should perform from the script-part for the duration marked with brackets above her stave in the score, always senza misura.

Soprano
Flute & Piccolo
Bb Clarinet
Bassoon
Harp
Piano
Cello
Yfir sof and jör

Hef ég flutt hin aðvæk og or

Mín féll út í ís blátt vatn í eins og vor nætur regn.

Sól in, -sól var hjámi og grávina konukkum skórum.

Ábrætt height and litfell ur blátt regn hinn að vængj

Og tími inn og vatn i renn í veg laust til ur ár.

Og tími inn hvarf eins og tár, sem fell ur á hvít að.

Renn and vatn, ris blár dagur, raddlaust nót.

Íntótt mun ég sof undir sjós til um höm, -vi hinn óvæ.

Ég finn mót spyrnútí mánslímat vatnsins.

Ég hef bú i mér hvílu í halflukt og aúgílf ár -i ín ár.
A Glacier's Requiem
OPEN SECTION #1

Adagio

Soprano Solo

Flute

Clarinet in B

Bassoon

Harp

Piano

Violoncello

Script-part, mobiles 1-6.
OPEN SECTION #2

Adagio

S. Solo

Picc.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hp.

Pno.

Vc.