

Christopher Stark

FROM THE FIELD

a micro opera in three parts

2018-19

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FROM THE FIELD

Libretto by Megan Stark drawn from original sources

Written for the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble

Premiere: June 1 & 2, 2019, Z Space, San Francisco

CAST

John Wesley Powell, geologist

Dorothea Lange, photographer

Steven W. Running, climate scientist

INSTRUMENTATION

Soprano

Violin

Cello

DURATION

20'00"

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Audio/Video Technician
Laptop with QLab Software
Projector and Rear Projection Screen
Stereo Playback

Libretto by
Megan Stark
*drawn from
original sources*

for the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble

FROM THE FIELD

a micro opera in three parts

Music by
Christopher Stark

PART ONE: Rain Follows the Plow
With impeccable ambience (♩ = 60)

Soprano

Violin

Cello

Projector Cues

1 Part 1

2 The Arid Region...

senza vib., bend III slightly out of tune

senza vib. bend II slightly out of tune

pp mf pp mf

6

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

3

Extending from...

mf pp mf pp

10

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

4

Many droughts...

mf pp mf pp

14

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

5

6

7

J.W. Powell

(image)

United States...

wide slow vib., getting faster

wide slow vib., getting faster

pp ff

pp ff

norm.

norm.

2

18

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

bend IV only

bend III only

mf *p* *mf* *p*

8 9

The United States Government... *This expedition...*

22

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

p *mf* *ffp* *mf* *p* *mf*

10 11

(image) *Powell's fieldwork...*

26

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

wide slow vib., getting faster
-----> sul pont.

mf *p* *ff*

wide slow vib., getting faster
-----> sul pont.

norm.

ffp *mf*

bend III only

bend IV only

p *ffp*

12 13

(image) *Special considerations...*

30

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

p *mf* *pp* *ffp sub.* *mf*

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

14 15

(image) *Powell provides maps...*

34

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

p *mf* *pp* *ffp sub.* *mf*

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

16 17

(image) *However...*

wide slow vib., getting faster
-----> sul pont.

norm., bend **II** only

3

Vln. *p* *mf* *p* *ff* *pp*

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *ff* *pp*

Proj. Cues

18 (image)

19 Powell is...

bend **III** only

Vln. *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *pp* *pp* *mf*

Proj. Cues

20 (image)

21 The government...

bend both notes

Vln. *pp* *mf* *pp* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *mf* *pp* *pp*

Proj. Cues

22 (image)

23 ...one designed...

gradually gliss. **III** down to G and gradually slow down
25"

pizz.

gradually gliss. **III** down to G and gradually slow down
25"

(in time)

Vln. *mf* *pp* *fff* *p*

Vc. *mf* *pp* *fff* *pp*

Proj. Cues

24 Rain follows...

25 (image)

Lange opens letter on desk

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj.
Cues

54

26

27

Part 2

The F.S.A. Photographer:

Part 2

The F.S.A. Photographer:

Lange reads letter while singing

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj.
Cues

58

28

on the string

A - lone

Alone in the field...

on the string

A - lone

Alone in the field...

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

61

A - lone in the

A - lone in the

A - lone in the

A - lone in the

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

64

field

The pho - to-gra-pher

field

The pho - to-gra-pher

68

Sop. must be a - ble to in - ter - pret be

Vln. 6 6 6

Vc. 3 3 3

71 Sop. a - ble to in - ter - - pret

Vln. 6 6 6 6

Vc. 29

Proj. Cues

interpret what he sees...

74

Sop.

what he sees_

Vln.

senza vib.

pp

pp < ff

Vc.

pp

arco

ff

ffp

78

Sop. *p* what (s)he *fp* sees

Vln. *f* sub. *fp*

Vc. *f* sub. *fp*

82 *p* *mf* *f*

Sop. In a - ny one In a - ny one

Vln. *fp* *fp*

Vc. *fp* *fp*

85 *p*

Sop. lo - cal - i - ty lo -

Vln. *fp* *f*

Vc. *f*

87 *f* *p* *mf*

Sop. cal - i - ty To do this job

Vln. *fp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Vc. *pp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Proj. Cues *To do this kind of job...*

30

92 *p*

Sop. the pho - to - gra - pher has to be more than an ar - tist

Vln. *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Vc. *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Proj. Cues *be more than an artist*

31

96

Sop. *f*
be more than an ar - tist

Vln. *f* *pp* *ff*

Vc. *f* *pp* *ff*

101

Sop. *f*
The script The script is pre - pared

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues 32
The "shooting script"...

106

Sop. *p*
in Wash - ing - ton, not in the field

Vln. *p* *ff*

Vc. *p* *ff*

Lange discards letter

112

Vln. *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff*

Vc. pizz. *ffz* poss. *ffz* *ffz*

116 Lange sings her own words

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

like an echo

(pizz.) let ring *p*

p

120 *p*

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

33

Proj. Cues

As I see... the im - por - tance of these

125

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

neg - a - tives Is that they

129

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

show what hap - pens to peo - ple

133

Sop. un - der what con - di - tions they live

Vln.

Vc.

34

Proj. Cues

under what conditions they live

137

Sop. *cresc.* What hap - - pens What

Vln.

Vc. *arco*

35

Proj. Cues

what happens to people...

139

Sop. hap - pens to peo - - ple *f.*

Vln.

Vc.

6

141

Sop. when they re - set - tle them - selves

Vln.

Vc.

6

molto accel.

Vln.

Vc.

143

A little slower than before (♩ = 84)

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

145

as high as poss. The neg-a - tives The

as high as poss.

pizz., let ring

36

The negatives...

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

149

neg - a - tives show the mi - gra - tion of peo - ple

Allegro agitato (♩ = 120)

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

155

Lange opens second letter from the government

pp cresc.

arco

pp cresc.

158

Vln.

Vc.

161

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

Lange reads letter while singing

A - lone

ffp

ffp

37

Alone in the field

164

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

p

mf

A - lone in the

f sub.

fp

f sub.

fp

167

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

f

A - lone in the field

fp

f

f

6

6

3

174

Sop. ter-pret be a - ble to in - ter - pret

Vln. 6 6 6 6 6 6

Vc. 3

177

Sop. *p* what he sees...

Vln. *senza vib.* *fp* *arco* *ff*

Vc. 3 *ff*

Proj. Cues 38 *p* *ff*

interpret what he sees...

181

p *mf* *f*

Sop. In a - ny one In a - ny one

Vln. *ffp* *fp*

Vc. *ffp* *fp*

184

Sop. lo - cal - i - ty the script

Vln. 3 3 3 3 *f* pizz.

Vc. 3 3 3 3 *f* pizz.

Proj. Cues 39 The "shooting script"...

188

Sop. the script the script is pre - pared

Vln. 3 *mf*

Vc. 3 *mf*

194

Sop. *p* in Wash-ing - ton, — not in the field

Vln. arco, senza vib. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

199

Vln. 3 3 3 3 *p* *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

Vc. secco *p* *mp* *mf*

204

Sop. *p* *mp* *mp*
Pre - sent the prob - lems Con -

Vln. *fpp* *arco* *fpp*

Vc. *f* *fpp* *f* *fpp*

Proj. Cues 40
present the problems...

208

Sop. *mf* *f*
vey the pro - gress The script:

Vln. *fpp* *f*

Vc. *f* *fpp* *f*

212

Sop. *p*
Wor - ried

Vln. *pizz.* *arco*

Vc. *p*

Proj. Cues 41
Worried farmer

215

Sop. *mp*
farm - er Run down in dis - re -

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues 42
(run down - in disrepair...)

218 *mf*

Sop. pair im - ple - ments i - dle in the

Vln.

Vc.

221 *f* *p* *f*

Sop. field Shak - ing hands

Vln.

Vc.

43

Proj. Cues - shaking hands

225 *p*

Sop. dump - ing

Vln. pizz. arco

Vc. *p sub.*

44

Proj. Cues - dumping - rioting...

228 *mf*

Sop. ri - - ot - ing trucks tip - ping

Vln.

Vc.

231

Sop. *f* *p* *mp*
o - - ver Smil - ing

Vln. *fp* *mp*

Vc. *fp* *mp*

Proj. Cues 45 - smiling

236

Sop. *mf* *f*
Smil - ing Smil - ing!

Vln. *mf* *f* *f* pizz.

Vc. *mf* *f* *f*

Proj. Cues 46 (farm and home lost...

240

Sop. *p* *mf*
Farm and home lost

Vln. *p sub. arco*

Vc. *p sub.*

243

Sop. *f*
Seek - ing re - lief

Vln. *f* 3 3 3

Vc. *f* 3 3 3 3

Proj. Cues 47 48 seeking relief crops rotting...

246 *ff*

Sop. Crops rot-ting in fields

Vln. *ff* *p sub. cresc. poco a poco*

Vc. *ff* *p sub. cresc. poco a poco*

249 *p cresc. poco a poco* **a little faster (♩ = 132)**

Sop. Wor - - ried

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues 49 Worried

251 **a little faster (♩ = 144)**

Sop. farm - er saved

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues 50 - saved - relieved...

254 **a little faster (♩ = 156)** **a little faster (♩ = 168)**

Sop. re - lieved re -

Vln.

Vc.

257

Sop. *lieved re - lieved re - lieved*

Vln.

Vc.

260

Sop. *and*

Vln.

Vc.

fff

264

Sop. *Lange discards letter*
hap - py

Vln.

Vc.

f

molto accel.

267

Vln.

Vc.

269

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

spoken, facing the audience

Something tells me that you won't believe it.

wild!

as high as poss.

fff poss.

as high as poss.

fff poss.

51

something tells me

(♩ = 104)

accel. rit.

272

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

molto sul tasto gliss. sul III

p

mf

p

mf

pizz., l.v. sempre

52

Video

(♩ = 80)

accel. rit.

276

Vln.

Vc.

p

mf

p

mf

A tempo (♩ = 69)

280

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

Lange sings her own words

Su - gar beet field, fresh - ly plowed,

trill II only, free bowing

fp

arco

pp

53

Sugar beet field...

20

285

Sop.

deep fur - rows of rich black soil

Vln.

trill III only

Vc.

pizz., l.v.

f

pp

arco

mf

290

Sop.

Man and wife, mid - dle - aged the wo - men and chil - dren

Vln.

trill

Vc.

pizz., l.v.

f

pp

arco

54

Proj. Cues

man and wife

296

Sop.

work a - long side the men men

Vln.

trill

Vc.

302

Sop.

Here one finds all kinds and con - di - tions

Vln.

trill

Vc.

pizz., l.v.

f

p

arco

55

Proj. Cues

Here one finds

mf

307

Sop. *f*
the rains have de - layed the sea - son

Vln. *tr*
tr

Vc. *tr*

312

Sop.
Rag hous - es and pa - per hous - es

Vln. *f*
6

Vc. *f*
3

316

Sop. *p* *f* *p*
this high - way this high - way one o one a

Vln. *senza vib.*
fp *fp*
trill II only

Vc. *tr*
fp *fp*

Proj. Cues
56
Highway US 101

321

Sop.
main ar - te - ry on which all tra - vel all

Vln. *trill III only*
tr
tr (stop trill)

Vc. *tr*

Proj. Cues
57
all heading north

A little faster (♩ = 80)

326 *f* *p*

Sop. head - ing north Camps for home - less

Vln. *f* *pp*

Vc. *f* *pp*

Proj. Cues 58 59

Video Camps for homeless men

332

Sop. men Drought re - fu - gees mi - grant camps camp - ing in fields and a -

Vln.

Vc.

A little slower (♩ = 63)

339 *f* *p*

Sop. long the high - ways high - ways They are try - ing

Vln. *fp* trill II only

Vc. *fp*

Proj. Cues 60 61

Video They are trying...

poco accel.

345

Sop. to es - ta - - bish themselves and want to go

Vln.

Vc. (*tr*)

The musical score for 'Highway 101' is presented in a multi-staff format. The Soprano part begins at measure 351 with the lyrics 'back go back this high-way this high-way'. The Violin and Viola parts provide harmonic support with triplets and sustained notes. The Projection Cues track includes visual markers for video transitions at measures 62 and 63, with the cue 'this highway 101...' starting at measure 63. The score is marked with dynamics like *f* and *p sub.*, and tempo changes to *Allegro* and *Andante*.

356

mf

rit.

p

Sop. one o one holds all that I can grasp

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Slower (♩ = 58)

362

Sop.

And a lot more_____ And a lot more_____

Vln.

ppp

Vc.

ppp

accl. **Faster (♩ = 80)**

369 *f*

Sop. *more* *more*

Vln. *3* *3* *6* *6*

Vc. *6* *6*

Proj. Cues **64**

Video

Vln.

Vc.

374

6

6

6

6

6

6

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

377

p

The script is pre - pared in Wash - ing - ton,

65

Proj. Cues

The script...

Lange picks up camera, and exits stage through the audience "taking pictures" of audience

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

383

not in the field

very gradually slow down

very gradually slow down

PART THREE: Spinning Your Wheels in the Sand
Senza misura

slowly move around audience, stopping to "take pictures" of them like Lange in Depression Era gradually moving towards the exit

Cues for singer:
"... the US government seems uninterested in making any policy changes that make any difference."

half-sing as if recalling the melody from earlier, sing at whatever pitch level you recall, rhythm is free

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

389

26"

4"

p

A - lone in the field

senza vib., bend IV slightly out of tune, improv., drawn out, intense, not synchronized with cello

26"

4"

senza vib., bend I slightly out of tune, improv., drawn out, intense, not synchronized with violin

26"

4"

66

Proj. Cues

Video Interview + Slides (plays automatically from here to the end)

Cue for singer:
"... once you're given an answer that's not science-based,
then it could just be from any sort of influence they have."

36" 4"

391 Sop. *simile*
the script is pre-pared in Wash-ing-ton

36" 4"

Vln. *simile*
pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

36" 4"

Vc. *simile*
pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cue for singer:
"That's my prediction.
We'll see if it's right."

33" 4"

393 Sop. *p*
what hap-pens to peo - ple

33" 4"

Vln. bow gradually becomes more active: more bow changes, more color variation
8 *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

33" 4"

Vc. bow gradually becomes more active: more bow changes, more color variation
pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Cue for singer:
"... so many countries are trying to put barriers up to more,
to more immigration and this is just the warm-up."

30" 4"

395 Sop. *3*
when they re-set-tle them-selves

30" 4"

Vln. bow speed slowly building towards tremolo in next measure
8 *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* Cues from video: "... this is just the warm-up"

30" 4"

Vc. bow changes slowly building towards tremolo in next measure
pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* Cues from video: "... this is just the warm-up"

fp *fp*

Cue for singer:
"And this is a collective vote, you might say, of the whole world."
42"

397

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

22" 20"

"I'm seeing things throughout the day that could be done better"

"And this is a collective vote, you might say, of the whole world"

22" 20"

"I'm seeing things throughout the day that could be done better"

"And this is a collective vote, you might say, of the whole world"

$p < f > p < f > p$

$p < f > p < f > p$

4" 28" Cue for singer: "We're not making sufficient progress."

398

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

4" 16" 12"

be more than an ar-tist

"people with any kind of conscience can't sit still and do"

"We're not making sufficient progress"

4" 16" 12"

"people with any kind of conscience can't sit still and do"

"We're not making sufficient progress"

$p < f > p < f > p$

$p < f > p < f > p$

4" 20"

400

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

4" 11" 9"

spoken

Something tells me that you won't believe it

"I can't remember exactly the first one"

"going out of your way and usually unpaid"

4" 11" 9"

"I can't remember exactly the first one"

"going out of your way and usually unpaid"

$ffpp$

$pp < mp > pp < mp > pp$

$pp < mf > pp < mf > pp$

Cue for singer:
"up it pops somewhere else with some little different
scientific pseudo-fact, and it gets, it gets fatiguing."

402

Sop.

21"

Vln.

10"

"a week later,
like whack-a-mole"

11"

"and it gets,
it gets fatiguing"

wild, gliss.
as high
as poss.

Vc.

10"

"a week later,
like whack-a-mole"

11"

"and it gets,
it gets fatiguing"

wild, gliss.
as high
as poss.

403

Sop.

4"

11"

Lange completely exits the room

A - lone in the field

Vln.

4"

11"

"or whether you're just spinning
your wheels in the sand."

n!

Vc.

4"

11"

"or whether you're just spinning
your wheels in the sand."

n!