

Christopher Stark

FROM THE FIELD

a micro opera in three parts

2018-19

Christopher Stark

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

for the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble

FROM THE FIELD

a micro opera in three parts

Libretto by
Megan Stark
*drawn from
original sources*

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.

ffp

ffp

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*

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* *ffp* *mf*

norm. bend III only

norm. bend IV only

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...

38

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

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

Proj. Cues

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

norm., bend II only 3

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

norm., bend III only

18 (image) 19 Powell is...

42

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

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

Proj. Cues

bend III only

20 (image) 21 The government...

46

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

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

Proj. Cues

bend both notes

22 (image) 23 ...one designed...

50

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

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

Proj. Cues

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

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

pizz. (in time)

24 25 Rain follows... (image)

PART TWO: The Photographer
Allegro agitato (♩ = 120)

Lange opens letter on desk

54

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

26 27

Part 2 The F.S.A. Photographer:

Lange reads letter while singing

58

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

28

Alone in the field...

61

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

Alone in the A - lone in the

64

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

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. 3 3 3

Proj. Cues **29** interpret what he sees...

74

Sop. what he sees...

Vln. senza vib. pp pp < ff ffp

Vc. pp ff arco ffp

78

Sop. what (s)he 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

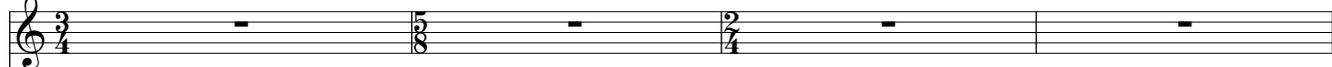
112

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

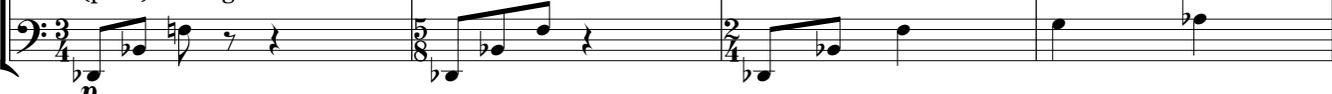
Vc. pizz. *ffz poss.* *ffz* *ffz*

Slower (♩ = 92)

116 *Lange sings her own words*

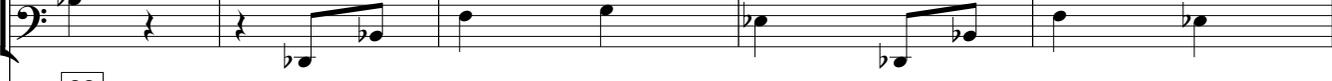
Sop. 

Vln. *like an echo*
p 

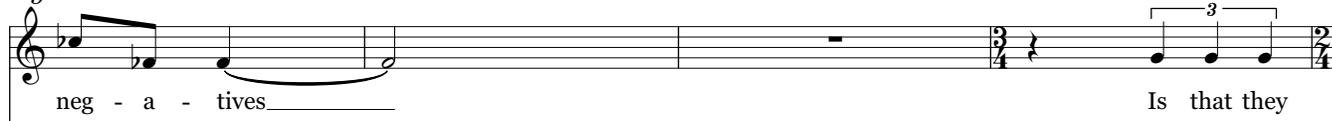
Vc. *(pizz.) let ring*
p 

120 *p*
3
Sop. 
As I see the im - por - tance of these

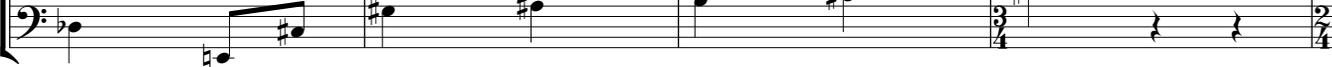
Vln. 

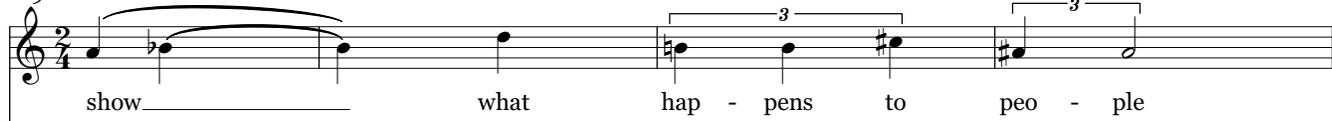
Vc. 

Proj. Cues **33**
As I see... 

125
Sop. 
neg - a - tives Is that they

Vln. 

Vc. 

129
Sop. 
show what hap - pens to peo - ple

Vln. 

Vc. 

133

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

Vln.

Vc.

Proj. Cues

34

under what conditions they live

137

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

Vln.

Vc. *arco*

Proj. Cues

35

what happens to people...

139

Sop. hap - pens to peo - - ple

Vln.

Vc.

6

141

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

Vln.

Vc.

6

molto accel.

143

Vln.

Vc.

A little slower than before (♩ = 84)

145

Sop. *p* as high as poss. The neg-a - tives The

Vln. *ff* *n* as high as poss. *p*

Vc. *ff* *n* pizz., let ring *p*

Proj. Cues [36] The negatives...

149

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

Vln.

Vc.

Allegro agitato (♩ = 120)

Lange opens second letter from the government

155

Sop.

Vln. *pp cresc.*

Vc. *pp cresc.* arco

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.

A - lone in the

f sub.

fp

f sub.

fp

167

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

A - lone in the field

f

ffp

f

6

6

3

f

170

Sop. *The pho - to-gra-pher must be a - ble to in -*

Vln. *6*

Vc. *pizz. f*

174

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

Vln. *6*

Vc. *3*

177

Sop. *what he sees*

Vln. *senza vib. fp*

Vc. *arco p ff*

Proj. Cues *38 p ff*

interpret what he sees...

181

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

Vln. *ffp fp*

Vc. *ffp fp*

184

Sop. lo - cal - i - ty the script

Vln. *f* pizz.

Vc. *f* pizz.

Proj. Cues

39

The "shooting script"...

188

Sop. the script the script is pre - pared

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

194

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

Vln. arco, senza vib. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

199

Vln. *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.* *p* *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.

Proj. Cues 43 - shaking hands

225 *p*

Sop. dump - ing

Vln. pizz. *p sub.* arco

Vc. *p sub.*

Proj. Cues 44 - 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 3

Vc. *f* 3 3 3 3

Proj. Cues 47 seeking relief 48 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

fff

264 *Lange discards letter*

Sop. *hap - py*

Vln.

Vc.

f

f

molto accel.

267

Vln.

Vc.

spoken, facing the audience

269

Sop. *Something tells me that you won't believe it.*

Vln. *wild!* *as high as poss.* *fff poss.*

Vc. *wild!* *as high as poss.* *fff poss.*

Proj. Cues *something tells me*

51

(♩ = 104)

accel. rit.

(♩ = 92)

accel. rit.

272 *molto sul tasto gliss. sul III*

Vln. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Vc. *pizz., l.v. sempre*

Proj. Cues *Video*

52

(♩ = 80)

accel. rit.

(♩ = 69)

accel. rit.

276

Vln. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Vc.

A tempo (♩ = 69)

Lange sings her own words

280

Sop. *Su - gar beet field, fresh - ly plowed,*

Vln. *trill II only, free bowing* *fp* *arco* *pp*

Proj. Cues *Sugar beet field...*

53

285

Sop. *mf*
 deep fur - rows of rich black soil
 trill III only

Vln. *fp*

Vc. pizz., l.v. *f* arco *pp*

290

Sop. *f*
 Man and wife, mid - dle - aged the wo - men and chil - dren

Vln. *fp*

Vc. pizz., l.v. *f* arco *pp*

Proj. Cues **54**
 man and wife

296

Sop. *f*
 work a - long side the men men

Vln. *fp*

Vc. *f*

302

Sop. *p* *mf*
 Here one finds all kinds and con - di - tions

Vln. *fp*

Vc. pizz., l.v. *f* arco *p*

Proj. Cues **55**
 Here one finds

307

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

Vln. *tr*

Vc. *tr*

312

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

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

316

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

Vln. *fp* senza vib.

Vc. *fp* *tr* *fp* trill II only

Proj. Cues *56* Highway US 101

321

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

Vln. *tr* (stop trill)

Vc. *tr* (stop trill)

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*

Vc. *fp*

Proj. Cues **60** **61**
Video They are trying...

trill II only

poco accel.

345

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

Vln. *(tr)*

Vc. *(tr)*

A tempo

351 *f* *p sub.*

Sop. back go back this high-way this high - way

Vln. *f* *p sub.*

Vc. *f* *p sub.*

Proj. Cues 62 63
Video this highway 101...

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*

accel.

Faster (♩ = 80)

369 *f*

Sop. more more

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

Proj. Cues 64
Video

Vln. *6*

Vc. *6*

Sop. *p*

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

Vln. *fp*

Vc. *fp*

Proj. Cues **65**

The script...

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

Sop.

not in the field

Vln.

Vc.

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. *p*

A - lone in the field

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

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

Proj. Cues **66**

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

26" 4" 26" 4"

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

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

"... 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. *fp*
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"

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

397

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

22" 20"

398

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

4" 16" 12" 28" "We're not making sufficient progress."

400

Sop.

Vln.

Vc.

4" 11" 9" 20"

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"

Vc. 10" "a week later,
like whack-a-mole" 11" "and it gets,
it gets fatiguing"

wild, gliss.
as high
as poss. ↗

wild, gliss.
as high
as poss. ↗

403

Sop. 4" 11"

Vln. 4" 11" "or whether you're just spinning
your wheels in the sand."

Vc. 4" 11" "or whether you're just spinning
your wheels in the sand."

Lange completely exits the room

A - lone in the field

n!

n!