

MORE THAN A CONCERT: SYMPHONY TACOMA CONCERT GIVES VOICE TO MOUNT RAINIER THROUGH MUSIC AND GLASS ART

The World Premiere of a new symphonic work. A multimedia experience featuring video, glass art and music. A symposium exploring changes to the delicate ecosystem of the Mountain and its glaciers. A collaboration between the Arts and the National Park Service. A once-in-a-lifetime educational opportunity for area high school students. Symphony Tacoma's Mountain and Sea season finale is all this and more.

Conceived by Music Director Sarah Ioannides, Mountain and Sea engages Symphony Tacoma, the Museum of Glass (MOG), Hilltop Artists, Lincoln High School orchestra students and Mount Rainier National Park in a multimedia artistic event culminating with the May 13 concert. In commemoration of the Centennial of the National Parks System, the multi-layered project will engage participants in music and glass art and raise awareness of the plight of Mount Rainier's glaciers, which are melting at an alarming rate. The capstone of the project and the season finale will be the world premiere of Fire-Mountain, the new symphonic work by Daniel Ott.

MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCE

Speaking of capstones, just three days before the concert string orchestra students from Lincoln High School will join Sarah, composer Daniel Ott, PLU Professor of Composition Greg Youtz and Symphony staff members during a daylong field trip to Paradise on Mount Rainier. We have a special relationship with the school; violinist Cynthia Iverson--a 30-year member of Symphony Tacoma--teaches their orchestra, and string players from Symphony Tacoma are currently in weekly residence there as string coaches and mentors.

This Wednesday, the students will trade their instruments for snow shoes as they travel to Paradise by bus for a daylong field trip. The Symphony is providing seltzer water, capri sun, peanuts and granola bars so they arrived properly fueled and hydrated! At the mountaintop, they'll hear presentations about the extensive glacial system, and learn from Dan and Greg about the creative process. A primary goal is to convey to the students that music and art don't happen in a vacuum, but simultaneously shape and respond to current events, life and culture. On Friday evening, the students will take a much shorter journey to the Pantages Theater, where they will re-unite with their new friends, both artists and park rangers, to watch first hand as Fire-Mountain comes together during the dress rehearsal.

THE MUSIC

A musical portrait of natural wonders, Ott's Fire-Mountain utilizes 155 musicians, including the 85-piece Symphony Tacoma and 70-person Symphony Tacoma Voices. Chorus Director Geoffrey Boers has consulted extensively with Sarah and Dan; and the Chorus has had the music since earlier this winter and has been preparing during weekly rehearsals. Dan will arrive early next week to participate in

rehearsals, giving Sarah and Geoffrey the rare opportunity to work first hand with the composer in preparation for the performance.

Also performed during the concert will be Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" and Debussy's Impressionist masterpiece La Mer. The program is characteristic of Sarah's thoughtful, curatorial approach to programming: gem-setting a new artistic creation with colorful, complementary music from the core repertoire and visual elements. The result is a multi-media experience that blends the challenging with the accessible.

THE FILM

Interwoven with Ott's music will be Tacoma filmmaker Derek Klein's art film, featuring footage from the mid-March "Fire and Ice" glassblowing event at MOG featuring Hilltop Artist student glassblowers, along with images from the park. With subject matter ranging from sports to creative entertainment, Derek's films capture real people and the passion that drives them. As MOG's multimedia director, he has produced numerous documentaries on pivotal figures in the art world. Derek, Sarah and Dan have worked in close association to produce an image choreography that is integral to the experience of Fire-Mountain. Presented on a screen suspended above the orchestra, the visual depictions of the molten glass and snow-capped peak, together with the chorus vocals, will poignantly illustrate the mountain's hidden fire and its surface glaciers, in all their grandeur and beauty.

Prior to the concert, Super Subscribers will be invited to a fascinating Music Mixer panel discussion featuring Sarah, Dan, climatologist Mike Warner, and Mount Rainier National Park Deputy Superintendent Tracy Swartout. The lobby will include informational displays staffed by NPS officials. Hilltop Artist students will also be on hand with displays of their glass art from the March Fire and Ice event.

OTHER PARTNERS AND SUPPORT

The concert is sponsored by Boeing. The commission is funded by a gift from Carroll Bryan and Laurie Sorensen. Assisting in the launch of this project, the Symphony has the distinguished honor of being the only Washington State grant recipient in a special award category of the National Endowment for the Arts and National Park System. March's "Fire and Ice" event was made possible by a grant from The Russell Family Foundation.

It has been a privilege to support Dan, Derek and especially Sarah in the long run-up to this concert. Elements of the project have been in Sarah's mind since the early days of her tenure, and we have literally been writing grant proposals, building bridges with collaborative partners, and otherwise planning the event since the spring of 2015! We are also profoundly grateful to Susan Warner and Debbie Lenk at the Museum of Glass, and to the artists and staff at Hilltop Artists, including recently-retired Executive Director Kit Evans.

Art responds to life, and by building relationships in the community, art can serve as a catalyst for education, growth and transformation in a region. Through a process of community collaboration and working in multiple mediums, this partnership seeks to produce an inspiring experience, empowering participants to undertake an active role in protecting our region.

