

Defiance

A One-Minute Opera

by

John Craton

Synopsis

As the curtain rises we see a woman (soprano) sitting next to a fire in a primeval forest. Sitting some way off is an old man and also another woman holding a small child. Standing near the soprano is a younger man to whom all the singer's words are addressed. The soprano delivers a series of instructions to the younger man (whom we presume to be her husband), the last of which is an admonition not to spit in the ashes. In response – as though fed up with the woman's prehistoric nagging – on the last note of the opera he defiantly spits into the fire. Curtain.

Personnel

Woman (soprano)

Old Man (non-singing)

Woman with child (non-singing)

Younger Man (non-singing)

Libretto

The libretto consists of a series of theoretical utterances in prehistoric speech found in the article "Linguists identify 15,000-year-old 'ultraconserved words'" by David Brown, staff writer for *The Washington Post* [6 May 2013], and is based on linguistic research done by Drs. Rebecca Grollemund and Mark Pagel of the University of Reading, U.K. Used by permission.

For Megan McKamey Barrett
(with a nod or two thrown in the direction of Anton Webern)

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Langsam $\text{♩} = 72$

Piccolo *ff* *p*

Flutes *ff* *p*

Oboes *ff* *p*

Clarinets in Bb *ff* *p*

Bassoons *ff* *p*

Horns in F *ff* *mf*

Trumpets in Bb *ff*

Trombone *ff* *mf*

Tuba *ff* *mf*

Timpani *ff*

Vibraphone *f*

Soprano Solo *f*
You,

Violin I *ff* *p* *f*

Violin II *ff* *p* *f*

Viola *ff* *p*

Violoncello *ff* *p*

Contrabass *ff* *p* pizz.

This musical score page includes the following parts and markings:

- Piccolo (Pic.):** Treble clef, *f*, triplet of eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and a sixteenth rest.
- Flute (Fl.):** Treble clef, *f*, triplet of eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and a sixteenth rest.
- Oboe (Ob.):** Treble clef, *f*, eighth notes, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Clarinet (Cl.):** Treble clef, eighth notes, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Bassoon (Bsn.):** Bass clef, whole rest.
- Horn (Hn.):** Treble clef, *f*, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Trumpet (Tpt.):** Treble clef, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Trombone (Tbn.):** Bass clef, *f*, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Tuba (Tba.):** Bass clef, *f*, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Timpani (Timp.):** Bass clef, *mf*, eighth notes, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Vibraphone (Vib.):** Treble clef, triplet of eighth notes, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Soloist (S. Solo):** Treble clef, lyrics: "hear me! Give this fire to that old man..."
- Violin I (Vln. I):** Treble clef, *f*, triplet of eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and a sixteenth rest.
- Violin II (Vln. II):** Treble clef, *f*, triplet of eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and a sixteenth rest.
- Viola (Vla.):** Bass clef, *f*, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Bass clef, *f*, quarter notes, and a half note.
- Double Bass (Cb.):** Bass clef, *f*, quarter notes, and a half note. Marking: *arco*.

9 *poco rall.*

Instrumentation: Picc., Fl., Ob., Cl., Bsn., Hn., Tpt., Tbn., Tba., Timp., Vib., S. Solo, Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., Cb.

Lyrics:
Pull the black worm off the bark and give it to the mother.

Performance Markings: *poco rall.*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, *mp*

13 **a tempo**

Picc. *mf* *ff* 3 3

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *mf* *ff* 3 3

Cl. *mf* *ff*

Bsn. *sf* *ff*

Hn. *ff*

Tpt. *sf* *ff*

Tbn. *mf* *sf* *ff*

Tba. *mf* *sf* *ff*

Timp. *sf* *ff*

Vib. *sf* *ff* 3 3

S. Solo *ff*
And no spit-ting in the ash es!

Vln. I **a tempo** pizz. *mf* *sf* arco *ff*

Vln. II pizz. *mf* *sf* arco *ff*

Vla. pizz. *mf* *sf* arco *ff*

Vc. pizz. *mf* *sf* arco *ff*

Cb. pizz. *mf* *sf* arco *ff*