

Casey Burns – Opera Composer March 5th Update. I will be archiving previous updates at www.caseyburnsflutes.com/operaupdates.pdf and focusing on the works in development here.

Wagner has his Ring and I have my “Eclipse Ring” or I suppose I could call it the “Diamond Ring Cycle” after that element of eclipses. For now I will call it the “Eclipse Cycle”, These are 4 operas that are related storywise, with the Space Alien Eclipse Tourists as the common link. The first opera in this sequence is the most recent and each subsequent opera goes backwards in time.

1) The Eclipse of Love (current work in progress) - Some somewhat discontented Space Alien Eclipse Tourists arrive to witness the Great American Eclipse, complaining about the previous three times on Earth and what disasters these became. They wonder what disaster awaits them this time. They arrive with some weather modification technology that will part the clouds. Meanwhile the Professor (Bass) arrives at the same viewing spot with his nerd kid students along with other eclipse watchers, who are all worried as the clouds and then some fog appears to be settling in to ruin the view. The Aliens are trying not to be discovered as that would violate their Prime Directive and sing to each other in Morse Code. Lauren, one of the precocious nerd kids almost outs them as she is also a Ham Radio nerd. It turns out the Professor already knows about them and the two promise the aliens that they will remain anonymous. For the Aliens this would be their worst case scenario if they were outed, as it would end their tourism by having violated the Prime Directive.

Just then Cliff (Second Tenor) and Alyra Rose (Mezzo), the couple getting married during the eclipse, storm in arguing with the incompetent “best man” Bullshiddo (Baritone) who can’t seem to get anything right (he’s the comic focus of the opera) about the disaster of the Wedding Rehearsal. Their flakey New Age Minister FalconBurger (“Hysterical” Tenor) who Bullshiddo hired just totally ruined the Dress Rehearsal. The crowd of eclipse watchers is worried because of the clouds - but then these miraculously part and the Space Aliens get excited that their technology finally worked this time after 3 previous failed attempts and end their excitement with a brief quote from “Love the One you’re With”. The Space Aliens are named “Cros, Sill, Nazz and Youg”.

Finally FalconBurger (named that because he ate a road-killed falcon once, got really sick from it and had visions) makes his entrance and grosses everyone out with his backstory, which includes elements of Science Denialism and Flat-Earther propaganda. He tells everyone to take their eclipse glasses off now and only watch with them on during Totality. He then sings about what the eclipse means metaphysically and flat earth-wise. The Professor speaks a loud authoritative “NO!” at the end and then sings of the beauty of this event and the Beauty of scientific understanding and Nature and Truth and Fact. Afterwards FalconBurger and the Professor lock horns, with FalconBurger claiming Science is nothing more than another religion designed to make the scientists filthy rich. As the Professor tries to

calm him down and focus on the eclipse countdown it escalates with FalconBurger storming off as the wedding cake arrives in preparation. The wedding couple is in huge crisis as the Diamond Ring countdown to Totality is happening. The professor saves the day by informing them that he is a Mail Order Minister who performs eclipse weddings frequently. The Aliens assist (mocking everything privately) and the couple is married quickly and then everyone savors the eclipse to sublime music. Finally towards the end a very stoned FalconBurger arrives, blinded in the darkness by his eclipse glasses, and trips on a telescope and lands in the wedding cake, to everyone's amusement singing "FailArmy!" Finally, Totality ends and all explain "Encore! Encore! Encore!" - which is a great way to end an opera and thus it ends. After the Applause and Curtain Calls the cast does an encore, singing number called "Don't Stare at the Sun and Trust in Science!"

There will be a few Donizetti quotes. After all, he and I were both born on November 29th.

2) The Eclipse of Salsa - I am bending history a bit here and turning a lunar eclipse into a Solar eclipse. Columbus's ship is on its way back to the Americas and the very same Space Alien Eclipse Tourists (they are apparently long lived) have signed on disguised as sailors from Galicia where they have taken to the Galician bagpipes (Gaita) to make their disguise convincing. Reminds them of the instruments back home. The ship is way off course due to the Aliens' intentional handling (they want to make sure they arrive in the Eclipse zone after all). The Aliens figure if they are far from land they won't have any of the troubles they encountered their previous two times on Earth. The other sailors can't figure out why they are so off course and blame it on Columbus and nearly lynch him. Finally after the eclipse the boat arrives on the coast of somewhere in the Caribbean and are confronted by hostile indigenous people. Nobody wants to go down to the shore so they send the Galician bagpipers (Space Aliens in disguise) who are sent to confront the hostile natives and scare them with their bagpipes. The indigenous people pause the pipers - run off and come back with their musical instruments and thus Salsa Music is born. (This is a true story although the leader of the expedition was one of the Conquistadores and the pipers were Galician Gaiteiros, according to Carlos Nunez). Will be sung in Spanish perhaps. Think: Billy Budd with Space Aliens. I am still working on the story line and whether to include Columbus. But this will be next year's task. Only one opera a year if I am lucky!

3) le morte d'Henry - The Space Aliens arrive in England to view the August 2, 1133 eclipse. They arrive a week early and disguise themselves as traveling royalty and impose themselves on King Henry the First. Why stay with him? The food is better and it is simply safer. Plus they don't want to repeat the troubles of previous bad experience. Henry tries to be a gracious host and shares with them his current political crises. Unfortunately the Aliens are such difficult and needy guests, complain of everything, and challenge the King enough so that during the eclipse, poor old stressed out King Henry collapses from a heart attack and dies. The Aliens

can't intervene due to the Prime Directive. Chaos ensues as England descends into Civil War. The Aliens barely make it back to their ship alive, singing "Not this shit again!"

4) The Eclipse of War - The Space Aliens have been really looking forward to the eclipse of May 28, 585 BC. Their first on Earth! They are looking forward to Turkey's lovely Mediterranean climate, perfect at that time of the year and having just a swell time of it. Well they land smack dab into the middle of the Battle of Halys between the Medes and the Lydians. They materialize in front of Herodotus who assumes them to be Gods and they say, "Sure, why not! We'll stop your war by making the Sun disappear!" They assure Herodotus that their "God Powers" (Alien Weather Modifying Technology) will work and it doesn't obviously yet the clouds part anyway and the truce ensues after the Eclipse happens. Herodotus isn't impressed and begins to figure that something isn't adding up. The Aliens have a hard time explain their way out the door. The music will identify something amazing about Herodotus, that he will discover on his future path of discovery. Remember, the Professor from the 1st Opera said that he knew who these Space Aliens were and everyone assumes SETI....