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INSTRUMENTATION

The orchestra consists of the following:

2 Flutes, 1st Flute doubling on Piccolo
 2 Oboes
 1 English Horn
 2 Clarinets in B-flat
 1 Bass Clarinet
 2 Bassoons
 4 Horns in F
 2 Trumpets in B-flat
 2 Trombones (2nd Trombone doubles on Bass Trombone)

Percussion 1: Timpani, Bass Drum, Snare Drum (1 player)
 Percussion 2: Glockenspiel, Crotales, Suspended Cymbal (1 player)

Celesta
 Piano
 Harp

Strings (minimum 6-6-5-4-2)

One trumpet player and one horn player will play offstage at the beginning of the opera and in a few places thereafter. Otherwise, all players will perform from the pit. A mixed chorus (SATB) is also required. The young men and women onstage should be of sufficient numbers to allow for SATB singing. Ideally, the women's chorus which sings with the Musician in Scene 1 and Scene 3 should be located in the orchestra pit. However, the women's chorus part may be sung by the women onstage.

Duration: approximately 60 minutes.

Frank Ferko (b. 1950)

For biographical information visit: www.frankferko.com

AVAILABLE EDITIONS

→ Piano/Vocal Score	5234
Choral Part	5234A
Additional Full Score	5234B
Libretto	8374
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CAST

The cast of the opera consists of four principal singers and a chorus of young men and women.

Youth: high, lyric baritone

Mistress: dramatic soprano or mezzo-soprano

Apprentice: lyric soprano

Musician: boy soprano

Chorus: SATB with enough women to divide into SSAA at designated places in Scene 1 and Scene 3.

SYNOPSIS

***THE HILL**, in part a consolatory work for an era when youth is cut off in its prime, takes place in a mythological setting. Young people are waiting on a hill distinguished by a somewhat incomprehensible **Musician** and a Manor into which their leader has vanished.*

*Despite the **Musician**'s cryptic warnings, the young leader's best friend (the **Youth**) follows a mysterious young woman (the **Apprentice**) into the Manor. There he discovers from the **Mistress** that his friend has indeed died. Frantic with grief, he begs for death also. After some argument his wish is granted.*

*However, because of the love all of the young people bear one another, the souls of the departed are placed on the **Musician**'s harp and blaze forth eternally.*

SCENE 1

*[A park at the top of a hill, with a manor in the distance. The light is gentle, golden, autumnal. Brilliantly colored bicycles—preferably red and visually disturbing—are discarded helter-skelter at the top of a path on one side of the set. Young men and women—the **Chorus**—are scattered around in various poses. They are uncannily still. Their clothes are casual, in unobtrusive colors. The young people are unadorned, except in two ways: they all have distinctive Navajo-style blankets, which they are wearing or lying on; in any case, always in contact with. (Mexican or Southwest Indian serapes or ponchos may be substituted for the blankets, but in natural colors.) They also all wear headbands with large, individually distinctive seals—NOT the animal. (In part, the seal represents the soul; the blanket, the physical being; the bicycle, life energy.)]*

*[The **Chorus**'s attention is fixed on the **Musician** and on the **Youth** near him. The **Musician** has an archaic-looking, thoroughly imaginary "harp," which suggests both a stringed instrument and wind chimes. (Its music is provided from the pit.) He does not have a blanket or a headband. However, his "harp" is inlaid with seals. The **Youth**'s blanket is tied in a roll, unlike those of his companions.]*

SCENE 2

*A large room in the manor. The **Mistress** and the **Apprentice** watch as the group of young travelers (from the previous scene) approach the house. In her discussion with the **Apprentice** of the fate of the travelers, the **Mistress** sings an aria, "But in a time, perhaps one will come." She then takes from her apron a small, decorative seal (symbol of the soul), which had once belonged to the leader of the group of travelers. In a duet, she and the **Apprentice** comment on the seal's symbolic imagery: two stags with their antlers intertwined. As the **Mistress** gives the seal to the **Apprentice** for safekeeping, the **Youth** enters. He sees the seal and asks about his friend, who was the travelers' leader. When he is informed that his friend is dead, at first, he refuses to believe it, but he then asks the **Mistress** to give him death as well. At first, she refuses, but when he begs her for death, she replies, "It will be as it must be." She takes him to an alcove where she quietly ushers him into the next world. The **Apprentice**, alone on stage, responds to this action with a symbolic dance of death ("Totentanz") followed by a sung verse which concludes with the words, "...where love is, light will grow."*

SCENE 2

*All the young travelers come into view while singing and expressing their desire to sleep. They kneel and roll and tie their blankets very ritualistically. When they have finished, the **Apprentice** and **Musician** enter behind them from opposite sides. The **Apprentice** takes the two seals from her pouch and hands them to the **Musician**. They kindle in his hands, and he places them in adjacent spots on his "harp." All the seals on the "harp" blaze, but the seals of the young people do not. The **Apprentice** and the **Musician** sing together the verse that the **Apprentice** sang in the previous scene. This music becomes the basis for the final chorus, which is sung by all of the young travelers. As the chorus concludes, the **Musician**, once again, sings alone with his "harp," and the trumpet sounds from "the other side."*

The Hill
A Symbolist Opera in One Act
Scene 1

Libretto by Sally M. Gall

Music by Frank Ferko

Slowly, broadly ♩ = 63

Mistress

Apprentice

Musician

Youth

Soprano

Alto

Chorus

Tenor

Bass

Slowly, broadly ♩ = 63

Piano
(for rehearsal only)

ff [Tpt../Tbn. onstage]

mp [Tpt../Hn. offstage]

4

[Tpt./Tbn. onstage]

f

[Tpt./Hn. offstage]

mp

7

[Strings]

ppp

11

pp

ppp

$\text{♩} = 52$

17

[Ob. solo]

mp

3

3

[Strings]

pp

ppp

22

mp

pp

molto rit.

28 **A tempo** (♩ = 52)

Mus. *mp* (*) Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.

S 1 *p* Ah.

S 2 *p* Ah.

A 1 *p* Ah.

A 2 *p* Ah.

A tempo (♩ = 52)

[Fl., E. H.] *ppp mp*

[Hp.] *mf*

32

Mus. Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.

S 1 Ah.

S 2 Ah.

A 1 Ah.

A 2 Ah.

[Strings]

[Fl., E. H.]

(*) Sopranos and Altos sustain each of the pitches sung by the **Musician** as he sings the pitch. Arrows indicate which singers sustain each pitch. The **Chorus** notes have no particular value but are sustained until the indicated breath mark. When the **Musician** has a rest, chorus singers continue to sustain their notes through that rest. When the soloist sings a pitch which is already being sustained, **Chorus** singers do not re-articulate the pitch but continue to sustain it.

35 Moderately ♩ = ca. 96

Mus.

Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.

S 1

S 2

Ah.

A 1

A 2

Ah.

mp *pp* *mp* *pp*

Red.

pp

3

38

S

We wait, and still — the Mu-

A

We wait, and still — the Mu-

T

We wait, and still — the Mu-

B

We wait, and still — the Mu-

mf *mf* *mf* *mf*

3 *3* *3* *3*

[Hp.] *mp* [Strings] *mf*

44

S si - cian does not an - swer. *mf* We wait, _____ and still _____

A si - cian does not an - swer. *mf* We wait, _____ and still _____

T si - cian does not an - swer. *mf* We wait, _____ and still _____ the Mu- ³

B si - cian does not an - swer. *mf* We wait, _____ and still _____ the Mu- ³

50

S _____ the Mu - si - cian does not an - swer, _____ an - swer. *p* The

A _____ the Mu - si - cian does not an - swer, _____ an - swer.

T si - cian does not an - swer.

B si - cian does not an - swer.

55

S af - ter - noon grows cold, the af - ter - noon grows cold. Why is he wait-ing?

A *p* The af - ter - noon grows cold, Why is he wait-ing?

T

B

60 *poco rall.*

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 92$

S *p* *mp* Will some great bird fly from the west and

A *p* *mp* Will some great bird fly from the west and

T *p* *mp* Will some great bird fly from the west and

B *p* *mp* Will some great bird fly from the west and

poco rall.

$\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 92$

65

S bid him speak? Or does he wait for voic-es in the wind?

A bid him speak? Or does he wait for voic-es in the wind?

T bid him speak? Or does he wait for voic-es in the wind?

B bid him speak? Or does he wait for voic-es in the wind?

p

mf

71

Youth

Hush!

mf

[Bn.] *mp* 3

[Strings]

[B. Cl.]

76

Youth

He will speak to me. He will speak soon. All _____ shall be ex -

p

81

YOUTH

plained. ____

S

mf

All shall be ex-plained?

A

mf

All shall be ex-plained?

T

mf

All shall be ex - plained? ____

B

mf

All shall be ex - plained? ____

cresc.

mf

cresc.

Scene 2

[The Manor. A large, well-lighted room, with a semi-visible alcove. The furnishings include a bench with neatly rolled and tied blankets. The **Apprentice** is looking out a window. The **Mistress** comes in from the alcove adjusting her clothes.]

307 With calm serenity ♩ = 60

Piano

p

[solo Winds]

[Strings]

313

[Ob. solo]

pp

espressivo

mp 3 [Bn. solo]

318

(8^{va})

[Ob. solo]

mp 3

[Strings] *p*

322

Mistr.

mf

Ah! You are here, my dear.

Appr.

mf

Look, — there.

325

Appr. Are they not beau - ti - ful? So young.

[Cl. solo]

p

330

Mistr. The

Appr. So strong. They have come all this way.

[Tpt. solo]

[Hns.] *pp*

mf

335

Mistr. sun weighs on their skin. Their eyes are heav - y with hold - ing up the

p [Tutti]

p

340 *p*

Mistr.

moon.

[Cl. solo]

mp

pp

[Strings] *pp*

346 *mp*

Appr.

Ah, but they are beau - ti - ful. They drink the sun glad-ly.

[Hns.] *p*

[Strings]

351

Appr.

Their eyes spar-kle in the moon. You know they are beau - ti - ful.

355

Mistr. *mf* They have come all this way. Here they

Appr. So young. So strong. —

mp 3 3

[Hn. solo] *p*

ppp

360

Mistr. shall find peace.

Appr. *mf* They are young. They are

3 3 3 3

mf [Hp.]

364

Appr. strong. Mis-tress, They do not wish for peace.

3 3 3

368 *p* *mf*

Mistr. You will learn that you are wrong. The

373

Mistr. sun weighs on their skin. — Their eyes are heav - y — with hold - ing

377 *p*

Mistr. up the moon. They will die soon.

382 *mf* *cresc.* *f*

Mistr. It is writ - ten. It is sealed in stone. It shall be done. The earth is strong. The

Appr. *mp*

Is it writ - ten?

pp *mp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *cresc.*

387

Mistr. seas will cov - er them.

Appr. *f* They are young and beau - ti - ful.

392

Mistr. *ff* All things die. *f* They had a lead - er once.

[Brass, Strings] *ff* *sfp* *mp* *pp* *mf*

398

Mistr. *mf* He too was young and beau-ti-ful. — There is no ex - cep - tion. There

[Winds] *sfp* *p* *p*

Scene 3

[During the finale, all the young men and women enter in front of the scrim. They kneel and roll and tie their blankets very ritualistically. When they have finished, the **Apprentice** and **Musician** enter behind them from opposite sides. The **Apprentice** takes the two seals from her pouch and hands them to the **Musician**. They kindle in his hands, and he places them in adjacent spots on his "harp." All the seals on the "harp" blaze, but the seals of the young people do not.]

Moderately slow ♩ = 52 **Faster** ♩ = 66 ♩ = 52

819 [Chorus offstage]

Soprano *p* Ah, ah,

Alto *p* Ah, ah,

Tenor *p* Ah, ah,

Bass *p* Ah, ah,

Piano *f* [Strings] *f*

S *mp* ah, ah,

A ah, ah,

T ah, ah,

B ah, ah,

mp [Brass] *pp*

822 ♩ = 66

mp [Strings] *pp*

825

[Chorus comes onstage]

Score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Piano (P) starting at measure 825. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) are marked with "ah," and the piano part is marked *mf*. The vocal lines feature long, sustained notes with ties, and the piano part provides a rhythmic accompaniment.

828

Score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Piano (P) starting at measure 828. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) are marked with "ah," and the piano part is marked *p*. The vocal lines feature long, sustained notes with ties, and the piano part provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The lyrics "We shall" are present for all vocal parts, and the piano part includes the word "unis." (unison).

832

S sleep, we shall sleep... ah, ah.

A sleep, we shall sleep... ah, ah.

T sleep, we shall sleep... ah, ah.

B sleep, we shall sleep... ah, ah.

unis.

unis.

unis.

mp

837

S We shall sleep, sleep... ah, ah.

A We shall sleep, sleep... ah, ah.

T We shall sleep, sleep... ah, ah.

B We shall sleep, sleep... ah, ah.

unis.

unis.

unis.

[Celesta arp. begins]

mp

841

S
A
T
B

ah, ah, ah, *f*
ah, ah, ah, *f*
ah, ah, ah, *f*
ah, ah, ah, *f*

[Cel.]

844

S
A
T
B

ah, ah, ah.

ah, ah, ah.

ah, ah, ah.

ah, ah, ah.

cresc.

[Tutti]
f