

Vox terrae (Voice of the Earth) (2007)
Richard Danielpour (1956 –)

The outstanding and internationally acclaimed Grammy-Award winning composer Richard Danielpour is still much in demand worldwide. Much of his success stems from his ability to communicate deep and important emotions via simple and direct yet uncompromising ways. His distinctive compositional style includes large, stunningly orchestrated, highly expressive and rhythmically vibrant romantic ideas. A dedicated mentor and educator, he has significantly influenced a younger generation of composers. The 2005 première of his first opera, “Margaret Garner” – written with Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison – took critics and audiences by storm. He has been commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, American Composers Orchestra, the San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Pacific, National, Atlanta, and Baltimore Symphonies, and many others. His music has been championed by artists Emanuel Ax, Sarah Chang, Gary Graffman, Thomas Hampson, Yo-Yo Ma, Jessye Norman, Frederica von Stade, and Dawn Upshaw; the American, Emerson, Guarneri, and Muir String Quartets; the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio; and conductors Leonard Bernstein, Charles Dutoit, Zdeněk Mácal, Kurt Masur, Leonard Slatkin, and David Zinman.

Mr. Danielpour has received many prestigious honors, including the American Academy of Arts & Letters’ Lifetime Achievement Award and Charles Ives Fellowship; the Guggenheim Award; two Rockefeller Foundation grants; the Bearns Prize from Columbia University; and grants and residencies from the Barlow Foundation, MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Copland House, and the American Academy in Rome. He has also enjoyed guest residences at Berklee College (Boston), a McCormack Residency at Skidmore College, and a specially created interdisciplinary lectureship at Northwestern University surrounding the Chicago première of “Margaret Garner.”

One of the most recorded composers of his generation, Mr. Danielpour became only the third composer – after Stravinsky and Copland – to be signed to an exclusive recording contract by Sony Classical. His many recorded works include the Cello Concerto (Yo-Yo Ma/Philadelphia Orchestra/David Zinman); the Grammy-nominated “Concerto for Orchestra” (Pittsburgh Symphony/David Zinman); “An American Requiem”; “A Child’s Reliquary” (Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio); “In the Arms of the Beloved;” “Celestial Night,” “Splendid City,” and “Urban Dances” (London Philharmonia/Zdeněk Mácal); “First Light,” “The Awakened Heart,” and Symphony No. 3 (Seattle Symphony/Gerard Schwarz); and “Metamorphosis” (Piano Concerto No. 1) (Michael Boriskin/Utah Symphony/Joseph Silverstein).

About *Vox terrae*, the composer wrote:

I have often composed music in order to give voice to those who are not heard. With *Vox terrae*, the voice is that of our planet. Of course, like the many disenfranchised, the earth does speak, but we often turn a deaf ear, despite the many global issues that are now beginning to affect us adversely.

The latter part of this work may be interpreted as confession, apology, and intercession all rolled into one. In going through the galleys of the piece recently, I was again reminded that we are here for such a short time, and then a part of us becomes one with the earth itself. May we awaken to our profound responsibility for this planet before we take our last places here.

Richard Danielpour, October 4, 2011