

ANOTHER SUNRISE



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Operas share profound human experiences and often ask more questions than they answer. This seems to be the case in *Another Sunrise*, the one-act opera by composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer.

Under unimaginably horrific conditions, what will a person do to survive to see another sunrise? What will they remember of their brutal captivity? What will they be able to reveal? Heggie and Scheer tackle these gut-wrenching questions in the real-life story of Auschwitz survivor Krystyna Zywulska, a Polish resistor and hidden Jew, and the protagonist of *Another Sunrise*.

SYNOPSIS

Krystyna Żywulska, a Holocaust survivor, is asked to record her memories of Auschwitz for an interviewer. Despite her plethora of memories, including the poems and songs she created during her imprisonment, she finds it impossible to verbalize what she experienced long ago. In the midst of a sleepless night, with so many words in her memory, she attempts to find the ones that describe her fight for survival.

The opera depicts her imprisonment in the Nazi concentration camps as it also explores a survivor's everyday reality, twenty years after her release. Zywulska hid her Jewish identity throughout her captivity; yet, she became the camp's poet and with her words, inspired other prisoners to survive. It's a complex situation where trauma and memory are forever married, and often, as Gene Scheer imagines, "there are no words."

If you could, what questions would you ask Krystyna?

Another Sunrise is about the struggle to describe harrowing, unimaginable situations to people who weren't there. It is also about what it is to survive. Like many who make it through a war, Krystyna survived not through grand acts of heroism, but through near maddening acts of survival. We do whatever it takes to live another day: to see another sunrise."

— JAKE HEGGIE, COMPOSER,
AND GENE SCHEER, LIBRETTIST

LIGHT / THE HOLOCAUST & HUMANITY PROJECT



CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTES

Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project is the story of survival. Situated during the catastrophic events of the Holocaust, this work strives to illustrate the courage, resilience, and sometimes pure luck required to endure and rebuild life after unimaginable and devastating loss. I am grateful to Naomi Warren and the many survivors who shared their testimony during the creation of this work. I am forever changed by this knowledge and hope that by my sharing Naomi's story, others will be affected to fight indifference and intolerance when witnessed. Past is present and not to be forgotten.

SYNOPSIS

As an artist whose practice is very much involved in the humanity within dance, approaching a story based in an important historical event was new to me. I am interested to help people relate to one another and feel that dance has the ability to express, in a metaphoric way, emotion that words cannot capture. Throughout my study of the Holocaust, I became fixated on memory and the ways in which people cope with disaster and loss. In my mind, I wonder what conversations survivors have with themselves over the nearly 80 years since the end of World War II. This concept is introduced with the image of a survivor who comforts her younger self and relives her story.

Through the biblical story of Adam and Eve, the circle of life begins. Civilizations develop; families

and cultures evolved to include a pattern of daily life and valued traditions, like a wedding. However, change is imminent; the ground is shifting, and what is familiar slowly disappears. Certain populations are deemed to be inferior, and then targeted and isolated. They are degraded to the point of being perceived as non-human, and life or death is determined by powers outside of their control. People are treated as property and transported to camps. Overwhelming numbers do not survive the trip. Even within a prison, the circular nature of life continues. Acts of brutality, courage, defiance, and anger occur in captivity. Eventually, though, we all face death, and do so alone. However, the circle continues; lives and families are rebuilt. This is not every survivor's story, but it is the one I humbly seek to tell.

— STEPHEN MILLS