

## Opera Background

Back in 2013, after closing a family business that had occupied all of my free time for 7 years, I found myself ripe for a new project. Being a long-time collector of recorded music, particularly opera, I became troubled by three things I perceived with regard to today's world of opera: 1, the relative obscurity of English language operas being performed live; 2, the dearth of contemporary stories whose characters exhibit contemporary emotional responses we can fully relate to; and 3, the general lack of epic storytelling in new works for the opera stage.

I am also a reader of science fiction and fantasy, and the topic of a fantasy book I had read many years earlier came up in discussion with a fellow reader. That book was Greg Bear's epic *Songs of Earth & Power*. As both my fellow reader and I had fond memories of the book, it began to occupy my thoughts, with the idea that I ought to track it down and read it again.

Not surprisingly, my musings about opera and about this fantasy story eventually collided together, sparking an epiphany: Greg Bear's epic story would make for a very intriguing opera cycle!

Creating a libretto adaptation of *The Infinity Concerto*, book 1 of *Songs of Earth & Power* began in earnest. Owing to the intricacy and complexity of the story, it was slow going, but eventually I had the adaptation mostly complete. I contacted Greg Bear late in 2014 to float my idea for the opera cycle based upon his book. He was enthusiastic about having me continue this work, and with a written agreement in hand I was able to move forward.

Once Greg gave his approval of the completed libretto adaptation (written in screenplay format at his request) I was able to proceed with music composition for the opera. As the work progressed, I periodically sent printed scores and sound files to Greg. He was unwavering in his support, replying with astonishing swiftness to every email I ever sent.

An epic opera is an epic undertaking, and many times during this odyssey I felt a certain sympathy for some well known composers of the past who earned their living in an entirely unrelated profession and composed on the side (Alexander Borodin springs to mind). Eventually in 2023 the first opera in the cycle, "Song of Sidhedark" was completed, but sadly Greg Bear passed away before hearing the conclusion.

I am grateful to Astrid Anderson Bear, Greg's widow, for her continued support of this project. It is my sincere hope that Greg's imaginative story will one day reach the live opera stage, and in so doing honor his memory and amazing legacy.

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