

Car Crash Opera chamber opera, 2006-07

Animation and Libretto by

Skip Battaglia

Music by

Michaela Eremiášová and Jairo Duarte-López

Duration ca. 8 minutes.

Car Crash Opera was commissioned as the music score for a short film by renown animator and RIT Professor Skip Battaglia. The creation of the film required that the music be composed and recorded in advance. Knowing that the animation would take close to two years for its completion, we approached the music not only as a film score but also as a stand-alone composition. The music makes use of several musical styles in order to illustrate a different backdrop for each character or couple. Once we are familiar with the characters the story develops when two adolescents find themselves cut off the road by a careless amorous couple, they decide to start a chase that concludes with the inevitable collision of four cars. After the final crash the music attempts to depict images of horror, tragedy and mourning as the singers join as a choir of souls.

Michaela Eremiášová & Jairo Duarte-López

Synopsis of the film in the director's words:

“This seven to eight minute animated film will be a cinematic homage to that paragon of American movie art forms ---the car crash film. But...this will be sung as an opera...with characters, flourishes, poignant interludes, orchestration, sound effects. [It] will be dramatically exaggerated, an over-the-top car crash to comment on all filmed car crashes, funny and tragic, graphically beautiful and kinetically terrifying, and more sublime than ironic. The soundtrack is meant to be as over-sized as the visual elements of the film...”

“There are to be four separate vehicles which meet in a traffic conflagration: 1st- a mother and young child delivering a birthday cake, 2nd- a portly contractor driving his farm pick up truck loaded with chickens as he smokes a cigar, 3rd- an amorous couple drinking and fondling, and 4th- two scattered teenage speedsters sharing their music from a single iPod.”

Skip Battaglia

Instrumentation

Clarinet in A 1 (dbl. Eb Cl.)
Clarinet in A 2 (dbl. Bass Cl.)
Bass Clarinet 3
Alto Saxophone in Eb

Trumpet in C
Bass trombone

Perc. 1: Marimba
 Cabaza
 Castanets
 Metal and Glass*
 *(to be crushed with a brick or anvil inside a plastic tub)

Perc. 2: Vibraphone
 Castanets
 Susp. Cymbal 16"
 Brake Drum
 Triangle

Bass Drum (shared)

Piano

Soprano	<i>Mama</i>
Mezzo-Soprano	<i>Bambina, Princesa</i>
Tenor	<i>Odi, Trino</i>
Bass	<i>Rico, Guido</i>

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Optional
-chamber string ensemble
-mixed chorus

Score in C

Libretto by Skip Battaglia

Mama and Bambina, Soft clouds
the softest of clouds for our sky.
Sweet cake
the sweetest of cakes for Grandma's surprise.

Guido Hmm...Money blues
Damn father clock
Thud my beat beaten blues
Ah! Pig smell clothes
mud hay blood
doo doo dah bah slop!

Mama and Bambina, Smooth road
How gentle this bumps that bounce us this far!
We sing our song together
On our trip, in our car
Soft clouds, na na na, sweet cake!

Trino and Rico, Cranking faster
Hit those lines
Bump that shoulder
Screw those guys!

Princessa and Odi, Hot leatherette
Smooth leather trim
Big crank in your gear box.

Trino and Rico, Hot little baby
We blow and flit
Hard dick pussy
Drives like shit!

Princessa and Odi, Fingernails grab my shift.

Mama and Bambina,
Mama and Bambina
Bambina and Ma...
Oh, did I tell you, oh.
You are so loud!
We sing our song together
On our trip, in our car.

(superimposed)

Guido,

Independent farmer

Isolated ham

Your concerns are not
mine!

(superimposed)

Trino and Rico,

Ha! Huh ha ha ha

Trino and Rico,
(*continue*)

Jump the signal
swerve the junk
Speed and shimmy
Feel the funk!

Princessa and Odi,

Oh Baby!
Hear the throbbing
Feel the heat!
Need you, want you, love you,
Crush you,
Split you,
AAHHH!

(superimposed)

Trino and Rico,
Ha! Huh ha ha ha
Personal mirror
See all 'round.
No cops 'bout here
Engine pounds,
SHIT!

(superimposed)

Mama,
Na na na
na na na
na na na...

Mama and Bambina,
(*continue*)

... na na na
Mama and Bambina
We sing our song, OYY!

Guido,

Oh, your concerns are not mine
Oh! shit, AAHH

Choir of souls

Oh oh oh
No no no