

Introductory Remarks to the Audience:

"Because I am a writer, I have prepared a handout. Be sure to take one today. *Strike the Rock!* is a work of narrative music intended to raise questions. It consists of two one-act operas entitled "Amber" and "Monte & Pinky."

Amber concerns a military family and *Monte & Pinky* the lives of two centenarians in a nursing home. Neither work is about just one thing or just one viewpoint. They occupy different frames of reference. *Amber* is about duty—to country, family, & self—and the costs paid. *Monte & Pinky* presents the framework of two elders who have outgrown their previous ideas and come to understand reconciliation.

Moses was told to strike a rock so that water could flow in the wilderness. Rock seems hard and impenetrable, not a water source. Ideas about faith, duty, race, property, & propriety may seem equally fixed and impenetrable. The wounds that we inadvertently inflict on others in order to protect ourselves or to preserve our way of life do not seem to be our wounds, but it is the role of art to make us feel, to raise questions, and to restore broken relationships.

Whether the wound is to an alien facing ethnic cleansing or to a habitat being cleansed of its plant and animal inhabitants, it is generally an *unfelt* wound for most of us most of the time. In my work, I aim to help you feel some of these unfelt wounds. I'm not in the book business. I've given away more of my work than I've sold. This includes productions like *Strike the Rock!*, which often are charity fundraisers (once the performers are paid).

I'm not in the book business, but I am in the wound business. If we're going to deal with the wounds we often unknowingly inflict on each other and the Earth, we must be aware of them, feel them, creatively engage with them, and hold them in sustained attention. The arts can help us do this. As we talk about the art, we may confront or discover our values. Therefore, if you'd like to talk with us about this work, we'll get together after the performance for refreshments and a Meet the Composer discussion.

Strike the Rock

Two Stories About Old Wounds

Erich Fromm once wrote that if humans would once and for all simply guarantee each other the right to live and thrive, they could then turn their attention to the more important “spiritual and religious problems of human existence.” These problems concern our relationships to each other and to the natural world. Suppose that in some future time humans have managed to make a dynamic balance of values. Suppose that they simply come to believe, as Chief Dan George said, that “we are as much alive as we keep the Earth alive.”

Because artists are allowed to make things up, in both the Prelude, “***The Unfelt Wound***” and my book, ***Frameshifts (vols. 1 & 2)***, I have imagined what people from such a future would say about their distant past, when slavery, genocide, war, inequities, extinctions, fouling the Earth, and other forms of self-destruction were widely practiced. The operas comprising ***Strike the Rock*** are part of this imaginative work. (Other works are listed on the last page of this program and some are available for purchase at the ticket table.) Why tell such stories and sing such songs? To help others to make changes in their frames of reference—what I call “frame-shifts.”

Grief and displacement force frame-shifts, but because we can think ahead, we do not have to wait to be forced. Continually turning back to the grounds of our existence, as we do together in worship, family life, the arts, and humanities, can guide us to care for our society and habitat. Caring relationships of trust, education, and commitment are the foundations of laws, economics, and common life, but we must work on ourselves and each other to pay attention to such life-fostering concerns through a continual practice of learning, re-framing, and corrective actions. Perhaps today's production will help you with the work you are doing on yourself.

In the many ways we wound the Earth, other people, and ourselves, we behave as if we were separate from the interconnected and interpenetrating life of the world. Unsolved and neglected, old wounds harden around pain—old wounds of family slights, vengeance, exclusion and exploitation. Before they can be lanced, expressed, and cleansed, they must be acknowledged. But rock-hard habits of self delusion do not yield easily.

Two Stories

Amber is about the strained relationships in a military family in Tennessee some time during the early 1980s. The father is a retired general officer who survived the Bataan Death March. His son currently serves as an army officer. Amber, his sister, is the father's caregiver; the other sister is a professional singer. Joseph McClellan wrote that the work was an old story that took “on new life in Rose's treatment, with dramatically apt music to control the pace of the performance and energize the text.” (*The Washington Post, August 5, 1999*). When this work was originally performed in Alexandria, VA in 1999 to benefit the Military Home in Washington, D.C., some

survivors of Bataan still resided in Washington, Santa Fe, and elsewhere in the United States. For the soldiers, families, victims, and habitats affected, the wounds of war do not heal but it is possible to learn to shift one's frame of reference frequently enough to find relief.

Monte and Pinky is a new work. The action occurs in the Shadow Hill nursing home in the fictional town of Wando, Virginia, a central location for Rose's stories and poems in *Frameshifts*. Pinky is a character in both the book and opera. In *Monte and Pinky*, two centenarian residents become reacquainted with each other after 56 years. The aged white woman and her former black laundress reflect on how previous relationships had been distorted by war and racial injustice and come to accept a transforming realignment to reality through their perspectives as elders.

Usually “enlightenment” refers to an understanding based on principles of experiences, inquiry, and verification. Such understandings may be rationally powerful but unable to answer grief, soften a grudge, change a habit, recruit enthusiasm. Frame-shifts, realignments, changed perspectives, new roles and scripts, new stories, new ways of knowing—there are so many ways to talk about the kind of enlightenment which transforms and heals.

The Great Transition

Pamela Boyce Simms

The Unfelt Wound
Prelude to Strike the Rock

**Long before the People closed the great wound, long ago,
long before they mingled Earth and mind,
they streamed as lava flows,
burned all they touched,
hardened, heaped up hate,
cratered their hearts.**

**Thick between them, mountains rose and hid the springs of hope,
heart from heart, and breath from sea and sky,
and skin from scale and leaf.
None came around.
None woke: separate,
living like stones.**

**Long ago, they seized the gently given land and sea;
mined it, voided, wounded all they touched:
unyoked and unaligned,
scouring their lives,
cutting down green cures
rooted in hearts.**

**Calmly they continued on their way, lame, deaf, and blind.
Hidden, self-buried in amenities,
they wheeled their endless war
proudly ahead:
free, they said—unyoked—
yet unaligned.**

**Long before the People closed the great wound, long ago;
before they learned to turn well-gardened minds,
they did not yoke their hearts,
make any shift,
line up with love and life,
or feel the wound.**

List of Works by Richard L. Rose

Most of these writings and compositions are publicly available on the frameshifts.com blog-site. Others are on marginalnotesinwordsandmusic.org. Audio-recordings of some writings are also being made. The two volumes of *Frameshifts* are also available in ebook and hardcopy from Amazon.com. Works on science research and teaching are available from the composer.

Amber 1999, opera, with CD

Annunciations 1968-2009, oratorio, with CD

Another journal Article

Audio-recordings of selected works, 2016-

Books of Daniel, The 1997-2009, opera with CD

Coming Around 2016, poems, companion book to M&P

Finding a Purchase, poems, last book of *Frameshifts*

Finding a Purchase, poems, expanded & separate version

Fisher of the James, The 2012-2013, opera, with CD

Floater and Sinkers, poetry

Frameshifts 1967-2011, 2 volumes, stories & poetry

Frameshifts Blogs: to sign up: <http://eepurl.com/blVuIH>

Giants, poems and stories

Healing Breaths 2014, seminar notes

Hidden Faces, Hidden Voices 2012, stories

Hymn tunes for Christopher Webber's Hymnal 2016

Jo Evelyn's Music 2001-2009, Improvs and "Offbeats" gigs

Journal Article "The Perilous Per"

Journal Article with Bill on coins

La Rinuncia 2009-2015, opera with CD and DVD (on blog-site)

Missa brevis (1982-2015), with DVD (on blog-site)

Marking Time (a poetic memoir)

Monte and Pinky 2001-2017 (See also: *Strike the Rock*)

Oyster research paper 1974-1980, in *Estuaries, ecological research*

People's Voice, The, 2001 opera, with CD

Precious Splatter, A 1969-2017, poems (work in progress)

QEF and Transformations 1983-1991 newsletters for science teaching

Queen and the Crocodile, The 2008 *, children's book

Research on Keller Method

Research on temperamental styles

Research on proportional reasoning (dissertation)

Review of Inspector O, in ---

Reviews: other books are reviewed on the blog site

School Year, The 15BYA-2015 C.E., an autobiography in frameshifts

Shura 2008*, children's book

Strike the Rock 2017 production of Amber and Monte & Pinky

In Sweet Surrender 2015 production of *La Rinuncia* and *Missa brevis*

* Copies are in the special children's collection at the Main Library in Richmond, VA.