

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Adapted & Directed
by Yuval Sharon
Music by Annie Gosfield

NOV 12 2pm | NOV 18 12pm, 2pm

WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL
— and —
DTLA locations



GUSTAVO DUDAMEL
Music & Artistic Director

www.waroftheworlds.la

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WAR OF THE WORLDS

NOV 12, 2017 2pm
NOV 18 12pm, 2pm

Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group

Yuval Sharon, *director*

Christopher Rountree, *conductor*

Jonathan Deans, *concept sound designer*

David Bullard, *concert hall sound designer*

Jody Elff, *siren sites sound designer*

Calder Greenwood, *production designer*

Jaymee Ngerwichit, *costume designer*

Pablo Santiago, *lighting designer*

Lara Helena, *alien choreographer*

Annie GOSFIELD *War of the Worlds*

(world premiere, LA Phil commission with generous support from Margaret Morgan and Wesley Phoa in honor of the Deborah Borda Women in the Arts Initiative)

Adapted and directed by Yuval Sharon

“Venus” lyrics in Scene 4 by Annie Gosfield
Spanish translation in Scene 4 by Suzanna Guzmán

Co-produced by The Industry and NOW Art
The *War of the Worlds* radio play by Howard Koch used by permission of Peter Koch

Programs and artists subject to change.

WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

Sigourney Weaver, *Narrator*

Hila Plitmann, *La sirena*

David Castillo, *Officer*

James Hayden, *Commander / Sound Designer*

Jon Keenan, *Gunner / Stage Hand*

Elise Shope Henry, *flute / alto flute*

Carolyn Hove, *oboe*

Don Foster, *clarinet / bass clarinet*

Shawn Mouser, *bassoon*

Ryan Darke, *trumpet*

David Rejano, *trombone*

Randall Montgomery, *tuba*

James Barbor, Tyler Stell, *percussion 1*

Perry Dreiman, Eduardo Meneses, *percussion 2*

Lisa Edwards, *piano / organ / sampler*

Mark Kashper, Rochelle Abramson, Rebecca Reale, *violin 1*

Michele Bovyer, Stacy Wetzel, Nickolai Kurganov, *violin 2*

Ben Ullery, Minor L. Wetzel, Victor de Almeida, *violins*

Dahae Kim, Jonathan Karoly, Jason Lippmann, *cellos*

Oscar M. Meza, *bass*

“La Sirena” Ensemble: Joanne Pearce Martin, *Theremin / sampler*
Matthew Howard, *percussion for live Foley*

SIREN 1: PROFESSOR PIERSON

135 South Olive Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Hugo Armstrong, *Professor Pierson*

Joanna Lynn-Jacobs, *Starshine Meadows*

David Garrett, *cello*

Clayton Farris, *actor*

Milosz Karubin, Jeremy Hahn, Briella Deruise
and Hannah Grigereit, *alien dancers*

SIREN 2: MRS. MARTINEZ

416 S. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Suzanna Guzmán, *Mrs. Martinez*

Estella Ramos, *Acting Secretary of the Interior*

Joanna Lynn-Jacobs, *Dr. Melissa Morse*

Jin-Shan Dai, *violin*

Jory Herman, *bass*

Gabriel Romero, *actor*

Stephen Beitler, Cesar Sosa, Kate Spare and

Talia Schulz, *alien dancers*

SIREN 3: GENERAL LANSING

719 S. Hill St., Los Angeles, CA 90014

Hadleigh Adams, *General Lansing*

Jeffrey Grant, Cory Hills, Nicholas Stoup, *percussion*

Carolyn Michelle Smith, Ross Steeves, Cheryl Umaña, *actors*

Myles Brewer, Jen Haley, Jessica Kittridge

and Ottavio Taddei, *alien dancers*

Artist and performer bios can be found at www.waroftheworlds.la/bios

LIBRETTO

Scene 1: Introduction, “Mercury,” and First Interruption

NARRATOR

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I’m Sigourney Weaver, and this is the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Music, as we know, has the power of conjuring worlds, both real and imaginary, what has been and what could be. Every time we gather in this magnificent building, we ascend to a higher plane where peace and compassion reign supreme. And tonight’s program, with music by Annie Gosfield, will be no exception. The composer has taken the solar system as her theme, each movement taking us further from the sun and deeper into outer space. Silence plays a critical role in the pieces you will hear tonight, so we ask you to contribute to the music-making by turning your cellphones off completely. And now, let’s go along with Christopher Rountree, the LA Philharmonic, and Ms. Gosfield as they take us first to “Mercury.”

The orchestra begins playing a sweet piece on the topic “Mercury.” After a few minutes, the playing is interrupted by the return of the Narrator.

NARRATOR

Ladies and gentlemen, I hate to interrupt your enjoyment of this wonderful music, but the LA Phil wanted you to be aware of some breaking news. It seems that several unexplained explosions were observed in the sky just over Los Angeles. Now don’t panic, it doesn’t appear to be a terrorist attack, but scientists are describing it as explosions of incandescent gas originating from the planet Mars and hurtling towards us at what they are calling quote an enormous velocity. There is a possibility that we may need to evacuate, so if you could take a moment to truly take note of your nearest exit, that would make that unfortunate event as efficient as possible. But really, there is nothing to worry about for the

moment, so let’s carry on with “Mercury.”

Music plays until the piece is complete. Applause. Orchestra stands for it. They sit back down and strike up the next piece.

Scene 2: “Venus” and Communication from Siren 1

The next piece, “Venus,” begins, when a rumbling takes over the speakers. The conductor stops the concert, bewildered.

NARRATOR

Sorry, ladies and gentlemen, truly, no need to panic. I don’t have any information on what that unexpected rumbling sound you heard might be, but the National Meteorological Agency has ordered scientists to address all large gatherings throughout LA County. So Professor Pierson from the Mount Wilson Observatory has agreed to speak to us from the streets of Los Angeles to give us an update on exactly what is going on. Professor Pierson, are you there?

PIERSON

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is Professor Richard Pierson, calling from our temporary observation area at the Tinkertoy Parking Lot in downtown Los Angeles. I’m sure my interruption is not “music to your ears.” *(He laughs at his bad joke.)*

NARRATOR

I’m sorry, Professor Pierson, was that a pun?

PIERSON

Yes, pardon me, ladies and gentlemen, I know you all must be quite alarmed. No time for jokes, no sir.

NARRATOR

Professor, I’m reading reports of space debris dropping onto the streets of Los Angeles – is this true?

PIERSON

Yes – er well, something like that, yes. We rushed here as soon as we could to study it.

NARRATOR

What can you tell us about the object in question?

PIERSON

It is a cylindrical object on a pole in the sidewalk. Why it must have been here for decades, but I’ll be darned if I ever noticed it before.

NARRATOR

And you believe this has some connection with that rumbling sound reported throughout the city?

PIERSON

That rumbling you heard emanated from this object just moments ago, quite unexpectedly. But what’s really fascinating is that the high frequency radio waves this object is emitting are identical with those of the blasts we just recorded from Mars.

NARRATOR

Are you saying there is a connection between Mars and that unidentified object?

PIERSON (hesitant)

It would be conjecture for me at this point to make that connection.

NARRATOR

But this object could potentially offer proof of intelligent life on Mars?

PIERSON

I can assure you, Ms. Weaver, that contrary to the popular belief, we have no evidence of Mars supporting intelligent life. But you can rest assured that we are vociferously scouring the skies for any signs of further activity. I even set up a telescope right here, the one I normally use to observe the peaceful glimmer of the night sky. So if you hear a ticking, that’s the vibration of the telescope’s clockwork.

NARRATOR

Is there any suspicious activity on Mars right now, Professor?

LIBRETTO

PIERSON

Oh no, nothing unusual right now, Ms. Weaver. A red disk swimming in a blue sea. Mars happens to be the point nearest the earth ... in opposition, as we call it.

NARRATOR

And Professor, for the benefit of our listeners, how far is Mars from earth?

PIERSON

Approximately forty million miles.

NARRATOR

Well, that seems a safe enough distance! So in a worst-case scenario, we should have plenty of time to run for cover. Thank you Professor Pierson. Now, enough interruptions, ladies and gentlemen! Let's return now, calmly, to the soothing world of music.

The music to "Venus" starts up again. A booming sound is heard through the sirens – the live cymbal crash of the percussionist at Siren Site 3. Musicians look around anxiously, and the music peters out, but with the aggressive gestures of the conductor to keep playing, the music picks up steam again. As the music continues, we hear the voice of Pierson:

PIERSON

Ms. Weaver? Ms. Weaver?

Narrator enters. Music does not stop but continues as underscoring to the following dialogue.

NARRATOR

Professor Pierson? Are you still connected?

PIERSON

Yes, I'm afraid I have an alarming new update. Another object identical to the one we are observing here has been identified in another part of downtown Los Angeles. This one made a pretty dramatic entrance: witnesses have reported seeing a blinding green flash in the sky over a span of several hundred miles, and a loud, metallic bang was heard as far north as Tarzana.

NARRATOR

That must have been the crash we heard.

PIERSON

A team from Mount Wilson is finding its way to the scene, but you know, the traffic is just awful, so it may be a while before we can give you a proper update.

NARRATOR

Thank you, Professor Pierson. We're all eager to hear from your correspondent as soon as they get on the scene.

PIERSON

Absolutely.

Narrator exits – the music hasn't stopped. The conductor turns around, and up, with trepidation. The song is much more meekly sung. After a few moments, the Narrator returns.

NARRATOR

Ladies and gentlemen...
(The Narrator motions for the orchestra to stop.)
Ladies and gentlemen – *(Motioning to imaginary patrons)* Please – please keep in your seat sir! Yes, ma'am, just stay where we are. No one needs to get antsy. KCRW's head meteorologist Dr. Melissa Morse made it to the scene of that second crash and can tell us exactly what is happening out there.

Scene 3: Communication with Morse and Martinez at Siren 2

MELISSA MORSE

Am I coming through, Ms. Weaver?

NARRATOR

We hear you loud and clear, Dr. Morse. What can you see?

MORSE

Ladies and gentlemen, well, I ... I hardly know where to begin! This strange scene is like a Hollywood movie come to life. What I can see of the ... object in question sure doesn't look like a meteor, at least not any

meteor that I've seen. It looks like a piece of metal, a cylinder, mounted high on a pole.

NARRATOR

Can you describe it for us?

MORSE

The post supporting it is long and thin, like a telephone pole you might pass every day. ... But the metal structure on top is ... luminous, a shiny yellow, yet somehow ancient. The police are doing their best to keep the crowds away, but a crowd of people have gathered here with us.

NARRATOR

Did any of them witness the crash?

MORSE

Yes, I have an eye-witness standing by, a Mrs. Martinez, owner of the restaurant on the corner, La Luna Azul – which translates roughly to mean "The Blue Moon." Step closer, please, Mrs. Martinez. Had you ever seen the object in question before?

MARTINEZ (suddenly screaming)
Niños! Quitense de allí!
(Kids! Get away from that thing!)

MORSE (condescending)

Don't worry, ladies and gentlemen, my PhD was in Latin American literature. Sra. Martínez. *¿Alguna vez has visto ese cilindro de metal amarillo antes?*
(Have you ever seen that yellow metal cylinder before?)

MARTINEZ

¿Mandé? That thing on the telephone pole?
(What, that thing on the telephone pole?)
I come to this country 25 years ago and I never seen nothing like that.

MORSE

And you saw the explosion?

MARTINEZ (yelling at kids again)
Get away from that! *Ni saben de donde viene! Vayanse a casa!*

MORSE

Mrs. Martinez, can you please tell us what you saw?

MARTINEZ

Pues ... I was listening to the radio...escuchaba la radio, media dormida...la música tan linda ... una balada bien suave...

MORSE (translating)

She was half drowsing, listening halfway... The music was lovely, a ballad.

MARTINEZ

... que cantaba mi padre...a song my father used to sing: "Munequita linda, de caballos de oro..."

MORSE

–Did you see something?

MARTINEZ

I don't SEE nothing...*Lo oí!* I hear it! "Dime si me quieres..."

MORSE

What did you hear?

MARTINEZ

Like the sound of a kettle whistling, sssssss ... getting louder and louder, like the fire on the fourth of July.

MORSE

And then?

MARTINEZ

La música se paró...And then the music stopped – and I hear a voice talking about la planeta Marte ... Fíjate! Mars! I look out the window, y sabes que? Asi como un sueño... un rayo verde ... ZOOM... Destelló a través del cielo!

MORSE

... a green streak flashed across the sky!

MARTINEZ

Despues un PÚN! Un golpe a la tierra!

MORSE

Then bang! Something smacked the ground.

MARTINEZ

¡Me tiró de la silla!

MORSE

Knocked me clear out of my chair!

MARTINEZ

I think...*"Dios mio! Es el Grande!"* But it wasn't no earthquake...

MORSE

Maybe this is an alien?

MARTINEZ

No! Cómo qué 'alien! No somos ilegales! My family works hard! My son is in college! My green card is good for two more years. We love this country!

MORSE

No, Mrs. Martinez – is this object an extra-terrestrial?

MARTINEZ

Como que 'extraterrestre'? Andalé, hablas de cine! De fantasía. But this thing, listen... sssilba!

("La Sirena", singing at Walt Disney Concert Hall, begins singing through the sirens on the street.)

MORSE

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you could see this fantastic scene. Hundreds of cars in back of us. Police trying to rope off the street but to no use. The people are breaking through. Braver souls are venturing towards the object, shielding their eyes from the yellow metal glare.

MARTINEZ

Lo oyes? Canta!

NARRATOR

Is that sound coming from the object?

MORSE (transfixed)

Listen! Can you hear it?

MARTINEZ

Así ... HMMMMM ... (Singing along with the alien)

MORSE

That sound – There's a hum, a resonant vibration emanating from the object. Let me get nearer ...

NARRATOR

Are you sure that's a good idea?

MORSE

Professor Pierson! Are you out there? This is no meteor! The metal casing is extraterrestrial, Smooth and cylindrical, Not of this earth!

MARTINEZ

Que diablo en música tan bonita!

MORSE & MARTINEZ

What devil lives in such beautiful music!

("La Sirena" becomes active with violent music.)

MARTINEZ

Listen! *Tiene rábia...*He's mad!

MORSE

Wait! Something's happening! Ladies and gentlemen, the top of the cylinder is rotating, rising up slowly, like a turning screw!

MARTINEZ & MORSE

It's moving!
Quedense atrás! Quedense atrás les digo. Te volverán ceniza!
(Keep back, there! Keep back, I tell you! It's red hot, you'll burn to a cinder!)

A clunking sound.

MORSE

The top is off! It's open!

LIBRETTO

MARTINEZ

Dios mio!! Dios de mi vida!!!

(Sudden silence)

NARRATOR

Dr. Morse? Dr. Morse, can you hear us?

(Silence)

Professor Pierson?

PROFESSOR PIERSON

Yes, Ms. Weaver, I'm still here.

NARRATOR

What's happening out there?

PROFESSOR PIERSON

(suddenly serene)

Enjoy the music and stay calm!

You're safest right where you are!

NARRATOR

There, you heard Professor Pierson. Let's let music be our consolation and our distraction – the next planet in Ms. Gosfield's song cycle? "Earth."

Scene 4: "Earth"

Orchestra plays the piece "Earth". Suddenly feedback from a mic seems to be heard.

CONDUCTOR (*without stopping the orchestra*)

Dave? Dave? We're getting feedback here!

(No response.)

DAVE!

SOUND DESIGNER (on the God mic)

There's no feedback on my end, Chris.

CONDUCTOR

Then what's that sound?

SOUND DESIGNER (on the God mic)

I have no idea.

(*The sound intensifies.*)

CONDUCTOR

It's getting worse! Dave, do something!

SOUND DESIGNER

It's some kind of interference, Chris – I'm afraid there's nothing I can do.

The orchestra stops – the feedback gets louder. A moment of silence, then the orchestra begins a driving theme, as the Narrator enters again. From this point on, the orchestra in Walt Disney Concert Hall plays continuously as underscoring for the following dialogues between sirens.

Scene 5: General Lansing at Siren 3

NARRATOR

Ladies and gentlemen, the US army is mobilizing! I just read a report that the military is taking immediate steps to fight back against this strange invader. We've established a connection with General Lansing, commander of the state troops. General Lansing, are you there?

LANSING

This is Lansing of the signal corps. The situation arising from the presence of certain individuals of unidentified nature is now under control.

We have constructed a wall of defense

So all cause for alarm, if such cause ever existed, is now entirely unjustified.

"La Sirena" becomes active and increasingly violent.

Now the hunter becomes the hunted –

Our destiny made manifest!

Wait a minute: I see something on top of the cylinder. No, it's nothing but a shadow. Now the troops are on the edge of the site. Seven hundred armed men are closing in on the old metal tube. Wait, that wasn't a shadow! It's something moving ... a solid metal ... kind of shield rising up out of the cylinder ... It's going higher and higher. Why, it's standing on legs ... actually rearing up on a sort of metal framework. Now it's reaching above the trees. Our army is retreating! Run for cover! Run for— (*The connection breaks.*)

NARRATOR

General Lansing? General Lansing?

Scene 6: Secretary of the Interior at Siren 2

NARRATOR

Ladies and gentlemen, astonishing news. It's now been confirmed that the strange beings who have been sighted around downtown LA are the vanguard of an invading army from the planet Mars. It seems the Martians have strategically placed nearly 200 forces in vessels all around the city. There is evidence that they have been silently looming above our city for as long as 70 years, waiting for a sign from their masters to awake.

Today, that signal was given from their home planet, and now the massive levathan of an army has risen up. Please don't attempt to leave this building, just outside these walls is utter chaos. We have a special radio broadcast from Estella Ramos in Washington, the Acting Secretary of the Interior, that we can play for you now. Roll the tape please.

SECRETARY

Citizens of the nation: I shall not try to conceal the gravity of the situation that confronts the country. Nor shall I underestimate the commitment of the US government to protect the lives and property of its people by any means necessary. However, I must impress upon you the urgent need of calm and resourceful action. Place your faith in our military, who, given time, will gather their superior resources, strategy, and intelligence to destroy the enemy. We must confront the deadly weapons of our adversary with a nation united, courageous, and dedicated to the preservation of human supremacy on this planet. Thank you, and God bless A—(the connection is cut.)

NARRATOR

Deadly weapons? What kind of weapon are we talking about? Professor Pierson, are you there? What do you know?

PROFESSOR PIERSON

Well I hate to call it a “heat ray,” but in essence that’s what this is. It’s all too evident that these creatures have scientific knowledge far in advance of our own.

Scene 7: Commander Pilot Attack

NARRATOR

My phone is blowing up with bulletins too numerous to read. Electricity and communication are out all over the city, but somehow the concert hall has been spared. Computer systems are being attacked with multiple hacks and are going haywire, spewing disinformation or simply shutting down. Astronomers report continued gas outbursts at regular intervals on planet Mars – and similar landings are happening all over the country, ladies and gentlemen. Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania... Invaders have been seen uprooting power lines, bridges, and railroad tracks.

Hold on – ladies and gentlemen, I just got this notification. (Short pause to read her phone.) Oh my God. OK, they’re broadcasting the communication of the fighting forces, which are now heading directly into our city. Dave, switch it on!

(The three characters – Officer, Gunner, Commander – singing live at Walt Disney Hall but out of sight)

OFFICER

Range, thirty-two meters.

GUNNER

Thirty-two meters.

OFFICER

Projection, thirty-nine degrees.

GUNNER

Thirty-nine degrees.

COMMANDER

Air Force bomber, Victor-8-43, off Los Angeles – Lieutenant Voght, commanding eight bombers. Reporting to Commander Fairfax, Langham Field ... This is Voght,

reporting to Commander Fairfax, Langham Field ... Enemy tripod machines now in sight. A heavy black fog hanging close to the earth ... of extreme density, nature unknown. Evident objective is Downtown Los Angeles. They’re pushing down a high tension power station.

OFFICER

Eight army bombers in engagement with enemy tripod machines over the Cahuenga Pass. Engines incapacitated by heat ray. All crashed. One enemy machine destroyed. Enemy now discharging heavy black smoke in direction of ...

GUNNER

Warning! Poisonous black smoke pouring in from the Valley. Reaches Lankershim. Gas masks useless. Urge population to move into open spaces ... Cars get off the road ...

(Sudden, eerie calm – bells ring.)

SCENE 8: Final Attack

NARRATOR:

Why in God’s name are those bells ringing?

PIERSON

Ms. Weaver, are you there?

NARRATOR:

Professor Pierson? You’re alive!

PIERSON

Those bells you hear are ringing to warn the people to evacuate the city as the Martians approach. Avoid the I10 – hopelessly jammed. Our last defenses failed. Our army, artillery, air force, everything wiped out. We’ll stay here to the end ... People are praying in the cathedral.

Streets are all jammed. It sounds like the last New Year’s Eve in the city.

GUNNER / OFFICER / COMMANDER (simultaneous with Pierson / NARRATOR)
2X2L... calling CQ... 2X2L... calling CQ... 2X2L... calling 8X3R... Come in, please...

PIERSON

Who knows, maybe if we let them rule
We’ll come to discover the aliens
Are more humane than we are?

A young hippie rushes the stage at Siren I.

STARSHINE MEADOWS

This must be what it felt like
To look across the sea
And witness the approach
Of a supernatural trinity:
the Nina, the Pinta, the Santa Maria!

“La Sirena” builds up steam again.

PIERSON

Wait a minute ... The aliens are now in sight! Five of them ... The first crossing the concrete banks of the LA River. I can see it from here, wading...wading through the aqueduct ... He stands watching, looking over the city. His black head stands as high as the tops of the skyscrapers. He’s waiting for the others. This is the end now. Smoke comes out ... black smoke, drifting over the city.

People in the streets see it now. They’re running towards the East ... thousands of them. The smoke’s spreading faster. It’s reached City Hall.

People are trying to run away from it, but it’s no use. They’re falling like flies.
Now the smoke’s crossing Broadway ... Hill ... Grand ... one hundred yards away ... it’s fifty feet ... God, have mercy!

GUNNER / OFFICER / COMMANDER (simultaneous with Pierson)
Ready to strike! Ready to strike!

Sound of an explosion – climactic music for “La Sirena.” The Narrator ducks for cover. The orchestra at Walt Disney Concert Hall goes silent. Slowly the Narrator looks around. A Stage Hand runs on stage.

LIBRETTO

STAGE HAND

The titanium of the building repelled the
heat ray! We may be the last humans in
Los Angeles – but we are saved!

NARRATOR

The power of music has redeemed humanity
once again!

Scene 9: CODA

Chorus (all forces at all sirens and inside
Walt Disney Concert Hall):
Now we know
That our world was being watched closely
With envious eyes
By a great intelligence,
Vast, cool, and unsympathetic.
Now we know
That as human beings busied themselves
With their various concerns,
They were scrutinized and studied
Like creatures under a microscope.
People going to and fro
Attending to their small affairs,
With infinite complacency.
Was it by design or by chance
Mankind inherited this spinning fragment
of solar driftwood
From the dark mystery of Time and Space?

THE END

