

***Winter After Times of Fire*, for ensemble of improvisers and surround sound, Ewa Trębacz (2019)**

Winter After Times of Fire (2019) is a surround sound collage created as an audio “score” for an ensemble of performers-improvisers. It was commissioned by the Seattle-based trio [Kin of the Moon](#) with the support of King County's [4Culture](#).

Premiere:

February 22, 2019, Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle - PONCHO Concert Hall

Heather Bentley, viola | **Leanna Keith**, flute | **Kaley Lane Eaton**, soprano

The sound material for the fixed-media part comes from multiple sources. Much of the material comes from improvisation-based recording sessions with members of the Kin of the Moon in a number of acoustically interesting spaces. During such recording sessions I would play pre-recorded short phrases and ask the ensemble to create a response. The response was recorded in Ambisonics and transformed with the use of the [Ambisonic Toolkit \(ATK\)](#). Later I took some of those responses – processed and transformed – to other spaces.

For instance I took excerpts from previous recordings to Satsop Abandoned Nuclear Plant (Washington State), where I asked flutist Leanna Keith to add another response. In that space I also improvised short sections in a violin-piccorno duet with Leanna, which was later transformed into sequences of fast-moving, wind-like sweeping noises.

At another session I asked violist Heather Bentley and flutist Leanna Keith to improvise with an artificially re-created reverb from Dan Harpole Cistern in Fort Worden. Along with the material created through interactions with the ensemble, I also used excerpts from my earlier recordings (for instance, a small excerpt from 2007 recording with Polish soprano and my long-time collaborator Anna Niedźwiedz, at the Missionaries Church in Kraków, Poland). I used these excerpts either as triggers for the ensemble, or by embedding the heavily transformed versions of them into the final soundscape.

All that material was composed into the Ambisonic soundscape, which served as an aural score during the live performance. The piece is meant to live its own life and change with each performance, each set of performers, and each performance space.

The title:

Having a strange and slightly post-apocalyptic experience of living in a world engulfed by wildfire smoke – as in Pacific Northwest summer 2018 – made me think of global processes, forces of nature that inevitably lead to one another after reaching a critical point of no return. An ice age as a result of volcanic eruptions, then broken by volcanic activity, a nuclear winter following the time of fire, when life remains dormant. The title is a metaphor for these contradictions, bound together in an inevitable cycle of destruction and rebirth.