

ADAM MATLOCK, 2019 AWARDEE

Project: OPERA COMPOSITION: “WHAT RIOT?”

Adam's Herculean project is the creation of a full-scale opera about the Greenwood Massacre, the appalling mass murder of African Americans in 1921. Over two days, a white mob set fire to hundreds of Black-owned businesses in a prosperous Black business district.

Adam's update on his project and activities:

“My proposal was to be able to complete and present the first act of ‘What Riot?’ an opera about the Greenwood Massacre in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921.

While the initial proposal outlined the use of funds specifically to be able to pay singers and instrumentalists, to allow for two rehearsals and a live performance, the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic, which unfolded as the work was being completed in its first draft, impacted this plan.

In order to fulfill the grant obligations and complete the work with the safety of performers at the forefront of my priority, we pivoted towards producing a recording, which featured an electronic score that I created. By working with fewer musicians overall, this enabled the singers I did work with to be paid a more sustaining wage for their work, as well as guarantee us the ability to record vocals in a studio with plenty of space between each singer for maximum safety.

This also was able to sustain me for periods of part-time equivalent work on this project, particularly in the summer and fall of 2020 when the teaching landscape was significantly altered.

The future of this work lies in the stage. I'm grateful for the opportunity to start telling this story via the first act. What remains is the second act - for which the libretto is complete - and a slight revision of the first act to accommodate live performance by an ensemble. The hope would be to present all of this together when the work reaches completion. In the meantime, I am working steadily on new music for piano, accordion, and electronics, most of which can be found at <https://adammatlock.bandcamp.com>."

Join us for a performance of the first act.