

The Gordian



The Official UN-aligned Magazine

Issue 2. Vol. 2 | February 2020 Free of Charge

THE SIXTH MASS EXTINCTION



We have moved from a sense of nostalgia for a distant past that humanity has never really known, to alarm at near future that humanity may now fail to be a part of.

WHAT NOW FOR IRAN'S NUCLEAR DEAL?

Iran announced that it would no longer abide by any of its commitments under the 2015 JCPOA, but fell short of total withdrawal from the deal

WOMEN COMPOSERS IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

The history of western classical music has traditionally been the province of male composers making music for the aristocracy.

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK



contents

The Gordian | volume 2 | issue no.2

02

WHAT NOW FOR IRAN'S NUCLEAR DEAL?

Iran announced that it would no longer abide by any of its commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, but fell short of total withdrawal from the deal

06

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM OF IRAN

At the top of the hierarchy stands the Supreme Leader of Iran. As this position is considered a life tenure post, there have only been two supreme leaders since the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

10

EXTINCTION

We have moved from a sense of nostalgia for a distant past that humanity has never really known, to alarm at near future that humanity may now fail to be a part of.

17

“KLAATU BARADA NIKTO”

*These words are taken from the classic 1951 film directed by Robert Wise: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.*

19

A LOWDOWN ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WEARING FACE MASKS

Since the coronavirus hit the headlines a few weeks ago, you may be wondering whether you need to wear a face mask to protect yourself against the virus...

22

WOMEN COMPOSERS IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

The history of western classical music has traditionally been the province of male composers making music for the aristocracy.



IRAN BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

By Adrian Liberto

From the frying pan into the fire

February 11, 2020 marks the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran that ended the pro western monarchy under the despotic rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and ushered in the Islamic Republic headed by tyrannical Ayatollah Khomeini.

Reza Pahlavi, the founder of the dynasty came into power following a 1921, British-backed, coup d'état. He ended up falling foul of the British, however, owing to his pro German sympathies and was forced to resign in favour of his son, the Crown Prince Mohammad Reza, after the British and Soviets invaded the country in 1941.

The new Shah was not as ruthless as his father, but was authoritarian, nonetheless, and his self-aggrandisement was exorbitant.

In the early 50's he found himself in conflict with his democratic Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh. Once again, the British interfered; this time with the help of the CIA, and democracy was decisively crushed in 1953, in what was known as Operation Ajax. Mosaddegh was confined to house-arrest until his death, but many of his associates were not so lucky and were cruelly purged. Against this backdrop, it is not difficult to see why the revolution garnered so much support.



WHAT NOW FOR IRAN'S NUCLEAR DEAL?

By Ariana Yekrangi

At the beginning of January 2020, Iran announced that it would no longer abide by any of its commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The announcement fell short of total withdrawal from the deal, as Iran confirmed it would continue its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). On 14 January 2020 the E3 (UK, France and Germany) referred the matter to the Joint Commission of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism of the JCPOA.

What does the latest announcement mean? ---



Trump announces US withdrawal on May 8th.

Iran has been steadily reducing its commitments under the JCPOA over the last eight months amid increasing tension in the region. This latest decision ends the limits imposed on the number of centrifuges that can be used for enrichment. It means that there are now no longer any restrictions on Iran's enrichment programme. The Iranian government has stated that, from now on, its nuclear programme will "be developed solely based on its technical needs". However, the Government also stated that it would continue to cooperate with the IAEA, which monitors compliance with the deal, and allow IAEA inspectors access to its sites. It also stated that it would return to its obligations under the JCPOA if sanctions were lifted.

Timeline of Iranian breaches:

May 2019 - lifts limits on its stockpile of enriched uranium and heavy water. Surpasses those limits on 1 July 2019

July 2019 – begins enriching uranium beyond the 3.67% cap

September 2019 – lifts limits on research & development of centrifuge technology and begins to install more advanced centrifuges

November 2019 – resumes enrichment at the Fordow nuclear facility

January 2020 – lifts limits on the number of centrifuges in operation

Is Iran about to get a nuclear bomb?

Going forward, Iran will not observe any restriction on either its stockpiles of enriched uranium or the level to which it will enrich uranium. Both these limits were designed to lengthen the time it would take Iran to produce a nuclear warhead. Disregarding those limits could significantly reduce this ‘breakout’ time, presently estimated at about a year to, perhaps, six months or less. It has also been noted that without constraints on its ability to develop nuclear technology, Iran will increase its expertise in centrifuge enrichment to such a point that it will become irreversible. However, Iran’s willingness to continue cooperating with the IAEA has provided some hope that the country will not abandon the agreement altogether. Iran still maintains that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes.

How have the E3 countries responded?

The EU countries that led on the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal, France, Germany and the UK (the E3), issued a joint statement urging Iran to stick to its commitments under the JCPOA nuclear deal and calling for restraint from all sides with respect to tensions in the Middle East. That was followed by a further statement on 12 January 2020 in which the E3 called upon Iran to return to compliance, while also stating: “We reserve recourse to all the provisions of the JCPOA to preserve it and to resolve the issues related to Iran’s implementation of its JCPOA commitments within its framework.

We will also need to define a long-term framework for Iran’s nuclear programme JCPOA Dispute Resolution Mechanism.” However, two days after the statement, on 14 January 2020, the E3 announced that in light of Iran not meeting its nuclear commitments, they had referred the matter to the Joint Commission under the Dispute Resolution Mechanism provided for in the JCPOA. That statement cited concerns that: “Iran’s actions are inconsistent with the provisions of the nuclear agreement and have increasingly severe and non-reversible proliferation implications.

We do not accept the argument that Iran is entitled to reduce compliance with the JCPOA. Contrary to its statements, Iran has never triggered the JCPOA Dispute Resolution Mechanism and has no legal grounds to cease implementing the provisions of the agreement.” E3 Foreign Ministers concluded by reaffirming their commitment to the accord:

“We do this in good faith with the overarching objective of preserving the JCPOA and in the sincere hope of finding a way forward to resolve the impasse through constructive diplomatic dialogue, while preserving the agreement and remaining within its framework. In doing so, our 3 countries are not joining a campaign to implement maximum pressure against Iran. Our hope is to bring Iran back into full compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA”.

What happens now? —

The aim of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism is to resolve issues relating to the implementation of the agreement. It is pursued within the framework of the Joint Commission, which comprises the UK, France, Germany, Russia, China, Iran and the European Union. As Coordinator of the Joint Commission, the EU High Representative, Josep Borrell, will oversee the Dispute Resolution Mechanism process. In a statement issued on 14 January 2020, Mr Borrell urged: “The Dispute Resolution Mechanism requires intensive efforts in good faith by all. As the Coordinator, I expect all JCPOA participants to approach this process in that spirit.”

The dispute resolution process —

Under the detailed process set out in the JCPOA, the Joint Commission has 15 days to resolve an issue of noncompliance after the referral is made; although if all parties agree, the time frame can be extended. If the Joint Commission does not resolve the compliance issue, any state can elevate the complaint to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Ministers then have a further 15 days (or longer by consensus) to resolve the concern. At the request of the State, or States, raising the noncompliance issue, or at the request of the state allegedly not in

compliance, a three-member Advisory Board can be convened in parallel to the ministerial consideration or instead of ministerial consideration.





The State that raised the issue of noncompliance and the accused State each appoint a member and the third is independent. The Advisory Board has 15 days to offer an opinion, which is non-binding. The Joint Commission then has five days to consider the Advisory Board's opinion. If the Joint Commission has still not resolved the dispute and the complaining State/s believe it to "constitute significant non-performance" of JCPOA commitments, the matter could be referred to the UN Security Council.

Snapback provisions and the return of UN and EU sanctions?

If matters of non-compliance cannot be resolved through the Dispute Resolution Mechanism and the matter is referred to the UN Security Council, then a new procedure would commence which could result in the automatic 'snapback' of UN-related nuclear sanctions on Iran that were in place before the JCPOA was agreed.



At the top of the hierarchy stands the Supreme Leader of Iran. As this position is considered a life tenure post, there have only been two supreme leaders since the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Supreme Leader is the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, and the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary system all operate under his superintendence. In other terms he controls everything and everyone answers to him. There's also the Expediency Discernment Council which is responsible for advising the Supreme Leader. All of its 20 members are chosen by the Supreme Leader directly.

So how does the Supreme Leader get elected? ——————

The Supreme Leader is chosen by the Assembly of Experts of the Leadership. The same assembly is responsible for removing the Supreme Leader of Iran as well as supervising his activities. It consists of 20 members and all are chosen by the direct vote of Iranian citizens every 8 years. But do not be fooled! People only get to choose from an incredibly limited number of candidates, all of whom have to be approved of by the Guardian Council. We'll talk about who the Guardian Council is further down the line, for now just keep track of the number of times the name of this council comes up!

Then there's what's known as the three main bodies of the power system; The Executive body, the Judicial body and the Legislature.

The Executive body



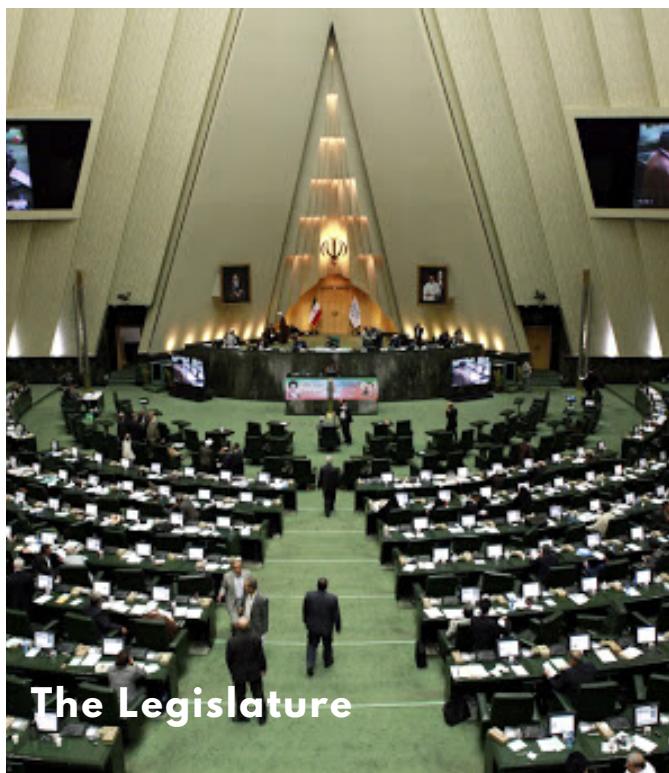
First there's the Executive body which consists primarily of the President and his ministers. The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran is chosen by the public vote of Iranian citizens every four years. The president's responsibilities include signing treaties and other agreements with foreign countries and international organisations, as well as administering national planning, budget, and state employment affairs. The power of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran is fairly limited and all presidential candidates have to be approved of by the Guardian Council! The ministers are appointed by the President himself, but the Islamic Consultative Assembly (the Legislation body) has to approve of the ministers.

The Judicial body

Then there's the Judicial body which is responsible for the implementation of justice. This body is entrusted with many duties such as investigating and passing judgement on violations of rights and complaints, supervising the proper enforcement of laws, and taking suitable measures to prevent crime. The Chief of Justice (head of the Judicial System) gets elected directly by the Supreme Leader of Iran and is reelected every five years, however it has to be noted that there is no limit for getting elected multiple times, even in a row.



The Legislature



And lastly there's the Legislature which consists of two important departments: The Islamic Consultative Assembly and The Guardian Council. The Islamic Consultative Assembly is responsible for establishing new laws on all matters within the limits of the Constitution. The Islamic Consultative Assembly currently has 290 representatives, all of whom are chosen by public vote, but all have to be approved of by the Guardian Council! The Guardian Council is also in charge of reviewing new legislation by the Consultative Assembly and to examine its compatibility with Islam and the Constitution.

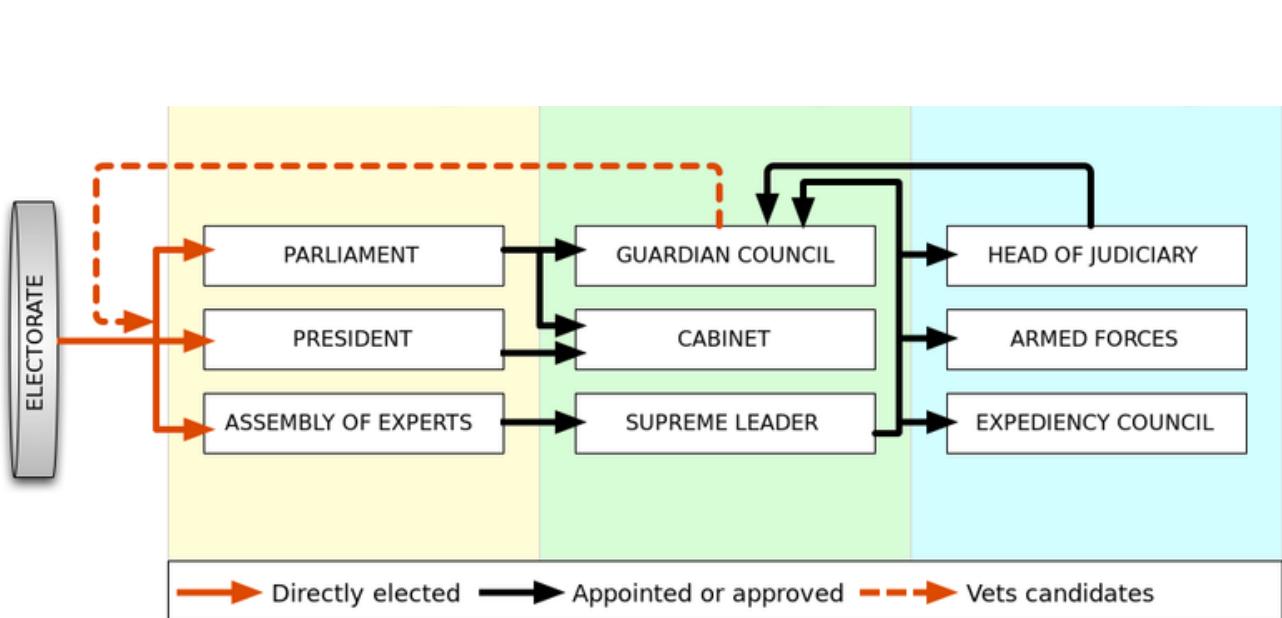
The Guardian Council

And finally we get to the Guardian Council. So what is this council that is in charge of approving all candidates, whether they are running for Presidency, the Islamic Consultative Assembly or the Assembly of Experts of the Leadership, before they are put to public vote? Surely this Council is chosen by the people themselves, right? Sadly the answer is a clear 'No!'. The Guardian Council consists of 12 members, 6 of whom are directly chosen by the Supreme Leader. The remaining 6 get elected by the Islamic Consultative Assembly, so through an indirect vote of people, but all candidates have to be nominated by the Chief Justice of Iran, who is the head of the judicial System. As mentioned before he is elected directly by the Supreme Leader!



So, in case you are as confused about this system, as I was when I was twelve, let's do a recap! The Supreme Leader chooses 6 out of 12 of the members of the Guardian Council directly, and the other 6 indirectly through electing the head of the Judicial System.

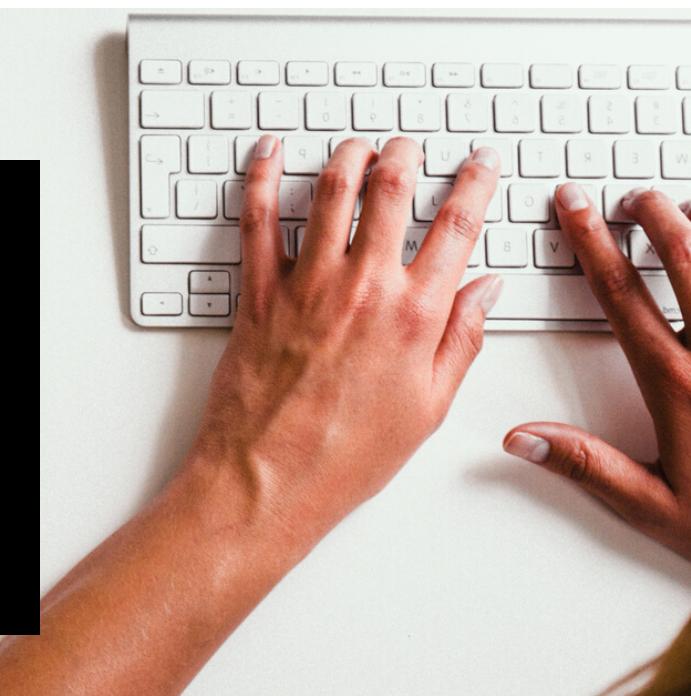
The Guardian Council then nominates the candidates for the Assembly of Experts of the Leadership. In other words the Supreme Leader indirectly elects the only people that have power over dismissing him! This means that the circle of power is a closed one in Iran and all changes depend on the Supreme Leader.



Did you know...

You can write, translate and research for UN-aligned at any point of time. If you wish to do so, please contact the Editor-in-chief, ideally by email, and briefly outline your idea. The Editor-in-chief will offer to take a look at your proposed contribution.

For more information contact us at:
contact@un-aligned.org





EXTINCTION

By Adrian Liberto

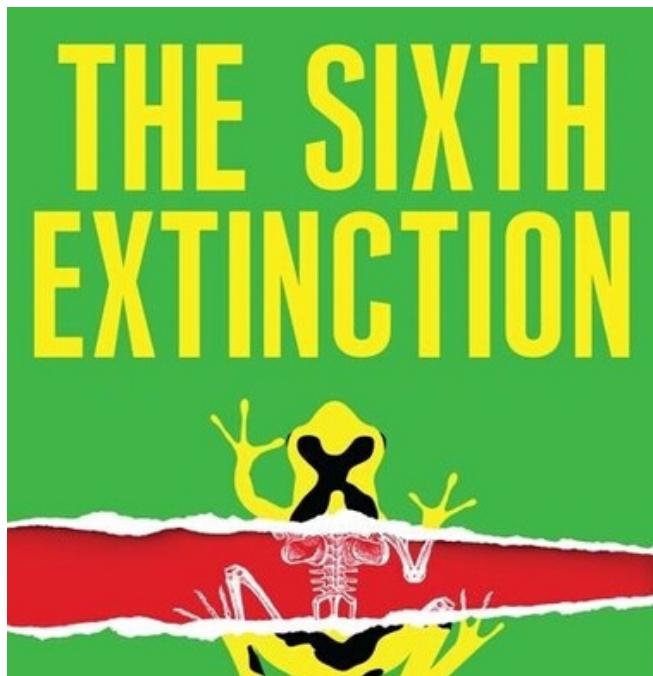
Anthropocene Extinction

When I was a child, the word ‘extinction’ would always conjure up images of awe-inspiring dinosaurs and pterosaurs. From the vivid pictures in the Knowledge magazines to the Jurassic Park franchise, children and adults would be inspired to dream of those long-lost worlds. This is no longer the case. The word arouses different emotions now. Anyone with the slightest idea of the problems facing the world, no longer dwells on those mysterious creatures at the mention of ‘extinction’. We have moved from a sense of nostalgia for a distant past that humanity has never really known, to alarm at near future that humanity may now fail to be a part of.

The world as we have known it is dying; and it is humankind that is killing it. For many, extinction is now part of their perceived glimpse into the future; hence, the Extinction Rebellion, the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement and the various efforts to halt the relentless progress of Sixth Mass Extinction.



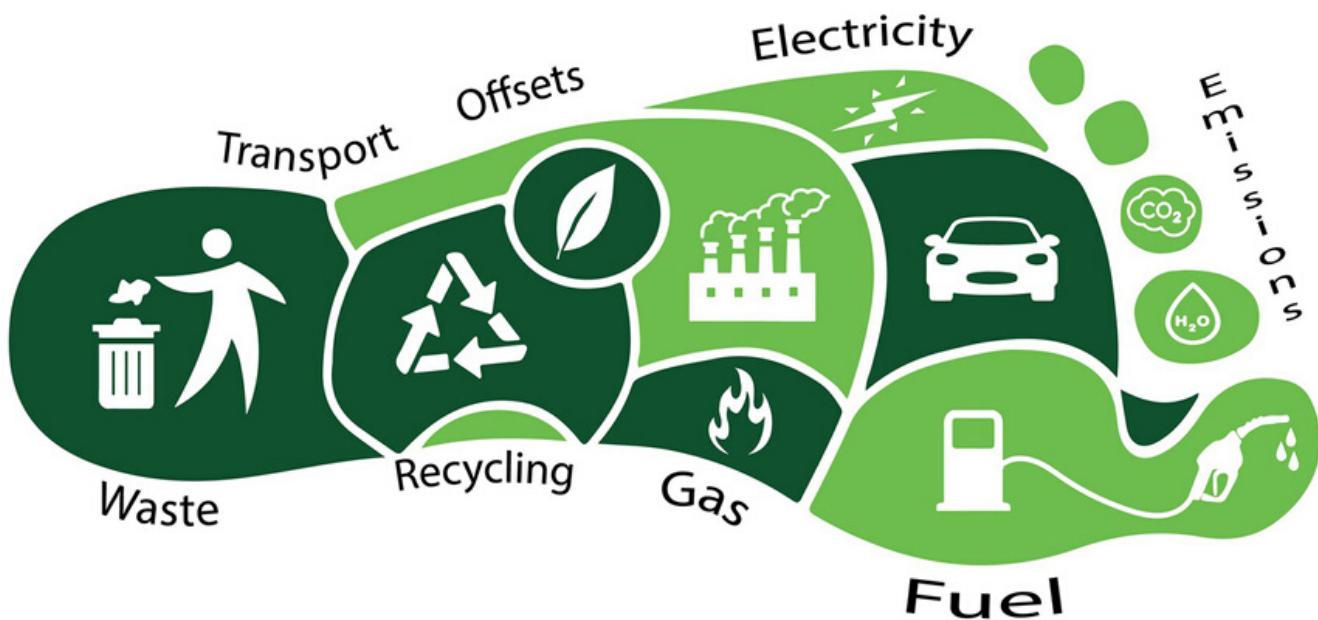
For whom the bell tolls



We live in dangerous times. January 2020 did not start well. Climate emergencies, wildfires and sabre rattling from some of the most powerful nations, highlighted our vulnerability. Then, for the first time since its inception in 1947, the Doomsday Clock, managed by members of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, hit a record hundred seconds to midnight. Before that, the closest it had come to striking the fateful hour that would unleash global catastrophe had been two minutes to midnight; it had reached that milestone during the Cold War, when nuclear annihilation loomed.

The onset of the sixth mass extinction is not a theory, but a reality. The question is whether we are in time to reverse the process. Insects have declined by 40% in recent decades and the trend is continuing. Apart from the disruption to the food chain, most of the world's crops rely on insects for pollination. In the last hundred or so years we have already lost 90% of crop varieties. Besides affecting jobs and food production in general, this is also detrimental to human health, since dwindling varieties are also responsible for poorer diets and fewer medical resources. However, the extinction is not limited to the fate of insects alone. As many as 2,000 extinctions are happening every year and the decline is accelerating.

Symbiotic relationships are not always evident and once the delicate balance that sustains our existence as a species collapses, we may find ourselves vanishing with it.



A question of many versus most

Many people do try to make a difference. Effective ways of reducing our carbon footprint include changing our diets, our modes of travel and our purchasing habits. Some go further and strive to get the message across by joining organisations like UN-aligned or campaigning in any way they deem fit. The problem is that the conscientious many are still too few, compared with the flippant majority. This majority is made up of those who ravage the planet, as well as those who are happy to sit back and let them do it. More often than not, therefore, there are not enough voters to change the situation through the ballot box by putting conscientious people into positions of power where they would be in a better position to implement the necessary reforms.



This is all the more difficult in the worse offending countries that kowtow to big business. It is no surprise that corporate finance usually puts profit before the planet. According to the World Economic Forum, for instance, only one percent of the Fortune 500 corporations, have targets to manage ecological risks. Moreover, politicians are adept at deflecting the attention of their citizens to other issues, like immigration or religious conventions.

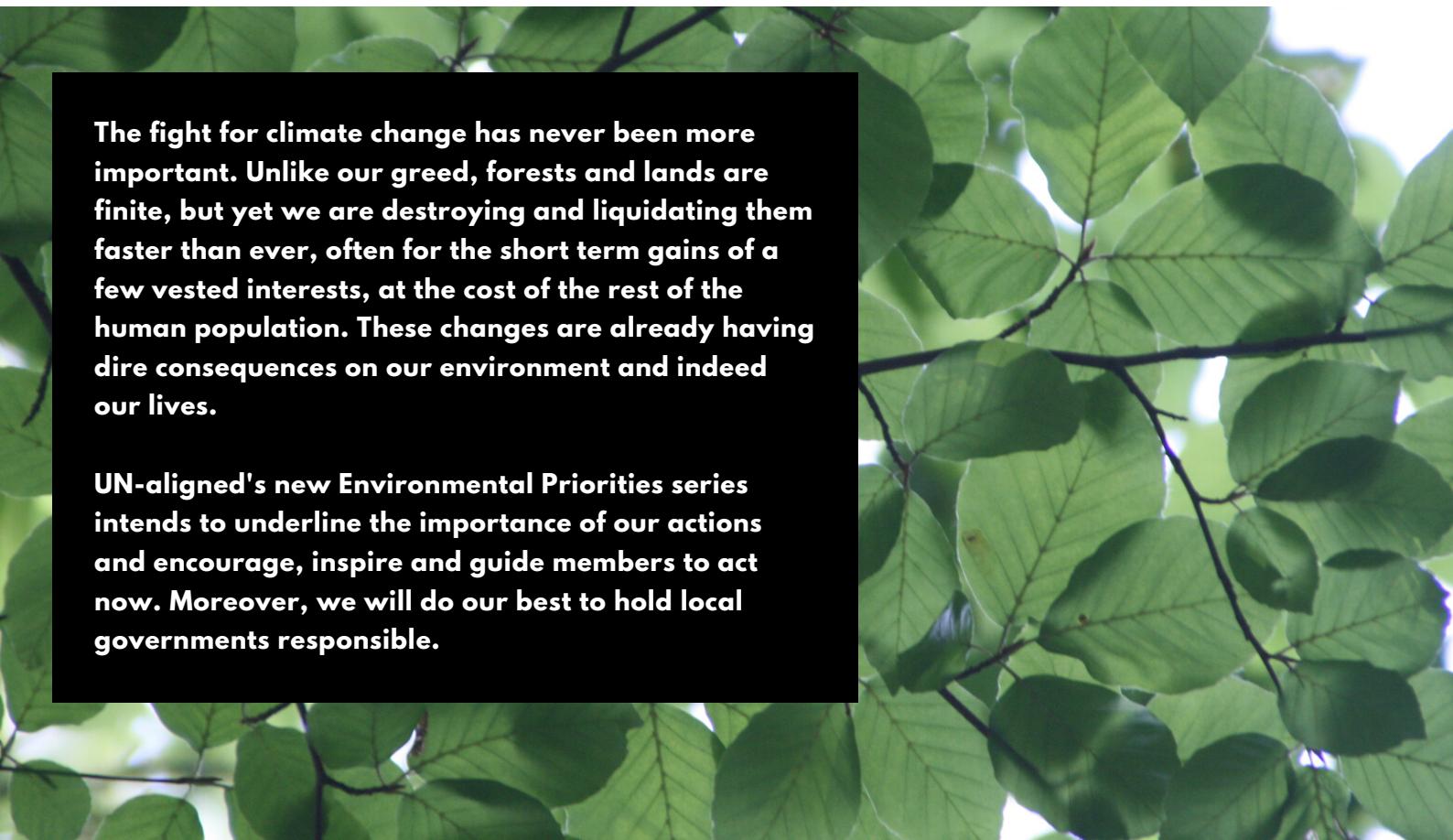
So, what else can be done?

For those of us who do care, it may not be so much a matter of doing things differently, as of doing them more persistently; especially with regards to getting our voices heard. Being a member of a positively involved organisation is good, but any organisation is only as good as the support it receives from its members. A few dedicated minds may eventually lose steam, but a vibrant, mutually supportive hub will just continue gaining momentum. UN-aligned is willing to stick its neck out. Help us with your ideas and your passion. Let us make it harder for those who are content to continue destroying the planet, to get their way. We must add impetus to the force that will change the course of history and the time is now.



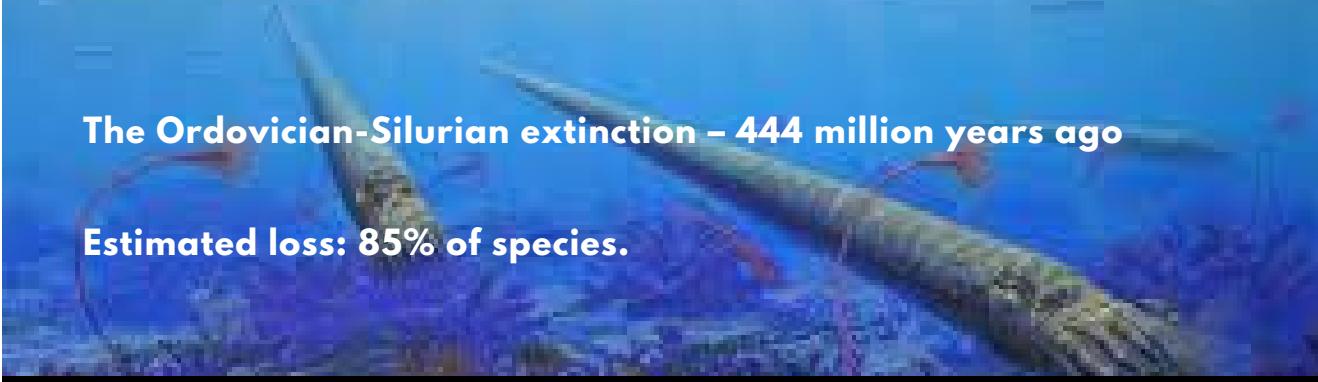
The fight for climate change has never been more important. Unlike our greed, forests and lands are finite, but yet we are destroying and liquidating them faster than ever, often for the short term gains of a few vested interests, at the cost of the rest of the human population. These changes are already having dire consequences on our environment and indeed our lives.

UN-aligned's new Environmental Priorities series intends to underline the importance of our actions and encourage, inspire and guide members to act now. Moreover, we will do our best to hold local governments responsible.



FACT FILE

Life on earth has faced five mass extinctions in the last 500 million years. These are cataclysmic events that drastically alter the fabric of life on earth.



The Ordovician-Silurian extinction – 444 million years ago

Estimated loss: 85% of species.

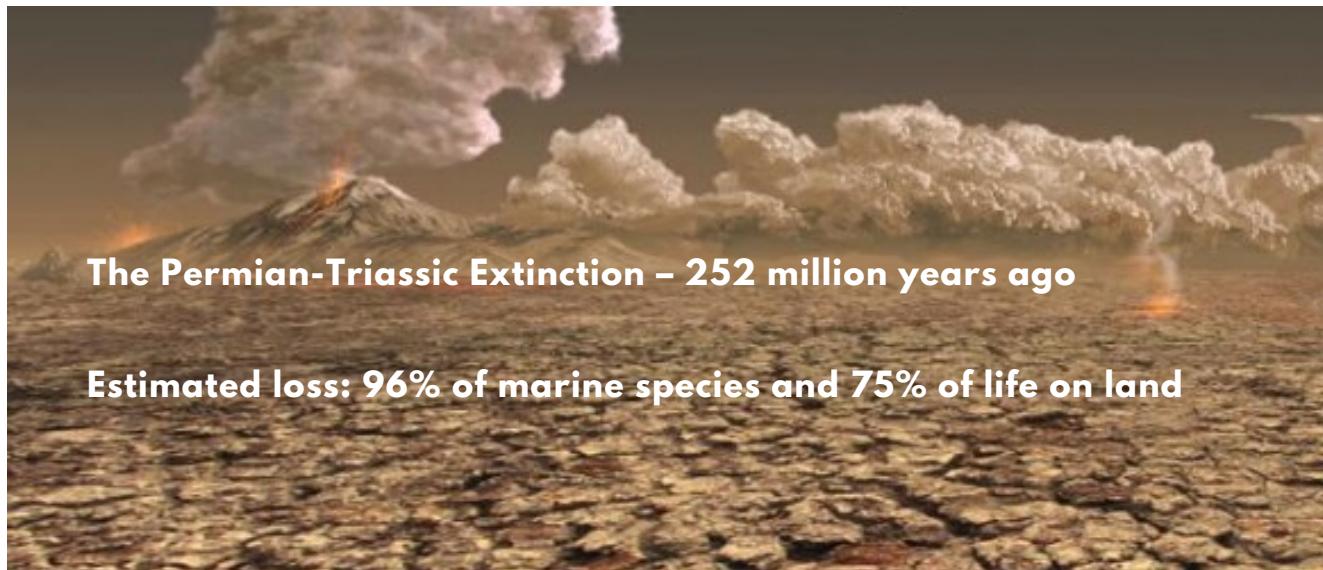
Caused by rising temperatures that froze many habitats and altered the chemical balance many creatures depended on



The Late Devonian Extinction – 383-359 million years ago

Estimated loss: 75% of species

Caused by a massive drop in oxygen levels in the oceans, possibly due to volcanic activity, and algae growth and decay triggered by a burst of vegetation on land that seeped nutrients into the sea.

**The Permian-Triassic Extinction – 252 million years ago****Estimated loss: 96% of marine species and 75% of life on land**

Mainly caused by the Siberian Traps, a volcanic complex that spewed trillions of tons of carbon into the atmosphere. This was the worst of all extinction events and is often referred to as the Great Dying. All the world's forests were destroyed and it took about ten million years before forests re-emerged.

**The Triassic-Jurassic Extinction – 201 million years ago****Estimated loss: 80% of species**

Caused by global warming and a quadrupling of Co2 levels due to excessive lava flows.



Although we have not yet reached the 75% threshold of a mass extinction, we are likely to, unless drastic action is taken. The National Geographic reports that humans are emitting greenhouse gases “as fast as – or even faster than – the Siberian Traps”. However, well before we hit that 75% mark, which could be less than 250 years away, “the damage would throw the ecosystems we call home into chaos, jeopardising species around the world – including us.”



“KLAATU BARADA NIKTO”

By Adrian Liberto

These words are taken from the classic 1951 film directed by Robert Wise: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. The film, based on a short story by Harry Bates, is about an alien, Klaatu, who comes to earth in order to warn humanity of its pending obliteration by an interplanetary police force, unless it mends its destructive ways. The words were uttered to Gort, the robot, after Klaatu was shot. They delivered a stay of execution. Nevertheless, the film ends with the ball in earth's court; their decision still to be made. We are now in 2020 and it seems as though many of our leaders are still hellbent on pursuing a self-destructive agenda.

Tackling the problem, the VHEMT way

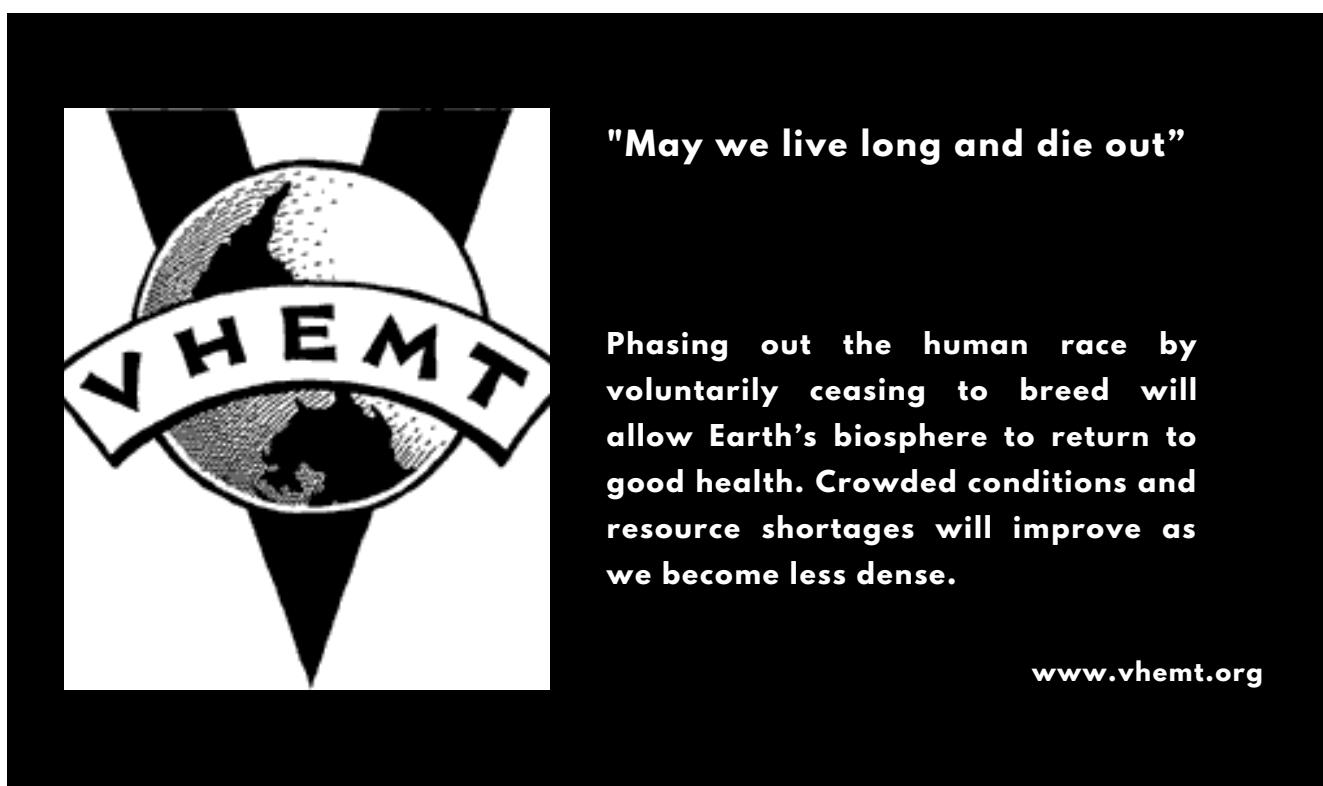
So far, we have not, as far as I am aware, received such a message. Nevertheless, there are some who genuinely believe that the planet will never be safe as long as we are around. The Voluntary Human Extinction Movement (VHEMT) thinks that the best solution to the problem is the voluntary extinction of the human race. VHEMT was founded by Les Knight, an American environmentalist in the 1970s when he decided that all other options for saving the planet were hopeless.



The idea is terrifying, but he has a point. In one of the videos on the VHEMT website (vhemt.org), we are compared to a cancer. It gets the message across clearly, as do many of the answers to some of the typical objections to the proposal.

The Earth needs people to take its side

My main objection is that only conscientious people would consider not procreating to save the planet. Of course, many conscientious people would pursue other options, like UN-aligned, for instance. But let us assume that all people of good will opted for voluntary human extinction. Who would be left? The Trumps and Putins of this world. The selfish, the greedy and the uncaring. How would the world fair better then?



Involuntary human extinction may win the day

Nevertheless, while I propose staying on and fighting for a more balanced and sustainable world, I do not exclude the possibility that VHEMT will get it way. Only the extinction will not be voluntary. Rather it will be as a consequence of our stupidity. And with the billions of innocent lives that will be lost, billions more lifeforms will also perish. Some of them, however, will survive and the world may be full of song and colours again. Should we not be striving to stick around?

A LOWDOWN ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WEARING FACE MASKS

By Ariana Yekrangi



Since the coronavirus hit headlines a few weeks ago, a lot of people seem to be getting ill, not only in China but also in other countries, and you may be wondering whether you need to wear a face mask to protect yourself against the virus.

Should you wear a mask?

The advice from the public health authorities in most places is that masks are really not necessary and they may actually be unhelpful because people will assume that they are protected when perhaps they are not. The advice they do give is to keep well clear of anybody who has got a nasty virus, though it may not be the coronavirus, of course. If you are in doubt, then you should keep your distance. The experts do not think that the particles can travel more than about a metre. In China however, the situation is very different. Public officials have instructed people to wear masks and the reason for that is that there is simply so much of the virus around. So they are protecting other people.



The advice is different in different countries, and because we have so few infections in Europe, the UK or in the United States, on the whole, it is not really a sensible precaution to wear a mask.

How is the virus transmitted?

The coronavirus is airborne, so we know that it spread through the air by people coughing and sneezing. The droplets can either be inhaled by people who breathe them in, or they can land on surfaces that people might then touch with their hands; their hands may then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, and in that way the virus enters their body.

Some of the face masks that are used

The sort of face masks that we see mostly in pictures seem to be the standard surgical face masks that are worn in the operating theatre. Another face mask is the N95, which has a different shape and is slightly more rounded. The standard surgical masks may help prevent some of the transmission, but they really are not foolproof at all. You cannot stop the viral particles going around the edges, for a start, but also, particles are going to collect on the outside of the mask and these can then contaminate your hands. From there, the infection can easily be passed on. There is a way of removing masks safely and this involves pulling them off with the straps only, but the process is not always carried out correctly. The N95 mask will protect you against particles, but they are very hot to wear and very difficult to put on. You may even need to be trained to do it! Once on, you may find that it restricts your breathing.



N95 mask

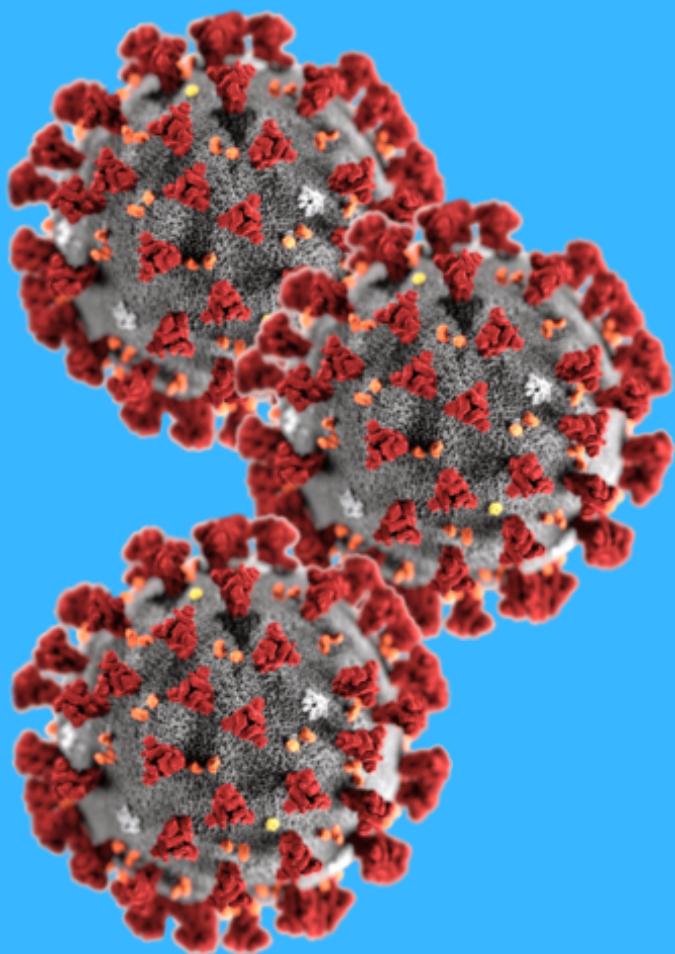
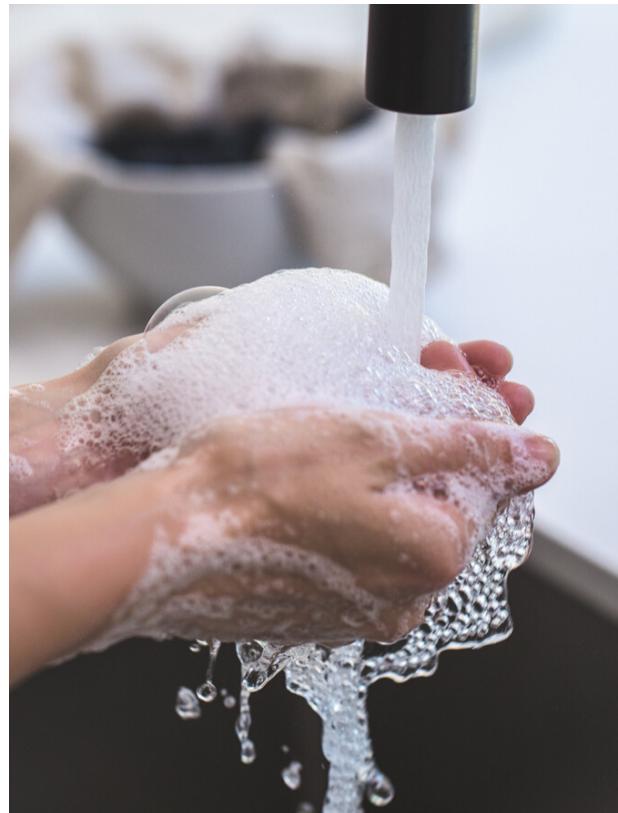


Standard surgical mask



Wash your hands and keep washing them...

This is perhaps the most important thing because the virus is actually transmitted from hands to other hands or from skin to skin quite easily. If in doubt, or if you have not washed your hands, do not put your hands anywhere near your eyes, nose or mouth. If you do feel the need to sneeze or cough yourself, use a tissue and then bin it straight away afterwards, and wash your hands. If you do not have a tissue, then sneeze into the inside of your elbow as this keeps any virus away from your hands where you might transmit it to other people.



The Novel coronavirus

The 2019 novel coronavirus is a contagious virus that causes 2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease, a respiratory infection. It is the cause of the ongoing 2019–20 Wuhan coronavirus outbreak. Many early cases were linked to a large seafood and animal market, and the virus is thought to have a zoonotic origin. Comparisons of the genetic sequences of this virus and other virus samples have shown similarities to SARS-CoV (79.5%) and bat coronaviruses (96%). This makes an ultimate origin in bats likely, although an intermediate host, such as a pangolin, cannot be ruled out.

WOMEN COMPOSERS IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

By Jonna Lappalainen

The history of western classical music has traditionally been the province of male composers making music for the aristocracy. Rather than due to nonexistence, the absence of women in the standard music histories has been the result of the common practices of musicologists of the past. First of all, many musicologists focused more on the documents of music (manuscripts, prints and treatises) than on the sociology of music. Fewer documents of the music of women or of the lower classes have remained. Second, musicologists have focused on the development of musical styles and the progressive works that engendered new genres. Most women were excluded from professional musical positions, which at least partly led to them entering new styles “late”.

Class: an important factor in determining access to music

Class was an important factor in determining access to music, for women as well as for men. Noble or rich merchant and banking families could provide their children with private musical education, but becoming a professional musician was generally not a possible option for the upper classes. This meant that as adults, women and men of high status would continue performing music mainly within private social circles. Some women could, nevertheless, even become patrons of music.



However, it was difficult for women to become professional musicians because girls born in classes from which male musicians came, could not get musical training unless they were born in musician families.

Of course many great male composers have also been forgotten in the writings of music history due to the disregard of music as a social phenomena. In this series, however, I want to focus on a few of the women who had an important and recognised role as composers in their historical and cultural contexts.



LILI BOULANGER

In the early centuries, women participated in singing at divine worship of the Christian church. As the church grew, the opposition grew towards women's participation and the performance of church music became available mainly to trained male singers. Women continued to sing in convents and documents from the late Middle Ages portray nuns as active composers and performers. Among the most important medieval composers was Hildegard of Bingen, a mystic, abbess, author, teacher and composer.

Hildegard of Bingen

Regardless of her gender, Hildegard was an exceptional figure during her time. Her writings extend from theological works to medical and scientific treatises. She was in correspondence with many important contemporary figures. Pope Eugenius confirmed her visions at the synod of Trier in 1147-48 by reading excerpts of her work *Scivias*. As a composer Hildegard was prolific; only Peter Abelard composed more music in the 12th century.



Born to noble parents, Hildegard was placed in the Benedictine monastery of Disibodenberg at the age of eight and received a profound education in arts and monastic virtues. She became the head of the convent in 1136, but left it to found a new monastic community in Rupertsberg, followed by 18 of her nuns. In the new monastery, outside of the direct interference of the monks of Disibodenberg, she stayed as abbess until her death in 1179. The monastery was a favorable environment for Hildegard's artistic, theological and scientific creations. Further studies have suggested that many nuns, just like their male counterparts, wrote chant melodies to honour local saints and were active contributors to medieval music of their time.

Her works

In Rupertsberg Hildegard wrote her most significant musical works. *Ordo Virtutum* (c. 1141-51), a morality play consisting of 85 vocal Latin songs. It is perhaps her most notable work and a landmark in the history of liturgical drama as the earliest representative of its genre. *Symphonia harmoniae caelestium revelationum* (c. 1150-60), is a sacred collection of 77 vocal works (antiphons, responsories, sequences and hymns) written for both well-known saints like the Virgin Mary and saints of local or regional importance.



ILLUMINATION FROM THE LIBER SCIVIAS SHOWING HILDEGARD RECEIVING A VISION AND DICTATING TO HER SCRIBE AND SECRETARY

Hildegard's monophonic vocal music to Latin texts depict the traditional musical practice of her time. Her style in musical and poetic aspects is, however, novel and norm-breaking among her contemporaries. Her texts, written by Hildegard herself, were sacred, but not liturgical. Her melodies were groundbreaking in their flexibility to move smoothly over unusually wide ranges and melodic leaps. She had a unique ability to maintain unity, despite free use of melodic forms, and create an endless amount of variations of the standard melodic phrases within her compositions. It was characteristic in early medieval music to emphasise the meaning of the text through the melody, and Hildegard also believed that carefully chosen melodies delivered the message directly into one's soul. Thus, her melodies were always grounded in the text, as praising God through songs was considered the essence of music.

Hildegard's hymn *Ave Generosa* is an unusual, even sensual, depiction of the Virgin Mary. It is an example of the composer's usage of free poetic and melodic format, imitating a speechlike flow of the text. The melody widely extends the commonly used vocal registers of contemporary singers. The soaring melody, with occasional leaps, creates an angelic and mystical impression. An animated movement in the middle of the phrases, and slowing down towards the end, rises to the heavens like an eager, yet humble and divine prayer.



"UNIVERSAL MAN" ILLUMINATION FROM HILDEGARD'S LIBER DIVINORUM OPERUM, I.2. LUCCA, MS 1942,
EARLY 13TH-CENTURY COPY.

FANCY A SHORT QUIZ?

A COPY TO THE ANSWERS OF THIS QUIZ ARE AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THE MAGAZINE.

01 Who composed the music for the 1933 ballet chanté, The Seven Deadly Sins, with the libretto by Bertolt Brecht? Can you name the seven deadly sins?

02 In the 1937 Walt Disney film, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, what was the profession of the dwarves? Can you name them?

05 Which Japanese director co-wrote, edited and directed the film Seven Samurai? What is the name of the 1960 Western version directed by John Sturges?

07 The list of the Seven Sages of ancient Greece varies according to tradition; three of the following were never included: who are they? Solon of Athens, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Socrates, Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of Mytilene, Diogenes of Sinope, Chilon of Sparta...

03 Which is the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World to have survived relatively intact to this day? Can you name all seven?

04 One of the legendary seven kings of Rome ruled jointly with a Sabine king for five years of his reign (though he is not counted with the seven): who were the two kings? Can you name the remaining six kings?

06 Which of the Seven Hills of Rome, situated between the Roman Forum and the Circus Maximus, is reputed to have been the site where Romulus and Remus were suckled by the she-wolf? Can you name the remaining six hills?

*For suggestions and feedback
please write to us at
contact@un-aligned.org*

Join UN-aligned

The world is changing rapidly; and so will our perception and fabric of life. Idealism is often used as a term of contempt, but creative people understand the power of imagination. We need to visualise and formulate a better world in order to make it a reality. This is the essence of UN-aligned.

UN-aligned was created with the goal of uniting our globe by a federal world order, which is based on the core principles of a shared humanity and a shared planet. It was this aim that united Adrian Liberto and Ariana Yekrangi to create this beacon of change. Join our global movement today and be the change you want to see. Our membership is completely free of charge.

As a member you can:

- Organise and manage a cell or parish
- Enjoy complete & free access to our premium benefits including: language courses, our virtual library and so much more
- Contribute to our newsletter
- Be part of a like-minded community

Visit:

un-aligned.org/register

for more information



Quiz Answer Sheet

1. Kurt Weill; lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride.
2. They were miners: Dopey, Doc, Bashful, Happy, Grumpy, Sleepy and Sneezy.
3. The Great Pyramid of Giza (Khufu); the other six are: The Colossus of Rhodes, The Lighthouse of Alexandria, The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, The Statue of Zeus at Olympia and The Hanging Gardens of Babylon.
4. Romulus and Titus Tatius; Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius and Tarquinius Superbus.
5. Akira Kurosawa; The Magnificent Seven.
6. The Palatine Hill; Aventine, Caelian, Capitoline, Esquiline, Quirinal and Viminal. The Vatican Hill, the Pincian Hill and the Janiculum Hill are not regarded as part of the traditional hills as they were outside the original boundaries of ancient Rome.
7. Heraclitus of Ephesus, Socrates and Diogenes of Sinope.

Credits

Founded by:

Adrian Liberto

Ariana Yekrangi

Publisher:

UN-aligned, The Alternative UN

Editor in chief:

Adrian Liberto

Art Direction/Design:

Canva

Logo:

Amaya Liberto

Exclusive photography for this episode:

Anahita Ahmadi

Exclusive reporting in this issue:

Jonna Lappalainen

An UN-aligned member who wishes to stay anonymous

Commons Library

Published in Helsinki, Finland

All rights belong to UN-aligned at:

www.un-aligned.org



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK

UN-aligned
Suvelantie 14 A 18
Espoo 02760
Finland

www.un-aligned.org

UN- ALIG NED

THE VIRTUAL & ALTERNATIVE UN

UN-aligned was created with the goal of uniting our globe by a federal world order, which is based on core principles of a shared humanity and a shared planet. It was this aim that united Adriano Liberto and Ariana Yekrangi to create this beacon of change in 2016.