

Soprano: *The forces change*
[She moves across the stage. Different colors converge.]

as distances change

As I travel through this extra dimension

::Musical interlude where forces converge. Crescendo as they all merge into a single sound::

As I travel away
forces come together

Unite





Rather than concealing the orchestra in a pit, set designer Matthew Ritchie put it on stage behind a screen that becomes translucent when the lighting is right.

gallery: hypermusic prologue

Each of the two singers occupies half of the stage. The baritone lives in the static, concrete world of classical physics. The soprano's colorful, vibrant world reflects her longing for change and depth.

J'ai découvert que nous pouvions exister
avec une cinquième dimension infinie
sans contredire les tests de gravité connus



The set was designed by artist Matthew Ritchie, who is based in New York City and knew Randall from previous ventures into artistic representation of science. While the set incorporates physics ideas—distortion of the fabric of space-time, for instance, is reflected in spiraling images and tie-dye swirls of color—he says the visuals were not meant to be direct translations of those ideas. “I want to tread carefully because it’s not science,” Ritchie says. “It’s a kind of emblem.”

To create the illusion of traveling through a different dimension, Ritchie projected video onto a gray stage. This allowed rapid background changes and intricate, morphing color schemes. While the orchestras for most opera performances are concealed in a pit in front of the stage, the musicians in *Hypermusic* sit onstage

behind a screen that becomes translucent when the lighting is right, so they appear in the same space as the singers.

With three creative minds completing most of the work for the opera from different locations—Parra in France, Randall in Massachusetts, and Ritchie in New York—*Hypermusic Prologue* could have been a train wreck of ideas; instead it manages to be harmonious, engaging, and adventurous.

The production debuted in Europe in the summer of 2009 and continues to tour. Excerpts from the opera are scheduled for performance January 11th and 12th at the Guggenheim Museum’s Spiral Hall in New York City. Parra says he hopes to bring the full production to the United States in 2011.

