

A pre-emptive requiem for Jumbo



A video still from Paul Walde's *Requiem for a Glacier*, which will open on Sept. 6 in Coquitlam.

by [Janis Warren - The Tri-City News](#)

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The call for volunteers to take part in Paul Walde's site-specific sound performance project in the Jumbo Glacier area of the Kootenays last year was a bit perplexing.

The intermedia artist, musician and curator had asked for musicians to rise early in late July, travel up a logging road and perform an oratorio — penned by Walde — on top of the Farnham Glacier, the most accessible of the five Jumbo glaciers that are left over from the last ice age.

In return for their efforts, the musicians would receive a limited edition artwork from Walde and credit in the subsequent video installation of *Requiem for a Glacier*.

Walde said it wasn't an easy task to assemble the performers nor was it easy to get up to the location. Only a few days before, the dangerous road up was cleared from a mudslide. There was quite a bit of anxiety beforehand if it would happen at all, he said.

But when the day came for the 55 musicians — ranging in age from 12 to 84 — to play the four-movement memorial work, the sky was blue and the conditions were perfect, Walde said.

Next Saturday, the University of Victoria associate professor will open his *Requiem* at Coquitlam's Evergreen Cultural Centre, a remount of the installation that was commissioned by the Langham Cultural Centre in Kaslo and displayed last fall.

The work not only highlights his original 37-minute long composition but also sheds light on the landscape, which is due to be transformed into a year-round, \$450-million recreational resort.

Walde often ties his art with climate change themes, highlighting the loss of wild spaces.

For the “pre-emptive” memorial project, Walde captures a time before the commercial development takes place. In the video, there is footage of the glacier and scenes of where it is melting.

As well, he has “performative vignettes” where musicians are playing solos in remote areas.

Walde said he didn't know what the end product would be when he was filming.

“We knew it would be based on elements of the performance,” he said “We didn't want a concert or music video. We wanted a new experience that moves at a slow pace. It's almost like watching a painting unfold in front of you.”

For the Coquitlam exhibit, Walde said the curator, Evergreen's visual arts manager Gregory Elgstrand, has made a room within a room that will have a 24' x 8' screen for the projection as well as mementos, photos and altered images from the Jumbo journey.

- The opening reception for *Requiem for a Glacier* is on Sept. 6 from 2 to 5 p.m., with artist Paul Walde attending. The exhibit, which launches the Evergreen gallery's 18th year, runs until Oct. 25. Visit evergreenculturalcentre.ca for details.

jwarren@tricitynews.com