

Sea Fugue

a song in seven parts on a poem by Elee Kraljii Gardiner

for Soprano and Piano

2013-2015

(ca. 25:00)

Christopher Gainey (b. 1981)

Dedicated to:

Alison D'Amato and Lynne McMurtry

With special thanks to:

John Roeder, David Gompper, Bruno Amato, Ray Chester, and Kristin Gainey

Sea Fugue

I.

Concrete plaza echoes, jackhammer beats,
revolving door pushed to a swift change
in heat. She swims through a current of suits, briefcases
bump/trigger her alarm. Screech of toner becomes coconut vendor's
canto, offshore rhythm. Terror cycling on the nine to five tide.

Double lines, *to flee, to chase, to fly*; this fugue,
her mind, slides into riptide
to terminus of last year's vacation.
Sudden highrise sound-wash in her cochlear seashell,
sand grit in the molar cave.
Revolution, suspension.

She sees those two
 small starfish
 catch at air
 screaming open-handed aria
 above the wave
 line and rises to rescue. She did once, she re-does
again, daily, unasked, unwell. She/dives under/and up, under
and up. She
 is in the pitch again
where no one else
dives.

She/works a wave/trough
 function/stoptime photography pushes past/the buoys, persistent
Percussion
coming closer/scales are changing/
he is growing child-sized/to man.

II.

She is catching his gaze, semaphore panic flashing intimate message – he
dips
un/
der.

He is un/
swum past/sound and strung/between
iris to iris intimacy/plumbing momentary
depth/of identity.

Sea pulls off the red trunks, *Percussion* plays
with his body/spins his axis, pulls him
closer. He is stripped
of consideration/ pulls her, his impulse claws her/ uses her to achieve/surface. She gives
herself/to this purpose
under/water sound changes,
feet beat ribs,
push her down. *Percussion*/-damaged, she/pulls away/seal-headed
until/ he spends himself.
His eyes rolling an *arpeggio*, climb chaos, *descrescendo*,
descrescendo.

III.

She learns
no man is as naked as when he is dressed by fear.

IV.

Body floats low, half-open

Lids do not wince under each wave, lips parted. Now

he is safe to touch.

This almost-corpse
is thick with corn-fed muscle. Pink skin slick with coconut sunscreen
repels her. No place on him is small
enough to hold.

She rakes/her fingers/through his fine hair
drags him/to shore because she must. Waves hammer/her torn
shoulder/where he/beat her like a drum. She/can't, she can't hear/
the slow boat of men who know/better shouting

¡Suéltale! ¡Suéltale y sálvate!

Percussion

When she lifts her face
to the Venezuelan landscape
it is awash
in pastels
losing all specifics.

V.

This parting - his hair coming away in her hand -
is all she will carry out of the sea towards life.
The decision to let go runs through her like anchor line from the hold.

Waves separate/them in a moment. She is furious
at his weakness, his bulk, sea's perseverance.

Fishermen know *Percussion* to ignore the impulse to follow the body.
Pitch her a line/greened by algae, string her/through the heart.

Mouth/fills with/water, sting smears eyes, sounds/soften,
diminuendo.

VI.

Falls. Sand abrades membranes.
She is queasy from the act of release.
diaphanous, permeable,
Sun seeps, she shakes
Surfacing among buildings and chairs.

Cardiac thrash, lung-full
of sunny dust motes. Her eyes, dry.
She holds onto the prow of her desk, mediating
two counts. Ab(pre)sent.
Dual mind, *contrapunto* - respiration: r e s o l v i n g.

That is how Sea plays with her.
Confusion *Percussion*
in the washroom she smooths her hair, composes
a line to explain the shaking. She smells of dissipation.

VII.

The mirror twin is pale. Moons of his eyes
surface in her own, her fingers cut with moons,
are never empty. She clutches filaments,
strives a fifth above or a fourth below the tide line,
doubled, accompanied,
unsure of every solitude.

Elee Kraljii Gardiner (2012)

Sea Fugue

I.

Elee Kraljii Gardiner (2012)

Christopher Gainey (2013-2015)

Intense, mechanical (♩ = 128)

Soprano

Piano

mp

mp

Detailed description: This block shows the first two measures of the piece. The Soprano part is mostly silent, with rests in 6/4, 3/4, and 7/4 time signatures. The Piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet in the second measure. Dynamics include *mp* and *mp*.

3

mp

Con-crete pla - za e-choes, jack-ham-mer

Detailed description: This block covers measures 3 and 4. The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "Con-crete pla - za e-choes, jack-ham-mer". The Piano part continues with intricate rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *mp*.

5

beats, re - volv-ing door pushed to a swift change in heat. She

mf *mp*

8^{vb} *8^{vb} (loco)* *8^{vb}*

Detailed description: This block covers measures 5, 6, and 7. The Soprano part continues with the lyrics "beats, re - volv-ing door pushed to a swift change in heat. She". The Piano part features a prominent 7th fret chord in measure 6 and uses *8^{vb}* (loco) markings. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*.

8 *f*

swims through a cur - rent of suits, brief ca-ses *mp*

mf

mp

mf S.P. *mp*

10 *ff*

bump/ trig-ger her_ a larm. Scree - ch of to-ner be-

f

f S.P. *f*

13 *mp*

comes co - co - nut-ven dor's can - to,

mp

S.P. *mp*