



(the little mermaid)

opera for 3 singers, flute/bass flute, woodblock, followspot, and predatory tunicate chorus

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the little mermaid

The little mermaid is an arrangement of a story by Hans Christian Anderson. A fairy tale dissolves to foam. In small pieces.

First reading: November 19, 2010, La Jolla, by Kallisti.

Staging Notes

The opera is presented with audience surrounding a rectangular staging area, with stationary instrumentalists on the perimeter. The space is dark, except for the follow-spot, and stand-lights. Much action is unseen or obscured, but felt in other means. The floor of the space should be hard enough that a paperclip dropped can be just audible. Sound and scent cross the space.

The predatory tunicate chorus exists interspersed amongst the audience, sometimes passing through them at different speeds, stacking into a heap in the center of the space, melting as a heap, blowing air at audience neighbors, misting water, touching, hovering from behind with hands over mouths, running at the singer in a way to impact her sound, dropping paper clips, spreading scent of kelp and greens in a pattern that follows the movement of the singers.

(More detailed directions available: for example, the first maneuver is slowly putting on plastic bags over heads down to the eyes, not over the breathing passage, turning slowly to an unknown neighbor, slowly opening the jaw to the widest possible degree, bearing teeth, and slowly leaning in to a distance where breathing is mutually felt. The style of movement is slow but continuously fluid, the pace of sloths, taichi, zombies. Movement is subtle and purposeful, with the aim of achieving a task, not to perform a particular sound or dance gesture.)

Forces

light followspot with gels and diffuser – a glass slowly rotated in front moves light patterns through the space

percussion mostly woodblock, piano peg chimes that amplify

bass flute doubling flute

3 singers 2 sopranos (1 stationary at music stand, 1 moving), 1 mezzo-soprano (moving)

chorus enough bodies to form a heap that fits under a light plastic table cloth which can float a number of seconds when thrown up – also armed with paper clips, kelp, evergreen scent, and talc or bubbles to be illuminated in the absence of a body

(the little mermaid)

1

light dif blue UR ceiling to floor, dif off, glass play | dif on | full blue on L

wood block | swish slow | move with mass

leslie | hidden in mass | lie center

predatory tunicate chorus | pass through center, deposit L 20" | still | bags on

♩ = 40

6/8

2

freely

p want watch

15" don't wait for chorus tp finish



11

b fl | sing (to flute)

m | walk toward L part way stop

l | 10" f what p wa - - - - ter p wa - ter

ch | turn to neighbor | jaw open | lean in | absolutely still | relax



23

b fl | flute

m | walk kneel face L | one mp one p one want wa - - - - ter seeps

l | wa - ter what o - - - - ther sea breathe

ch | M L

It

b fl

wb

t

m

l

ch

pp distant echo

mf ho - ver air

f air a - bove

mf o - ver air

pp distant echo

mf stars pull har - der

mf stars pull har - der

exit

pp distant echo

mf ho - ver air

f air a - bove

mf o - ver air

assemble heap 3

rain of ric. objects suggests tempo

breathy 15"

to bass flute

3

dif white UR ceiling

wb

t

m

l

ch

rain

flowing

soul foam swal - low swords

soul sea drink swords

soul or swal - low swords and walk

swish

p meet fall

p bleed bleed

p throat feet

assemble

assemble

melt still

It

b fl

t

m

l

ch

mp heart break break fall *mf* waves fall fall all *p* rise fall

meet mute break fall *mp* fall break break fall *mf* break fall break fall *p* sur - face

meet mute heart break fall *mp* fall up break wave break down heart fall *mf* waves break up to the surface *p* up breathe

trickle out

(b fl)

p

4 blue full center

It

b fl

t

m

I

tin - der hun - ger knots knots knots_ know_

tin - der hun - ger_ knows knots knots throats knots know

cross space wandering close to audience

p slo - machs are_ tear - drops tear tin - der skin_ hun - gry e - ther knots throats knots know_

L ↗

orange 1/2 dim center

It

b fl

wb

t

m

I

ch

know skin

know

pp pall

pp pale

mf hun - gry skin

pp too palled to stir_ to pale_ from fas - ting

swish swish

b cross w/ kelp

B ↘

5 white, diffuse

6 dark slow rotate

7 pink + orange on L full

It

b fl

wb

t

m

I

ch

f

p

pulsing slowly move into scream

mp pass fall

mp pass fall

assemble heap 3 people 30" still

assemble more still

exit fast

still

:15 pterodactyl / scream meet to UR corner

high gasping slow rotate CC 3-5 steps

:10 dispersed [paper clips rain]

to center :10 in spot glide out backwards

L

It on L

b fl

t

m

l

full flicker

flicker

fl

p fall

f up

mp noon shack - les plumed feet she dan - ces

mp noon shack - les plumed feet dan - ces

:05 in spot face other direction

glide out

fall up

in spot

in spot

exit

It

b fl

wb

t

m

ch

1" flicker on M

ceiling

tongue pizz.

sfz reverb

like a bomb a - broad

like a bomb a - broad

to center, lie

curl up

out

5" rush in 2" hold standing 5" rush out 2" still 5"

M

PPP m

It

b fl

wb

t

m

l

ch

small orange + pink cross

slow fade

spot cross again

b fl

p

f

mf

rain

circle

mp swords

mf salt her

p long sip ho - ver o - ver

mp swal - low

mf salt her

trail spot

p long sip fin - gers slip o - ver sip gob - lin

mp swal - low soar

reverse

L

L

lt | | | | to center expand | slow rotate glass | | 9 | 6 | |

b fl

t
ban - dagedher free - zing hair and f salt her ban - dage band band mp fin gers

m
hands free - zing p hair f salt her hands dance band band mp her fin gers

l
p hair dance exit f salt her badage - ges band hands ban - dag - es mp fin gers

lt | | | | dif white full on L | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

wb | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

t
her hair her mf hair

m
her hair her mf hair

l
her hair mf free - zing hair rose p lie feet at his feet plumes mp bathed tears wiped hair

ch
trickle in running at L

slow, freely expand and color breaths and singing to maximize effects of impacts , unsteady

lt | | | | | | | | | | dif blue ceiling 3x off | | | |

wb | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

t
sparse rain

m
to L expand beating steer out mf see east freeze see hear seas sieze free freeze see

l
p sea walk out mf east see hear seas free see

ch
with tears my hair my tears mf my hair my tears p tears mf see east freeze see hear seas sieze free freeze see

whisper into neighbor's ear

ML

11

diff blue on L in UR

tempo libre

swish

pp east see seas free sea the sea eats

pp east see seas free eat sea eats

pp east see seas free sea sea eats

pp the sea squirt eats its own brain

see freeze hear sieze sea

pp eats circle CC few steps

12 13

white full ceiling

slit scan stop center

ff

blow still rush in hold pace out

walk to L touch audience gentle

14

diff blue LR

dim

rain rock

carried

hair for a knife drip blood to feet back to the sea fall fall dis - solve

still walk to L in UR carry L across lower L exit as clump to UR

to L center
dif off dark

blue dif on talc 5" dark

15 16

fl

mf soul foam sea falls

mf soul foam sea foam

lit mf soul to sea foam sea foam dis - solves blow talc up disappear bubbles lit 10" touch firmer longer

flash white ceiling stretch

lullaby

meet mute break fall waves fall break

meet mute break fall swal - low years

the world a - bove up to the sur - face

hands toward face of neighbor warm toward ear toward mouth recede

dif white 1/2 on L

join chorus

pp m m

join chorus

pp m m

dance on throats swallow swords utrown^a bo - dy fall fall sing - ging

trickle in assemble hover over L mute L mouth in turn heads in m

lt | 1/4 dim down |
17 | center full |

b fl

wb

I
 up a - bove #up a - bove #up a - bove _____ watch exit UL

ch
 face out mute pace out to UL rush in heap (no M)



lt | 1/2 dif

b fl

wb
 swish

t

m
 walk to T (UR) switch heart _____ waves _____

I
 walk to T (UR) tongue _____ hear _____ knives _____

ch
 a tongue for legs _____ hair for a knife knives for legs _____ melt

lt | | | 1/4 dim | | | | | |

18

b fl | | | | | | | | | | | |

wb | | | | | | | | | | | |

t | *rit.* | | | | | | | | | | | |

m | *rit.* fall | | | | | | | | | | | |

l | *rit.* rise | | | | | | | | | | | |

ch | | | | | | | | | | | |

throats to fly

wrap heap in cloth



lt | | | | | | | | | | | |

19 | | | | | | | | | | | |

20

b fl | | | | | | | | | | | |

wb | | | | | | | | | | | |

l | | | | | | | | | | | |

ch | | | | | | | | | | | |

full up on cloth still 1-2" dark

flash on cloth on ground dark

slow glide fade in, up to ceiling 20"

slight blue

swish chimes

swish chimes

exit mm

throw up cloth exit center

blow bubbles up, exit

paperclips rain

scent circulate slowly around space