

# *Siren*

for English horn & fixed media

Aleyna M. Brown

2018



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Commissioned by Courtney Sullivan, English horn  
Premiered November 10, 2018 at Florida State University

5”

## **Program Note**

The siren song is an alluring melody heard only by sailors just before their death. Within a soundscape of cavernously echoing water drops and an underwater descent into this seductive trap, “Siren” is a feminist commentary on this mythical siren song. The English hornist represents our siren, not as told by the male-narrated stories through which the myth is known, but by the female protagonist, as depicted musically by her unhinged femininity—both beautiful and deadly. The song captivates the audience as it transforms into a cascading melody—luring the listener inward. When the sailor is in her grasp, the siren transforms back again into the femme fatale she is, dragging her catch into the depths of the cave. One final breath is inhaled, and the English horn sounds one last beckoning call, as the piece returns to the dark soundscape from which it began—dark, but just as beautiful.

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Mysteriously ♩ = 50

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The score is written for Fixed Media and English Horn in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 50 beats per minute. The music is characterized by atmospheric sound effects and dynamic contrasts.

**Fixed Media Part:**

- Measures 1-4: "water drops" (represented by 'x' marks) and "eerie ambience" (represented by a long note).
- Measures 5-8: "eerie ambience" and "running water enters" (represented by a note with a slur).
- Measures 9-14: "underwater descent" (represented by a descending line), "bats" (represented by a slur), "shuffled pings" (represented by a series of notes), and "media eng. horn(s)" (represented by a slur).
- Measures 15-18: "bats" (represented by a slur), "eerie ambience" (represented by a long note), "shuffled pings" (represented by a series of notes), and "inhale" (represented by a note).
- Measures 19-21: "water drops" (represented by 'x' marks).
- Measures 22-24: "ship bell" (represented by a note), "harp" (represented by a series of notes), and "shimmering" (represented by a slur).

**English Horn Part:**

- Measures 1-4: Rest.
- Measures 5-8: Rest.
- Measures 9-14: "sub bass" (represented by a note), "n" (represented by a slur), "f" (represented by a slur), "p" (represented by a slur), and "mp" (represented by a slur).
- Measures 15-18: "sub bass" (represented by a note), "pitch bend" (represented by a slur), and "water drops" (represented by 'x' marks).
- Measures 19-21: "sub bass" (represented by a note), "water drops" (represented by 'x' marks), and "3" (represented by a triplet).
- Measures 22-24: "sub bass" (represented by a note), "f" (represented by a slur), and "beckoningly" (represented by a slur).

25 *Poco piu mosso* ♩=60  
 harp gliss.  
 ethereal voices  
 8<sup>va</sup>-7

*ff* > *p*

28

*f cantabile*

31

*p*

33

*mf* > *f*

35

crashing wave  
 sub bass

*p*

*mp cantabile*

37

39

crashing wave

39

*mf*

41

41

43

**Tempo primo** ♩=50

inhale waterphone waterphone silence

43

silence

47

harp

sub bass

47

*f* *mp*

51

bats

51

*p* 3

56

56

3 3 3

59

sub bass

59

*f* *n*

eerie ambience

inhale

running water

Detailed description: The musical score is written for two staves. The first system (measures 51-55) features a treble clef staff with rests and a bass clef staff with a melodic line. A 'bats' instruction is placed above a note in measure 52. The second system (measures 56-58) continues the melodic line in the bass clef staff, including triplets and slurs. The third system (measures 59-63) shows a change to 4/4 time. The upper staff has rests, with 'eerie ambience' written above the first measure and 'inhale' and 'running water' above the last two measures. The lower staff has a melodic line starting with a 'sub bass' instruction and a dynamic marking of *f*. A fermata and a breath mark *n* are present at the end of the lower staff.

*Aleyna M. Brown*  
dedicated to Courtney Sullivan