

HOW TO PLAY MARIANA (2021)

Text score for ensemble of musicians, dancers, or actors

This piece has seven 'movements'. For each, the ensemble should select a duration in advance (up to 7 minutes). Between each movement, there should be a pause. Each movement should be interpreted freely, but performers might like to consider: different ways of moving (as if in the deep sea), different forms of echo, different ways of showing depth, increasing darkness/pressure/cold (dissipating light/heat), relationships of drifting, isolation of sounds, obscure shapes (barely visible, coming in and out of view), different currents of water.

First you must gather your resources – soil, silt, brine, smoke-stacks, whalebones, plastics, and giant mussel shells. Position them sparingly and delicately across a thick carpet lain down across several eons (as you decide).

Second you must describe your processes – of decay, of sinking, of snow, of making life without sunlight, of enticing otherworldly beings, of unwrapping the bodies of plants and animals and others (without judging). Understand that this is necessary and not to be estranged from other ideas of living.

Third you must drag down your weapons – your metals and your oils, your chemicals and your radioactive waste, the carcasses of your machines and the bloated ideas of your generals (until they are quieter). It follows that what goes down has been up, and that fear exists in all places.

Fourth you must stretch out your membranes – your jellified states of buoyancy (new and old), your opening of the dark with flashes of brilliance (for thieving and deception). Clinging onto shapefulness is a surface-level concept and it's better not to try.

Fifth you must indulge – in writhing, in weeping, in continental drift, in shafts of dissipating light, in echoing and falling, in branching forms, in clusters and the community salvaging of corpses (blanching like chalk). Coming together around a common goal can be achieved even in total darkness.

Sixth you must learn to climb down – by the splintering of appendages into six or eight or ten, by blindness and the growing of new eyes (towards translucence), by the extension of the body into gloomy silhouettes (under pressure). It is through growing downwards that we can understand the limits of weight-bearing shapes.

Seventh and finally you must embrace – the chasmic, the chaotic, the wretched, the putrid and those who have sunk (who are not really damned). Bring all that you are to the deep, for no parts can be left behind.