

*Supernatural Love* was commissioned in 2007 by Duo Concertante (violinist Nancy Dahn and pianist Timothy Steeves, based in St. John's, Newfoundland) with support from the Canada Council for the Arts (Commissioning of Canadian Compositions), and presented as part of national tours of Canada and China in 2007. The piece takes its title from a poem by Gjertrud Schnackenberg in which she continuously re-examines history from different spatial and temporal points of view. My piece is not based upon the poem - it takes off in its own direction - but, in a related manner, the work progressively and dynamically re-hears the resonances of the heart. The duet was pivotal for me in envisioning an elemental, streamlined, and transformative treatment of relatively sparse musical material. The first movement introduces, in canon, an upper-neighbour figure present in different guises throughout the entire work. Marked 'open and warm', the second movement takes the form of a recitative and aria that evoke a sense of gratitude in cantabile writing for the violin. Building to an area of purging, the opening figure re-emerges in monolithic unison sequences. Chromatic gestures of grief from the first movement's piano part are picked up and amplified by the violin against a foil of precipitously ascending piano lines. The third movement, marked 'with a spirit of emancipation,' is a perpetual-motion refrain. The upper-neighbor idea takes on a life of its own, returning obsessively until the surface splits open to reveal an icy transmutation of the same idea - 'empty sound', or loss giving way to a point of emptiness.

- Kati Agócs