

*Awakening Galatea* is a setting of Ovid's poem from *Metamorphoses* on the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. This myth, in which an artist falls in love with his own creation, has fascinated dramatists through the ages. More recent versions include George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* and the musical *My Fair Lady*. Ovid's poem, the oldest version, tells how the artist Pygmalion vows to shun the company of women because he finds too many faults in them. Yet he uses his miraculous skill to carve an ivory statue of a woman that is more beautiful than any living woman could possibly be and, awestruck, he falls in love with it. He caresses it, showers it with attention, brings it gifts - - yet no adornment makes it any more beautiful than the original statue. Finally, the goddess of love, Venus - - who up until that point had thought that she had seen it all - - takes pity upon him. Pygmalion is praying to find a woman just like his statue, because he does not dare ask for the actual statue. But Venus knows what he really wants, and she answers his prayer by making the statue come alive. The statue, Galatea, awakens to see Pygmalion with her very first glance. She is brought to life by the strength of his love (and the gracious intervention of Venus).

There were stories in Greek times of people falling in love with statues, but it was most probably Ovid who made this archetypical tale into an allegory for artistic creation. At the same time, the basis of the story that Ovid inherited from bronze-age myth is also a somewhat circuitous explanation of how the Greek sanctuary site of Paphos got its name. I have set the poem in the original Latin with extensive cuts -- although the opening and ending stanzas maintain the phrase structure of the original verse. Thanks are due to my brother Peter Agócs, a faculty member in classics at University College London, for his assistance with the translation, and for helping me to appreciate the nuances of the great fun that Ovid had with the story. *Awakening Galatea* was premiered at the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival and on the First Monday series at New England Conservatory in 2009 with the composer as soprano soloist.

- Kati Agócs

Kati Agócs joined the composition faculty of the New England Conservatory in 2008. Born in Windsor, Canada, of Hungarian and American background, she earned Doctor of Musical Arts and Masters degrees at Juilliard, where her principal teacher was Milton Babbitt. She is an alumna of Tanglewood Music Center, Aspen Music Festival, Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific (United World Colleges), and Sarah Lawrence College, all of which she attended on full scholarship. Recent works include *Elysium* for the National Arts Centre, *Pearls* for the American Composers Orchestra (premiered at Carnegie Hall), *Requiem Fragments* for the CBC Radio Orchestra, *I and Thou* for the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, *Immutable Dreams* for the Da Capo Chamber Players, *Division of Heaven and Earth* for pianist Fredrik Ullén, *Supernatural Love* for Duo Concertante, and new works for the Albany Symphony, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, and the Juilliard School (for its annual Irene Diamond Concert). Her music has been performed across the U.S. by such performers as the Grammy-winning ensemble Eighth Blackbird, saxophonist Timothy McAllister, and harpist Bridget Kibbey. Almost all of her recent chamber works are scheduled to be released on upcoming CDs in the next year. Awards include an inaugural Brother Thomas Fellowship from the Boston Foundation, Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Leonard Bernstein Fellowship at the Tanglewood Music Center, Canada Council for the Arts grants, Fulbright Fellowship to the Liszt Academy in Budapest, Jacob Javits Fellowship from the U.S. Department of Education, New York Foundation for the Arts Composition fellowship, Jerome Foundation commission, Presser Foundation Award, and honors from ASCAP in their Morton Gould Young Composer Awards. Agócs was chosen for Meet the Composer's 'Music Alive: New Partnerships' program for the current season. She is composer in residence for the National Youth Orchestra of Canada for 2010, and has been commissioned for their 50th Anniversary coast-to-coast tour.

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