

Austin Ali

HIGH-FLYERS

For Soprano and Piano

Full Score



Ninth Planet
Editions

PERUSAL SCORE

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(2023)

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*Dedicated in loving memory of Charles “Chas” Wetherbee
With special thanks and gratitude to Hilá Plitmann
Poetry from “High Flight” by John Gillespie Magee Jr.*

PROGRAM NOTE:

In January of this year, 2023, we lost Charles “Chas” Wetherbee too early to cancer. A concert violinist, professor, husband, and father of three, Chas left a lasting impact on his loved ones, colleagues, and students, as a musician and as a person. I got to know Chas briefly during our time together in Siena, Italy at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in the Summer of 2022. Chas and his close-knit group, the Carpe Diem String Quartet, spent time with me and nine other composition students premiering new works abroad. I fondly remember enjoying the quartet’s stunning performances and their genuine love for each other as friends, especially in our final dinner together. Even after Chas had discovered his cancer had come back, he refused to put down his violin and stop sharing his music and love with the world.

After Italy, Chas and I kept in touch via email, and he and his quartet extended me the generosity of recording another movement of my string quartet. I had no idea these months would be Chas’s final months of playing his violin. We exchanged emails, making adjustments to the composition, as Chas shared his wisdom with me beyond the summer excursion to Italy. Upon my final submission of comments to Chas, he replied, “all will be as you wish.”

Upon the eve of Chas’s passing, I discovered his GoFundMe page, flooded with thousands of donations and notes about his kindness, compassion, love, musicianship, friendship, and the mark he left as a person. Chas, throughout his whole life, gave so much to the world. Of all the notes, I would like to share this quote from his wife Karina:

“...Chas’s final words were about birds, especially birds of prey and wild fowl, “high-flyers”, as he called them... so, now, I take heart when I see a beautiful creature flying overhead; I give a small wave and a nod of acknowledgement, as I feel the warmth of the love that Chas left. I hope you feel it too. He put it out into the world for all to share.”

Duration ca. 3 min.

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HIGH-FLYERS

John Gillespie Magee Jr.

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Buoyant ♩ = 80

Soprano

Piano

ff *mf*

pedal with harmony

continue 3+2 pattern

3 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

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Faster ♩ = 92

ff

7

Oh! I have

ff p sub.

9

mf

slipped the sur - ly bonds of

8va

(p)

11

Earth And danced the

mf

ff

p

13

mf *f*

skies on laugh - ter sil - vered wings;

mf

15

Slower ♩ = 80
mf

Sun - ward I've climb - ed, and joined the tumb - ling

p sub.

20

f *mf*

mirth of sun - split clouds,

f *mf*

22 *ff* *mf*

and done a hun - dred things

8va *p sub.*

24 *f*

you have not dreamed of

8va *mf sotto voce*

(8)

26 Slower ♩ = 72 *p*

Wheeled and soared and

p

(8)

28

swung, High in the sun - lit si - lence. Hov'ring -

29

- there, I've chased the shou - ting wind a - long, and flung my

30

eager craft_ through foot - less halls of air.

32

15^{ma}

8^{va}

34

p

Up, _____ up _____ the long, _____

p sub. sotto voce

36

f

de - li - ri - ous burn - ing blue I've

f

The musical score is for a piece titled 'High-Flyers'. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 32-33) features a vocal line with a 15-measure rest and piano accompaniment with 8va and 15ma markings. The second system (measures 34-35) includes vocal lyrics 'Up, up the long,' with a piano (p) dynamic and a 'sub. sotto voce' instruction. The third system (measures 36-37) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'de - li - ri - ous burn - ing blue I've' and piano accompaniment with a forte (f) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, chords, and fingerings.

38 **Faster** ♩ = 80

topped the wind - swept heights _____ with ea - sy grace _____

ff *p*

40

Where ne - - ver lark nor e - ver ea - gle _____ flew

42 *p sub.*

And, while with si - lent li - fting mind I've trod The _____

pp

44 *f*

high un - tres - passed san - cti - ty of space,

(8)

f
Ped.

46

15^{ma}

Maestoso ♩ = 72

48 *p*

Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

f

15^{ma}

p *mf* *f*