

High Flight

for tenor and piano

Perusal Score

Duration: 4 min.

Music by Jon F. Howe

Text by John Gillespie Magee Jr.

November 2020

High Flight

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, – and done a hundred things*

*You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air...*

*Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or eagle flew –
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

By John Gillespie Magee Jr. 1941

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Program Notes

High Flight is a popular poem for aviators and astronauts alike, and is also the official poem of the Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force. Portions of the poem frequently appear on the headstones of Arlington National Cemetery. A powerful poem written only a few months before John Gillespie Magee Jr.'s death in December of 1941, *High Flight* is about spirituality and escaping the bounds of Earth and flying higher than ever before thanks to the invention of the airplane. Rather than warning man of their hubris, such as in the story of Daedalus and Icarus, this poem celebrates exploring the unknown and flying to the skies' limits. My musical setting attempts to bring these ideas to life.

This was written for and is dedicated to my friend, Brendon Lewis, who premiered the work on February 21, 2021 at the Hartt School's *Public Works Concert*.

Perusal Score

High Flight

Words by: John Gillespie Magee Jr. (1922-1941)

Music by: Jon F. Howe

Tranquil; ♩ = 72

Tenor

Piano

mp

Ped.

3

Ped. ad lib

5

mp

Oh!

7 *mf* 8

Oh! I have slipped

9 the sur - ly bonds of earth

11 And danced the

13

skies And danced the skies

15

mp

on laugh - ter sil - vered wings

17

18

mf

Sun - ward I've climbed

20

and joined the tum-bling mirth _____ Of sun-split clouds and

8^{va}-----, loco

f

23

done a hun-dred things _____ you have not dreamed of _____

26

accel.

p accel.

f

Slightly faster; ♩ = 88

28

f wheeled _____ and _____ soared _____ and swung _____ *rit.*

rit.

30 *mp dolce* High _____ in the sun-lit si-lence _____ *tempo* *mf* Hov-'ring

mp *mf*

rit.

34 there, I've chased the shou-ting wind _____ *loco*

mf

36

a-long and flung my ea - ger craft through

p

38

foot-less halls of air

8va *15ma* *loco*

accel. *f* *accel.*

42

Triumphant! ♩ = 96

mf

Up, up the

ff *mf*

Red. *

46 *f*

long, de - le - ri - ous bur - ning blue I've

49 *mp*

topped the wind swept the wind swept heights with

52 *mf*

ea - sy grace Where

mp

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'High Flight'. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system starts at measure 46 with a forte (f) dynamic. The vocal line has a triplet of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The second system starts at measure 49 with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The tempo changes to 2/4. The vocal line has a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar pattern. The third system starts at measure 52 with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The tempo changes to 4/4. The vocal line has a short phrase. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar pattern. A large diagonal watermark 'Perusal Score' is overlaid across the middle of the page.

55 *p quasi recit.*

ne - ver lark or e - ver ea - gle flew _____ And,

p

Red.

58 *rall.* *Introspective; ♩ = 66*

while with si - lent, mf - ting mind I've trod The high un - tres - passed

rall.

63 *mp* *rubato*

sanc - ti - ty _____ of _____ space, Put out my

8va *15ma*

mp *colla parte*

Red.

Triumphant! ♩ = 96

67

hand, and touched the face of God.

quasi echo

8va

loco

p

71

f

bell-like

Red.

73

8va

75

8va

8vb

77

ff
loco

79

8va

PerusaScore

81

83

Perusal Score

The image displays a musical score for measures 81 through 83 of the piece 'High Flight'. The score is written for a piano, with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Measure 81 begins with a treble staff containing a whole rest. The bass staff features a series of eighth-note chords, with some notes marked '8va' (octave up) and '8vb' (octave down). A 'loco' marking is present above the bass staff in measure 82. Measure 83 continues the pattern, with a 'loco' marking above the bass staff and a '8va' marking above the treble staff. The score concludes with a double bar line. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Perusal Score' is overlaid across the center of the page.