

HIGH FLIGHT, Farnell
SBMP 1734

Two-Part
(opt SSA)
piano

High Flight

poem by

John G. Magee, Jr.
& Mathilde Blind, alt.

music by

Laura Farnell



Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc.

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About the composer

Laura Farnell (b. 1975) has a passion for making music with singers, working with educators, and creating accessible and artistic choral compositions. After graduating summa cum laude from Baylor University (Waco, TX) with her BME in Choral Music (with a piano emphasis), Laura taught elementary music for two years in Mansfield ISD, followed by eight years of JH choir in Arlington ISD. She was honored by her schools with Teacher of the Year awards in 2000 and 2003, and she received an Excellence in Education Award in 2004 as the Arlington ISD's outstanding junior high teacher of the year.

Laura presently lives in Arlington, Texas, and serves as an invited music conference presenter, as well as choral clinician for district, region, and state honor choirs across the country. As a composer, she especially enjoys writing and arranging music for developing choirs and is represented by several music publishing companies. She has more than one hundred choral compositions in publication, including many commissioned pieces and a co-authored beginning sight-singing method book. She and her husband, Russell, and their two sons, attend First Presbyterian Church of Arlington where Russell serves as Minister of Music and Laura directs the children's and youth choirs.

Composer Notes

Most of the text for this piece is based on the poem "High Flight" written by an American World War 2 pilot, John Magee. During his training, he wrote a letter to his parents, which included this poem that he wrote in his mind while he was flying his plane. A few months later, he was tragically killed in a plane collision during a training exercise at age 29.

The poem became well-known again after the U.S. space shuttle, Challenger, exploded just 73 seconds into its flight on January 28, 1986, killing its 7 crew members. In President Ronald Reagan's address consoling the nation, he quoted the first and last lines of the poem.

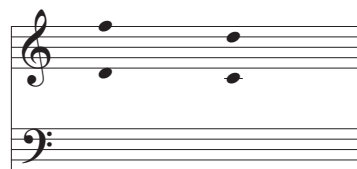
"The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, not the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and slipped the surly bonds of earth to 'touch the face of God.'"

The text for the slower, middle section of the piece is taken from lines of Mathilde Blind's poem, "The Ascent of Man - Prelude: Wings". This poem describes how one's soul can rise above struggle and pain through beauty, nature, and music, ascending as if in flight. In one sense, this musical composition depicts a literal flight, as described by Magee. However, in another sense the words and music of this piece capture the idea of a figurative flight in which the soul of the singer soars above the struggle and pain of life through music.

Poem

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 nor ever 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.

Ranges



Part 1 Part 2



recording and rehearsal tracks available at sbmp.com

Commissioned by the Heartland Youth Choir, Sandy Miller, Artistic Director
for the 2023 "Meet the Composer" Festival, Des Moines, Iowa

High Flight

John G. Magee, Jr.
Mathilde Blind, alt.

Laura Farnell

p
pedal harmonically

4 *mp*

7 *cresc.* *rit.* *a tempo* *mf*

9 *mf*
Fly, fly, fly, Fly, fly, fly!

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1734-3

21

chased the wind And danced the sky,

chased the wind And danced the sky,

24

mp

On silver wings to the

I have danced the sky, laugh-ter sil-vered

27

sun I've climbed. And with the clouds in

sun I've climbed. And with the clouds in

mf

30

tum - bl - ing mirth, I have slipped the sur - ly bonds of earth.

tum - bl - ing mirth, I have slipped the sur - ly bonds of earth.

tum - bl - ing mirth, I have slipped the sur - ly bonds of earth.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

33

High - er and high - er am I. And with these wings I

High - er and high - er am I. And with these wings I

High - er and high - er am I. And with these wings I

poco rit.

poco rit.

poco rit.

36

fly! Up, up the long and burn - ing

fly! Up, up the long and burn - ing

mf

mf

a tempo

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*Merriment or gladness

**"Surlly" means "unfriendly" or "threatening." The phrase "slipped the surly bonds of earth" in this case means to become free from earth's gravity, as well as the weight of earth's burdens.

40 *mf*

blue, _____ Where nev - er

blue, _____ the blue, _____ Where nev - er

43

lark nor ea - gle ev - er flew,

lark nor ea - gle _____ er flew,

46 *dim.* *p* *rit.*

Hov - er - ing in the si - lence,

dim. *p*

Hov - er - ing in the sun - lit Hov - er - ing in the si - lence.

dim. *p* *rit.*

48 *pp* $\text{♩} = 88-92$ *p*

si - lence. As -

gva $\text{♩} = 88-92$ *pp* *p*

51 *p*

cend, oh my soul, with the wings of the lark as -

As - cend, oh my soul, with the wings of the lark as -

54 *p* *cresc.*

cend. As - cend, oh my soul, on the

cend. As - cend, oh my soul, on the

p *cresc.* *cresc.*

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Musical score for piano, measures 65-68. The piece is in G major and 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Musical score for piano and voice, measures 69-71. The piano part continues with accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Fly, fly, fly! I have". The word "PREVIEW" is written diagonally across the page.

Musical score for piano and voice, measures 72-74. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Chased the wind! And danced the sky,". The word "PREVIEW" is written diagonally across the page.

75 I have danced the sky. Sil - vered wings,
On sil - vered wings to the

mf

I have danced the sky, laugh - ter sil - vered

78 to the sun I've climbed. in
sun I've climbed. And with the clouds in

f

sun I've climbed. And with the clouds in

81 tum - bl - ing mirth, I have slipped the sur - ly bonds of earth.

tum - bl - ing mirth, I have slipped the sur - ly bonds of earth.



84 *poco rit.*

High - er and high - er am I. _____ And with these wings I
High - er and high - er am I. _____ And with these wings I

poco rit.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 84, 85, and 86. It features a vocal line with two staves and a piano accompaniment with two staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The vocal melody consists of eighth notes with triplet markings. The piano accompaniment features chords with triplet markings. The tempo marking 'poco rit.' is placed above the first staff. The lyrics are 'High - er and high - er am I. _____ And with these wings I'.

87 ♩ = 108 *cresc.*

fly! fly! And with these
fly! fly! And with these

cresc.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 87, 88, and 89. It features a vocal line with two staves and a piano accompaniment with two staves. The key signature has one flat. The tempo marking '♩ = 108' is placed above the first staff. The tempo marking 'cresc.' is placed above the first staff and below the piano accompaniment. The vocal melody consists of quarter notes. The piano accompaniment features chords with triplet markings. The lyrics are 'fly! fly! And with these'.

90 *poco rit.* fly!

wings I rise and I rise and fly! _____
wings I rise and I rise and fly! _____

poco rit.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 90, 91, and 92. It features a vocal line with two staves and a piano accompaniment with two staves. The key signature has one flat. The tempo marking 'poco rit.' is placed above the first staff. The tempo marking 'poco rit.' is also placed below the piano accompaniment. The vocal melody consists of quarter notes. The piano accompaniment features chords with triplet markings. The lyrics are 'wings I rise and I rise and fly! _____'.