

ICARUS

for four voices and tape (1993)

Katharine Norman

Preview File Only

*commissioned by the Sonic Arts Network
with funds provided by The Arts Council of Great Britain*

Programme note

In 1992 I was lucky enough to get on a plane and fly across America. The experience of watching an entire country unfold beneath a sunlit sky filled me with exhilaration and joy. It also led me to reflect on how our dreams of flight - imagined, spiritual or metaphorical - can offer a temporary means of escape from more earth-bound realities.

In this piece the myth of Icarus is interwoven with brief extracts from Leonardo's astounding writings on flight and the sun, some of which are given below. Both could be said to represent a yearning for distant possibilities, spiritual or otherwise.

... You will study the anatomy of the wings of a bird together with the muscles of the breast which are the movers of these wings. And you do the same for man in order to show the possibility that there is in man to sustain himself amid the air by the flapping of wings...

... Why the sinews beneath the bird's wings are more powerful than those above. It is done for the movement.in order that the process of going up may be easy, and that of going down difficult and meeting with resistance; and it is especially adapted for going forward drawing itself back in the manner of a file ...

... That bird will rise on high which by means of a circular movement in the shape of a screw makes its reflex movement against the coming of the wind and against the flight of this wind, turning always upon its right or left side. ... When the bird passes from a slow to a swift current of the wind it lets itself be carried by the wind until it has devised a new assistance for itself the bird has always time to redirect its course and in safety adjust its flight which will always proceed entirely free

The sun does not move.

The sun has substance, shape, motion, radiance, heat ...

... for in the whole world I do not see a body of greater magnitude and power than this all vital force descends from it since the heat that is in living creatures comes from the soul and there is no other heat or light in the universe.

ICARUS

for four voices and tape (1993)

soprano:		mezzo soprano:	
tenor:		baritone:	

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS

TAPE: stereo playback from Dat. Diffusion weighted towards front speakers Slight high eq if the room is very reverberant.

AMPLIFICATION: the singers should have microphones. Slight amplification throughout to blend with tape. Raise levels slightly from [0" - 16"] and [c. 7'28" - 9'36"] to accentuate the spoken texts.

LIGHTING:

[0" - 24"] total blackout

[24" - 1'20"] raise stage lights gradually

[9'20" - 9'36"] raise stage lights gradually to a brighter level, and maintain this level until 14'16"

[14'16" - 15'04"] lower stage lights gradually to previous level, and maintain this level.

[15'44" (sung text 'into the sea') - 16'00"] lower lights gradually to complete blackout, maintain blackout until the end of the piece.

Performance instructions for the singers:





The score is divided into arbitrary 'bars' of 8 seconds duration, as an aid to ensemble. The piece does not require precise co-ordination between the singers and the tape. The singers' individual interpretation of rhythms takes priority.

CUES: Arrows pointing to the tape, or another singer's part, provide cues. You should enter shortly after hearing the cue, ad lib.

In general the rhythmic durations are proportional and are to be very freely interpreted, within the time divisions in the score. The singers usually function independently of one another. However, there are a few passages in which strict notated rhythm and/or an ensemble is intended. These points are indicated by metronome markings, and by bracketing the relevant voice(s) (e.g. mezzo soprano at 7'52", soprano and mezzo c. 10'22", lower three voices c. 11'48").

Notation:

Speech enclosed in a box (e.g. the opening of the piece) is to be spoken, with a natural speaking rhythm.

- a long, unmeasured note. Hold until the next note or a break (') is indicated.
- sh  'sh' as in 'shop', unvoiced. Gradual gliss as indicated.
- ss  's' as in 'sit', unvoiced. Gradual gliss as indicated.
-  repeat the given pitch ad lib within the given/relative duration, with accelerando, or rit (e.g. baritone c. 50").
-  gradual rit, or accel., within the pattern (e.g. tenor 1'52").

PERFORMANCE NOTE 1: (page 14)

From c. 11' 48" - c. 13'00" (pages 14 - 17). At the bottom of page 14, the lower voices take their tempo from the tenor entry, and continue at the given tempo, regardless of the tape. The soprano, however, follows the tape and her entry on page 15 is independent of the other voices (who may have already finished their entry). At the bottom of page 16 the soprano sets the tempo, and the other voices enter in tempo as before. The soprano entry on page 17 (c. 13'00") is independent of the other voices.

PERFORMANCE NOTE 2: (page 19)

'nearer to the sun' (all voices). Each voice is independent. Do not attempt to co-ordinate with each other or the tape; the effect should be heterophonic. Mezzo soprano sets the general pulse. All voices should observe the short pauses (') in their parts and the overall crescendo to forte. Hold final note (bottom page 19 'sun') until the tape cue occurs.

ICARUS

Katharine Norman

0" 8" 16" 24"

TAPE

SOP.

MEZZO SOP.

TENOR

BAR.

pp sh mp ppp

SPEAK: **Escaping the labyrinth**

SPEAK: **longing, for home**

louder **cut off**

sustained tone, vocal

SPEAK: **by a long stretch of sea**

mf sh

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal staves for Soprano, Mezzo Soprano, and Tenor, along with a Tape track. The Tape track shows a wavy line representing sound with time markers at 0", 8", 16", and 24". The Soprano staff has dynamics pp, sh, mp, and ppp, with a box containing the instruction 'SPEAK: by a long stretch of sea'. The Mezzo Soprano staff has a box with 'SPEAK: longing, for home' and dynamics mf and sh. The Tenor staff has dynamics (mf) and SPEAK: with a box containing 'Escaping the labyrinth', and later 'louder' and a box with 'cut off'. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is oriented vertically across the center of the staves.

32" 40" 48"

pp sh

sh

sh

stacc.

sotto voce, legato

Lo ng-ing, lo ng-ing, lo ng-ing

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment staff. It features a wavy line at the top with time markers at 32", 40", and 48". The piano part begins with dynamics pp and sh. There are several 'sh' markings above the staff. A 'stacc.' marking is present above a series of notes. The instruction 'sotto voce, legato' is written below the staff. The lyrics 'Lo ng-ing, lo ng-ing, lo ng-ing' are written below the piano part. A 'p' dynamic marking is at the end of the staff.

Handwritten musical score for the first system. The vocal line includes lyrics: "shee", "sh", "sh", and "mf". Above the staff, there are handwritten notes: "565h", "mpah (4=) '04" (6=)", and "mp' ooh (4=) '12" with wavy lines indicating sound effects. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line with lyrics: "Lo", "nging, lo", "nging, lo", and "nging". Dynamics include *mp* and *mf*.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The vocal line includes lyrics: "Lo", "nging", "lo", "nging, lo", "nging", and "lo". Above the staff, there are handwritten notes: "(4=) pp (6=) '20", "sh", "mf '28", and "mf '36". The piano accompaniment includes the instruction "sotto voce legato pp" and "stacc.". Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, and *stacc.*.

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The vocal line includes lyrics: "ooh", "ooh", "sh", and "ff". Above the staff, there are handwritten notes: "f", "(heads)", "ff", "ff", and "2'00". The piano accompaniment includes the instruction "poco marc." and "sub mp". Dynamics include *f*, *ff*, *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, and *sub mp*.

2'08" (tr) 2'16" mp (tr) 2'24" (pipe's)

ff shu

(marc.) P f

Lo ngi

lo nging, lo nging, lo nging, lo nging

f nging | Lo nging, lo nging, lo

nging, lo nging, lo nging, lo

2'32" mp 2'40" 2'48" shu

mf mp mp mf f

ng lo nging, lo nging Lo

mf nging lo nging

mp cresc. f

nging lo nging, longing, lo

dim.....

nging

pp 2'56" 3'04" 3'12"

mf ('buzz') f mp

sfp f P pp

nging, lo ng-ing Lo

Lo ng-ing Icarus-ss

ng-ing lo nging lo-ning, lo ng-i-ng

3'20 3'28

mf *f* *mf*

ng-i ng

pp *mp* *pp* *mf*

Lo ng-ing

mp *poco marc.*

(*ad lib.*) Ic-ar-us(s)

sung, (vocal) *mp* *mf* *sf* (whisper) *mf*

ah? niente

ng-i ng

in the same

ad lib. (ad lib.) *mf*

Daedalus took feathers and arranged them in rows, bound and secured them with wax

3'36" 3'44"

sf THESE WINGS 3'52" *sf* (beads) *sf* WING *sf* (beads) 4'00"

poco accel. *sub più mosso* *mf*

way that pan-pipes are made his son, Ica-rus(s)

molto meno mosso *mf*

They looked like real wings (s)

BIRDS' WINGS (beads) TH

WING 4'08" THESE WINGS TH 4'16"

molto rit... *dim* *mp*

played be-side hi-m

ad lib *mp*

Lo- n-g-ing

ad lib *mp*

Lo- n-g-ing

ad lib: slow, sustained *mp*

Lo- n-gi- ng

BIRDS' WINGS (beads) 4'24" WING 4'32"

(sustained)

tutti: ad lib: slow, sustained *mf*

to put on wings

ri

(with baritone 'sus')

se

slow, sustained *mf*

in the

mf

sus-pen-ded

4'40" ('birds') *mf* 4'48"

(senza vib.)

air (ë)

pp *mp* *f* *p*

air (ë)

pp *mp* *sf* *pp*

(mezzo)

pp *mf* *f* *mf* *pp*

air

air

air

air (ë)

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It consists of five staves. The top staff contains vocal lines with lyrics: "din...". A time marker "4'56''" is placed above the staff. A bracketed note "(tuned speech, blurred)" points to a section of the music. Below it, another bracketed note says "[You will study the anatomy of the wings of a bird, together]". The bottom staff has lyrics: "ng-i — ng air" and "ē — ē air". Dynamic markings include *pp*, *mp* (*senza vib.*), *mf*, and *pp*. A *Poco more.* marking is also present.

Handwritten musical score for the second system, consisting of five staves. The top staff has lyrics: "with the muscles of the breast which are the movers... wings]" and "[And you do the same for Man... in order to show]". Time markers "5'12''" and "5'20''" are placed above the staff. A blue watermark "Preview File Only" is oriented diagonally across the middle of the system.

Handwritten musical score for the third system, consisting of five staves. The top staff has lyrics: "the possibility ... in Man, to sustain himself amid the air by the flapping of wings]" and "[The bird has always time]". Time markers "5'28''" and "5'36''" are placed above the staff.

5'44" mf sh 5'52"

redirect its course and in safety adjust its flight ... proceed entirely free] [A bird supporting itself upon

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line and four piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line begins with a wavy line indicating a long note, followed by the lyrics: "redirect its course and in safety adjust its flight ... proceed entirely free] [A bird supporting itself upon". The time signature is 5/4, and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The system is marked with a double bar line at 5'44" and another at 5'52". Dynamics include *mf* and *sh* (sostenuto).

6'00" sh sh 6'08"

the air against ... of the wind, has a power... desires to descend... ... another similar power... ... strikes it

Preview File Only

The second system of the musical score continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "the air against ... of the wind, has a power... desires to descend... ... another similar power... ... strikes it". The system is marked with a double bar line at 6'00" and another at 6'08". Dynamics include *sh* (sostenuto).

6'16" 6'24"

Which ... raise it up] [And if these powers are equal, so that one cannot conquer the other... The bird will not be able either to raise

N.B. Tutti: long notes are senza vibrato

a bird (ir)

tape: ('other') mp bird

tape: ('equal') mp bird

The third system of the musical score continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Which ... raise it up] [And if these powers are equal, so that one cannot conquer the other... The bird will not be able either to raise". The system is marked with a double bar line at 6'16" and another at 6'24". Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano), *sfz* (sforzando), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). A note is marked "a bird (ir)". There are also annotations for "tape: ('other') mp bird" and "tape: ('equal') mp bird". A note in the piano part is marked "N.B. Tutti: long notes are senza vibrato".

or lower itself, and consequently will remain steady in its position in the air] [When the bird passes... a swift

6'32" 6'40"

marc. mf in the air

tape: ('itself') mf sfp a bird

tape: ('position') mp a bird

mp a

molto dim. (passes)

bird

current of the wind, it lets itself be carried by the wind] f (#) (#)

6'48" 6'56"

mf air tape ('carried') a bird

f bir [bird] (ir) (bar.) a bir

pp tape ('wind') bir

pp air (air) a bird

air

[That bird will rise on high which by... circular movement... screw makes its reflex movement against the flight of this wind

7'04" 7'12"

mp pp d (ir) d bir d

sfp subp (tenor) a bir

tape ('against') mp a bir (bird)

mf (D4) sfp ho

mp (o) tape ('bh')

a bi rd a bir d

turning always side (side) [whispered speech] 7'20" 7'28"

molto cantab. *mf* *side* *poco (accel...)* *f* *molto dim.* *mp*

d lets it-self be car-ried by the wi (wind) (i)

ir-ir-ir-ird

ngi- ng

↑ sop ('wind') *mp* *mp*

lets it-self be car-ried

sub *f* 7'36" 7'44"

(whispers) *mf* ICARUS!

pp *pp*

mp fly at a moderate height

(height) (height)

pp You must fly at a moderate height

mf You must fly at a moderate height

mf If you fly too low, the sea will weigh

by the wind

Ic-ar-us 7'52" 8'00"

bo to bo (bo) (bo) *pp* (whispers) *mp*

er-us

mp Fly neither too high, nor too low

(*duro*) *cantab.* *mp* *molto legato*

mf If you fly too high, the sun will melt the wax

you must fly at a moderate height

your feathers down

8'08" (K) >>>>> (II) 8'16"

(whispers) *mf* *cresc.*

sottovoce p You must study

5:4 *mf* *meno mosso* *poco f*

too low — and the sea will weigh your feathers down, too high — and the sun

mp

8'24" (II) 8'32"

(whispers) **ICARUS!** *mp* the process of

the anatomy of the wings of a bird, together with the muscles of the breast, which are the movers of these wings

poco più mosso *f* *sottovoce* *meno mosso* *mp* *niente*

will melt the wax Fly neither too high — nor too low —

mp the possibility that there is in Man, to sustain himself amid the air by the flapping of wings

why the sinews beneath the bird's wings are more powerful than those above; it is done for the movement

8'40" (II) 8'48" **ICARUS!**

(whisper) *mf* *mf* *mf*

going up may be easy, and that of going down difficult and meeting with resistance

A bird is an instrument working according

mf The bird has always time to redirect its course and in safety adjust its flight which will always proceed entirely free

mf when the bird

8'56" *mp* Ker - Us *f* *sf* 9'04"

to mathematical law

mp A bird supporting itself upon the air against the movement of the wind has a power within itself that desires to descend

f desires to rise by beating its wings it raises its shoulders and comes to condense the air

9'12" *mf* Ic - AR - US *mf* 9'20"

and there is another similar power in the wind that strikes it which desires to raise it up

mp Slow *cresc.* You must study the anatomy of the wings of a bird, together with the muscles of the breast which are the movers of these wings

mf *mp* FOLLOW BARITONE* (tutti:) And you do the same for Man in order to show

9'28" *sf* *crescendo* *ff* [birds'] *m m m m m* 9'36"

cresc. *f* the possibility that there is in Man, to sustain himself amid the air by the flapping of wings

* all voices in rhythmic unison, natural speaking rhythm