

AERIAL DYNAMICS
(For Soprano, Clarinet and Piano)

**First performed on 24th May 1996 in Regent's Hall, London
by Victoria Bell (Sop), Guy Cowley (Cl), Phillip Headlam and Richard Pearce (Pno)**

Aerial Dynamics was composed between January and May 1996 and is a setting of four poems for soprano, clarinet and piano by Dickinson, Thoreau, Tennyson and Hopkins. All four works are observations of nature in animal or elemental form and are arranged in a sequence of increasing intensity beginning with Dickinson's quirky description of a furtive garden bird and culminating in Hopkins' ecstatic hymn in praise of a hovering bird of prey.

As the work progresses the relationship between voice and instruments changes. The Dickinson and Thoreau use the clarinet and piano respectively to support the vocal line and highlight certain aspects of the poems. The Tennyson is the only song to be preceded by a scene-setting introduction whilst in the Hopkins, the piano and clarinet present and develop a number of distinct ideas against which the vocal line pursues a freely rhapsodic course. In the final song the musical argument in the piano and clarinet boils over into a clarinet cadenza which winds down to usher in the subdued final stanza. In contrast to this developed structure the first two songs in particular stand as small portraits in which the growth of the music is governed more by an intuitive response to the meaning of the words than by its own internal mechanisms.

This work is dedicated to Victoria Bell and I would also like to thank Munroe Engel for introducing me to Hopkins.

DURATION: 11 minutes

A BIRD CAME DOWN THE WALK
(Emily Dickinson)

A Bird came down the Walk-
He did not know I saw-
He bit an Angeworm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass-
And then he hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass-

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all around-
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought-
He stirred his Velvet Head

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home-

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam-
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon
Leap, plashless as they swim.

OVER THE DARK WORLD FLIES THE WIND
(Alfred Lord Tennyson)

Over the dark world flies the wind
And clatters in the sapless trees,
From cloud to cloud thro' darkness blind
Quick stars scud o'er the sounding seas:
I look: the showery skirts unbind:
Mars by the lonely Pleiades
Burns overhead: with brows decl'ined
I muse - I wander from my peace,
And still divide the rapid mind
This way and that in search of ease.

HAZE
(Henry David Thoreau)

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze.
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,
Visible Heat, air-water and dry sea,
Last conquest of the eye:
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth.
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,
Breakers of air, billows of heat,
Fine summer sprays on inland seas;
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,
From heath or stubble rising without
song
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

THE WINDHOVER
(Gerard Manley Hopkins)

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling-wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind.. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

Preview File Only

To Vicky with all my love.

Aerial Dynamics

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10, St Andrew Place, London, W.1

Four songs for soprano, clarinet and piano

I: A Bird Came Down the Walk

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Tom Armstrong

Allegro non troppo, tempo giusto (♩=c.96)

Clarin. in B \flat (sounds major second lower) *mf marcato*

Voice *mp animato*

A Bird A Bird came A Bird came down

Clarin. in B \flat *f*

Voice *mf*

A Bird came down the Walk - He did not know

Pleggiere

Clarin. in B \flat *f con fuoco*

Voice *f con fuoco*

He did not know I saw - He bit an Angle in holes ate the fellow, raw, worm And

espress. *f smorz.*

Clarin. in B \flat *mp dolce*

Voice *mp dolce*

And then he drank a Dew From a convenient Grass - And

animando *Tempo I* (♩=c.96)

piu fe animato

13. *mp scherzando* *mf* *incalzando* *cresc.* *ff*

Cl. in B \flat *mf* *ff*

Voice *schernzondo* *cresc.* *mf* *f*

then hopped side-wise to the Wall To let a Bee-He pass -

16. *mp* *affretando* *allargando* *cresc.* *f* *espress.*

Cl. in B \flat *mp* *f*

Voice *mp* *affretando* *f*

He glanced with rapideyes. That hurried all a-round - They looked like frightened I thought -
like Bees

19. *f* *poggiato* *affret.* *mp* *rf*

Cl. in B \flat *f* *mp* *rf*

Voice *poggiato* *affret.* *rf*

He stirred his Velvet Head Like in danger, Cautious I offered him
one

22. *incalzando* *smorz.* *Largo teneramente* ($\text{♩} = c. 58$) *espress.*

Cl. in B \flat *mf* *f* *mp* *mp espress.*

Voice *mp* *mp espress.*

a Crumb And he un-rolled - his feathers And

25. *mf poco maestoso* *mp* *affretando* *mf* *f* *plaggiero*

Cl. in B \flat *mf poco maestoso* *mp* *affretando* *mf* *f* *plaggiero*

Voice *mf poco maestoso* *mp* *affretando* *mf* *f* *plaggiero*

rowed him softer home - Than Oars divide the Ocean, Too silver for a seam - Or

28.

Cl. in B \flat

colmo

Voice

hier-flies, off Banks of Noon Leap, plash-less, plash-less, as they swim.

pp

pp

31.

Cl. in B \flat

smorz. - - - - - PPP

Voice

Preview File Only

II: Haze

Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)

Adagio misterioso (♩ = c. 60)

Voice

Hoof of the sun, e-the-re-al gauze, Ho-ven of

Pno.

Voice

Na-ture's ri-chest stuffs, Vi-si-ble heat, air - wa-ter and dry sea,

Pno.

mf espress. *mp*

mf *mp* *cresc.*

ped ad lib.

Voice

8. Last con-quest of the eye; poco a poco agitato

Pno.

f *submf* *cresc.*

12. *ff precip.*

Piu mosso (♩ = c. 72) *accel*

15. *poco mf* *mp leggiero*

Tail of the day displayed, sun-dust,

mp poco pesante *senza ped.*

20. *cresc. animato* *f* *A tempo* (♩ = c. 72)

Ae-ri-al surf upon the shores of earth.

cresc. *agitato* *ff* *subpp*

24. *acc.* *allargando*

p *cresc.* *marc.* *f*

E-the-re-al es-tua-ry, frith of light, Brea-ers air, bi llous of heat

poco rf *f marc. tiss.*

Tempo I (♩ = c. 60)

28.

Voice

P *ff* (h.k.)

Fine su- mmer spray on in- land seas;

Pno.

subpp *delicato*

Poco maestoso

32. smorzando.

Voice.

mf *mp* *poco rubato*

Bird of the sun trans- pa- rent- winged let of noon,

Pno.

smorz *mf* *mp* *poco rubato (colla parte)*

36.

mp sempre espress.

pochiss.

soft- pi- nioned, From heath or stu- bble ri- sing with- out song,

leggiero

gva

p *basso sempre marcato*

cresc.

senza ped.

41. *riten.* *f molto espress.* *mp*

Voice

Es-ta-blish thy se-re-ni-ty o'er the fields.

(8va) loco

Pno.

f *mp* *pp*

preview file only

III: 'Over the dark world flies the wind'

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Allegro molto (♩ = c. 120)

Pno.

P menacing

Cl. in B♭

④

fltr.
mp poco marcato

Pno.

Cl. in B♭

⑦

Pno.

19 *ff* *f* *ff*

Cl in B \flat

ff *passionata*

Voice

- ver the dark world flies the wind And cla-tters in the sop-

Pno.

ff *f* *cresc.* *b \flat* *ff* *f*

22 *f* *ff* *f*

Cl in B \flat

Voice

less trees, From cloud to cloud thro' dark-ness blind

Pno.

cresc. *f* *cresc.*

25 *ff* *mp*

Cl in B \flat

Voice

Quick stars scud o'er the sound-ing seas

Pno.

ff *mp* *mf*

espress.

riten... meno mosso

40 *ff* *mf tranquillo*

Cl. in B^b

Voice *ff* *mf tranquillo s*

I look: the shoe-ry skirts un-bind:

(gva) - - - - -

Pno. *ff* *pp delicato* *gva*

43 *poco* *sub mp con tenerezza* *poco*

Cl. in B^b

Voice *mp con tenerezza*

Mars by the lone-ly Plei-a-

(gva) - - - - -

Pno. *ppronore*

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rall - - - - -

46

poco

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

des burns o-ver-head: with

mp solenne

poco

Handwritten musical score for measures 46-48. The system includes staves for Clarinet in B-flat, Voice, and Piano. The voice part has lyrics: "des burns o-ver-head: with". The piano part features complex triplets and arpeggiated figures. A "poco" tempo marking is present above the first staff.

49

ancona meno mosso (♩=c.100)

subito tempo (♩=120)

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

brows de-clined muse - I

loco

pp menacing

pp menacing

p poco agitato

Handwritten musical score for measures 49-51. The system includes staves for Clarinet in B-flat, Voice, and Piano. The voice part has lyrics: "brows de-clined muse - I". The piano part has a dynamic marking of "mp" and "pp menacing". The clarinet part has a dynamic marking of "pp menacing". A "subito tempo" marking is present above the second staff.

52 *Cresc.*

Cl. in B \flat

Voice
wan-der from my peace,

Pno.

56 *(mf)* *(f)*

Cl. in B \flat

Voice
And

Pno.

59 *ff* *f* *ff* *f*

Cl. in B \flat

Voice
appassionato
still di-vide the ra-pid mind
This way and that in search-

Pno.

62 *mp* *decresc.* *pp*

tr

Cln B^b

mp *P* *pp*

Voice

of ease.

P *pp*

Pno.

To Brenda and Monnoe.
IV: The Windhover.

Grenard Montley Hopkins (1844 - 1889)
Vigorous, tempo giusto (♩ = c. 80)

Cl. in B♭

Voice

Pno.

f marc. fp cresc. f₃

f₃

poco

f

I caught

this mor -

f

f₃

mf

6

3

Cl. in B♭

Voice

Pno.

f simile

④

-ning mor-nings mi-nion,

King-dom of day-light's dau-phin,

da-pple -

f

mf

3

3

3

8

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno

down-drawn Fal-con, in his ni-ding of the ro-lling-e-vel

mf *f* *fp* *f*

f *f3*

12

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

un-der-neath him stea-dy air, and stri-ding High there, how he

sub p *cresc.* *marc.* *f*

p *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *cresc.* *f* *mf*

16

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

rung u-pon the rein of a wim-pling wing In his ec-sta-sy! then off,

mf cresc. *cresc.* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

mf *f* *ff marcato*

20

Cl. in B^b

Voice

off forth on swing,

Pno.

24

Cl. in B^b

Voice

Pno.

28 mp contabile

Cl. in B^b

Voice

As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl

mp leggiero

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

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32

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

and gli ding Re - buffed the big

f marcato

36

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

wind.

cresc. marc. ff

cresc. ff

40 Liberamente, quasi recitativo.

Cl. in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

My heart in hi - ding Sti rred for a bird, - the a -

f3 f p espress

Sub tempo (♩ = 80)

p espress
colla parte

f marc. fp cresc.

43

Clu B^b

Voice

-chieve of,
the mas — te-ry of the thing!

ff

47

Clu B^b

Pno.

simile

51

Clu B^b

Pno.

55

Clu B^b

Pno.

68 (mf)

Cl in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

bi - llion Times told love - lier, more dor - ge - nous,

(f)

(f)

(f)

(f)

71

Cl in B \flat

Voice

Pno.

my che - va - lier!

marcato

ff

ff

ff

senza ped

75

Cl in B \flat

Pno.

f marc.

ff

f marc.

ff

7A *come sopra*

Cl in B \flat

Pno.

83

Cl in B \flat

Pno.

* *Cadenza* : sempre marcato

97 *f ffp* *ff brillante*

Cl in B \flat

Pno.

Cl in B \flat *mf* *ff* *ffp* *ff brillante*

* Accidentals apply within beats

riten.
5 lunga
mf \Rightarrow p

Meno mosso, espress e legato ($\text{♩} = c.60$)

riten.
p mp

riten.
mf \Rightarrow p mp cantabile pp

molto rit.
pp calmo

Lento molto sostenuto ($\text{♩} = c.44$)

Cl in B \flat P cantabile espressivo, legato
Voice No won - der of it: sheer plod makes plough down
Pno pp

93

Cl in B \flat

mp

p

5

5

5

5

Voice

mp

p

3

3

3

6

3

6

3

6

3

6

3

6

Pno

mp

poco

p

si-lion Shine, and blue-bleak em-ber's,

97

Cl in B \flat

mp

smorzando

pp

p

5

5

5

Voice

mp

smorzando

pp

p

5

6

3

3

3

6

3

3

6

Pno

mp

smorzando...pp

p

Ped ad lib.

ah my dear, Fall, gall them-selves,

101

Cl in B \flat

mp

smorzando al niente

5

5

5

Voice

mp

smorz. al niente

5

5

5

5

Pno

mp

p

mp

p

l.v.

and gash gold-ver-mi-lion.