

Dear Daedalus

Recitative for Soprano and Double Bass

By Blake Cordell

dur. 5:50

2025

Program Notes

In the fateful flight from the labyrinth on Crete, not only did Icarus perish, but Daedalus' past and future were erased from his narrative. The lesson learned from his flight with Icarus overshadows his legacy as an inventory, architect, and artist. One forgotten story in particular, that of his tutorship of his nephew, paints a cruel irony when paired with his more famous tale. Fearful that his prodigal nephew would surpass his own genius, he flung him from a window only for the gods to turn his nephew into a bird – a bird that would return years later to torment him at his son's death.

Composer Notes

This piece is a dialogue between the character of Daedalus, personified by the double bassist, and his grief, given voice in various forms by the vocalist. The indicated rhythms and note durations communicate proportional note value, not alignment of parts. The two lines should be fairly independent of one another, aligning at minimum where indicated by vertical boxes. Dashed barlines and measure numbers are included only to facilitate rehearsal.

Performance Notes

Accidentals do not carry through measures and apply only to the note they are attached to.

Glissandi are used throughout to indicate even pitch bends.

Ornate X noteheads indicate sprechgesang and suggest rhythm and contour, not exact pitch.

Quotation marks around dynamics indicate relative dynamics, i.e., a “forte” whisper that is as loud as possible.

In the vocal part: regular X noteheads indicate unpitched utterances such as “Sh,” etc.

Diamond noteheads indicate whistling and suggest rhythm and contour, not exact pitch.

Wavy glissandi indicate exaggerated warbling pitch slides.

This piece was premiered by LIGAMENT
at the University of Iowa on May 3rd, 2025

Text

Dear Daedalus,
You left your wings on a marble plinth.
Does Apollon hear your call?
Enchanted strings, a dancing labyrinth,
All but a prelude to your grief.

Feathers became snowflakes,
Strings napped like spider webs,
Melted was flowed like the waves.
“Don’t fly too high, the sun will melt your wings.
Don’t fly too low, you’ll be pulled into the sea.”

Dear Daedalus,
I am the bird that mocks you
In your solemn grief.
I am the past that haunts you.
I am the salty shoreline, rocky reef.
I am the sun, the light of day,
Warm once shunned to whom you pray.
Sun of seasons, son of reason,
Understand today:

Statues came to life at your hands.
The air was yours to command with sails and masts,
A world so vast,
None could match your genius.
Save I, the forgotten nephew.
I saw a world built by us.

Dear Daedalus,
Like the sea, your jealousy, carried me away.
Given flight through death.
How fitting, then,
it was flight that took your son’s breath away.

Why do we blame the boy for flying so close to the sun?

This page
left blank

Full score

Dear Daedalus
Recitative for soprano and double bass

Blake Cordell

Freely between $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60-100$

Whisper
"f"
2

Like wind and waves
3 mf

Sprechgesang
p 3

mf
4

mp 3

Soprano

Still stuck in a maze.

Double Bass

IV tuned to C

mp

Whisper:
"Don't fly too high, the sun will melt your wings."
"f"

mf



5 f ————— f mp < f ————— mf

6

7

3

S.

Sh_____ Dear, dear, dear, sh_____ Dae - da - lus.

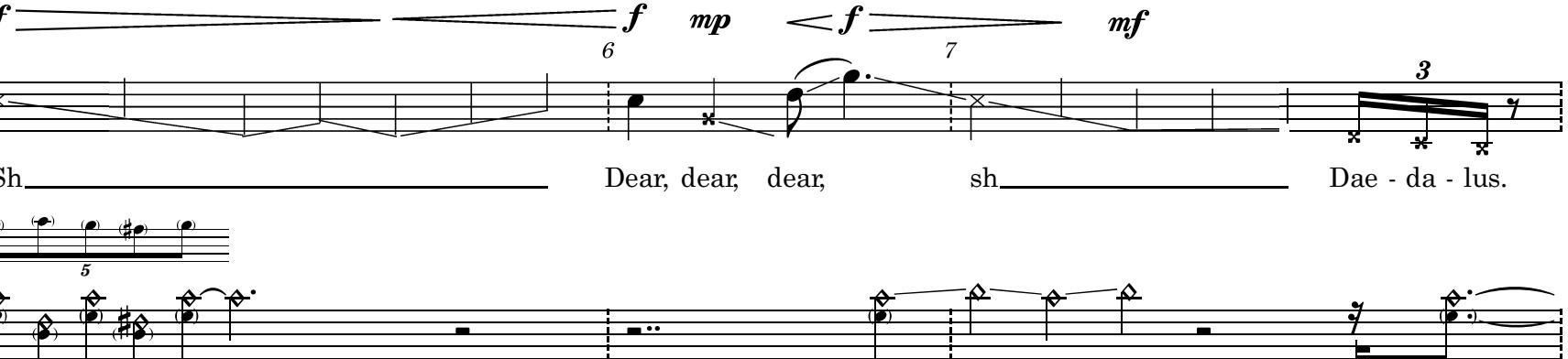
D. B.

5

5

Spoken:
Don't fly too high.
mf

Don't_____



Dear Daedalus - Full score

8 **p** 3 9 **mf** 3

S. *dee, doo, Dae, Dae - da - lus.* D. B. *fly too high.* **f**

10 **f** warble 11 12 **mp** 13

S. *Dear, dear, dear, dear, dear* D. B. *Dae - da - lus.* **A** You left your wings on a mar - ble plinth.

D. B. 3 **p** sp ob behind bridge

14 15 3 8:5

S. *Does A - pol - lon hear your call?* D. B. **"mf"** **mf** **p**

16

S. En - chant - ed strings, a dan - cing la - by - rinth, all _____ but a prel - ude to your

On side of bridge; white noise

D. B. "p"

17

18

19

S. grief. **pp**

D. B. **p**

20

B **mf** Feath - ers be - came snow - flakes.

21

S. Strings snapped like spi - der - webs.

D. B. III

22

Melt - ed wax flowed like the

D. B. II

Dear Daedalus - Full score

23 **p**

S. waves s_____ sh_____ s_____

D. B. **f**

24 **3**

Snow - flakes in the sum - mer sun. Sun, sun, sun.

pizz. **mf**

25 arco **3**

26 **mf**

S. Dear,_____ dear, dear. Don't fly too high, the sun will melt your wings.

D. B. **f** **mf** **LH pizz** **5** **f**

28

S. Don't go too low, you'll be pulled in - to the sea. See, dear

D. B. **LH** **5** **ff**

30 *f*
 S. Dae - da - lus.

31 *mf*
 S. I am the bird that mocks you_____

D. B. pizz. arco *p*

32 3 in your sol - emn pain.
 S. I am the past that haunts you. I am the

D. B. *pp* *mp* *mf*

33 34

35 sal - ty shore - line ro - cky reef. I am the bird that mocks you_____

IV
 D. B. LH clb *mp* LH clb *pizz.* arco sp

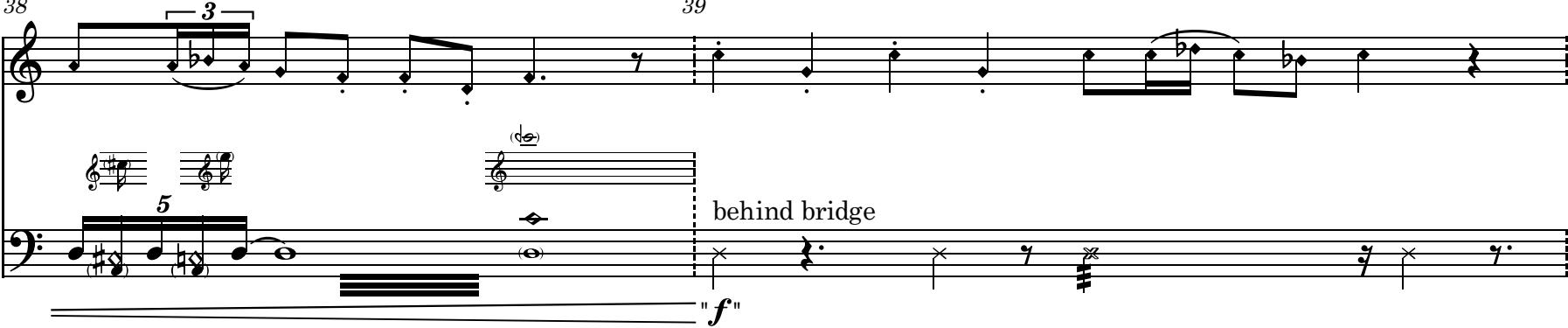
36 37 "f"
 S. reef. I am the bird that mocks you_____

D. B. LH clb *pizz.* arco sp

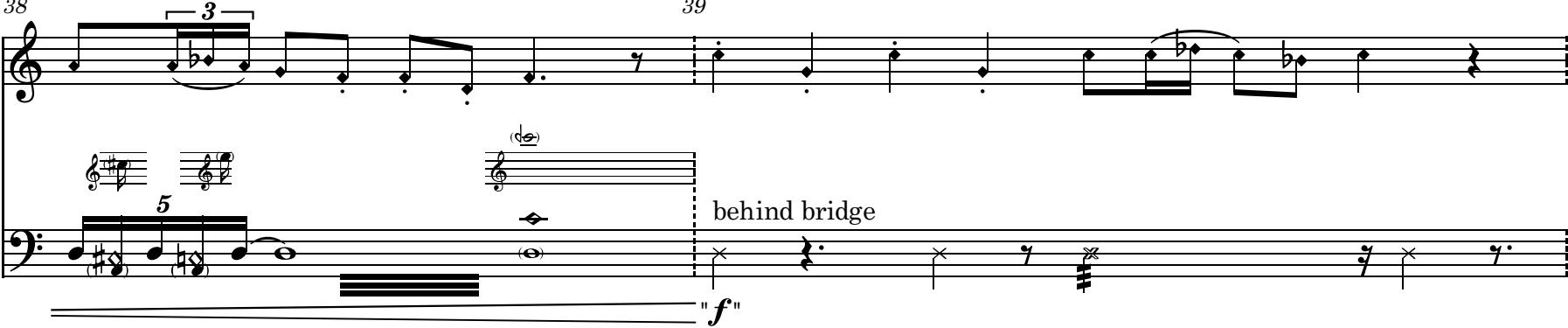
Whistle, prioritizing gestures and contour over exact pitch

Dear Daedalus - Full score

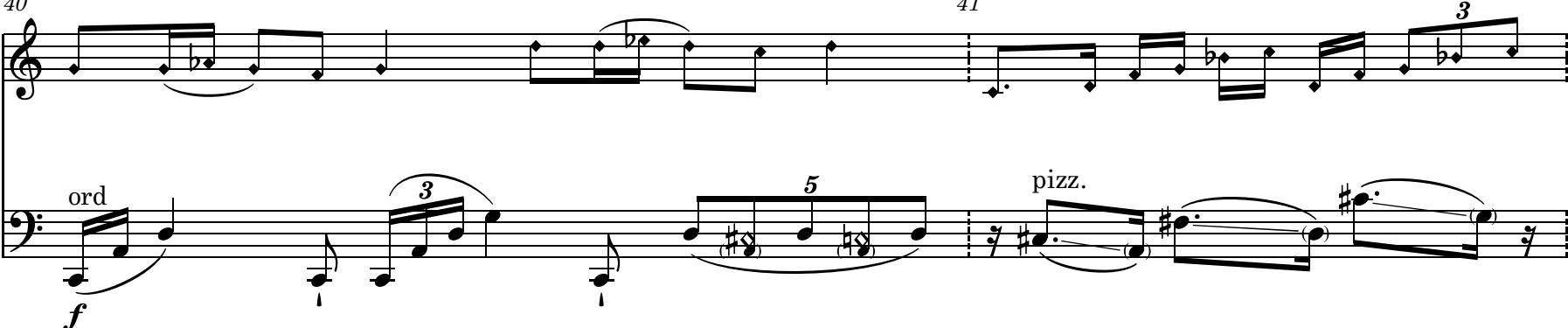
38

S. 

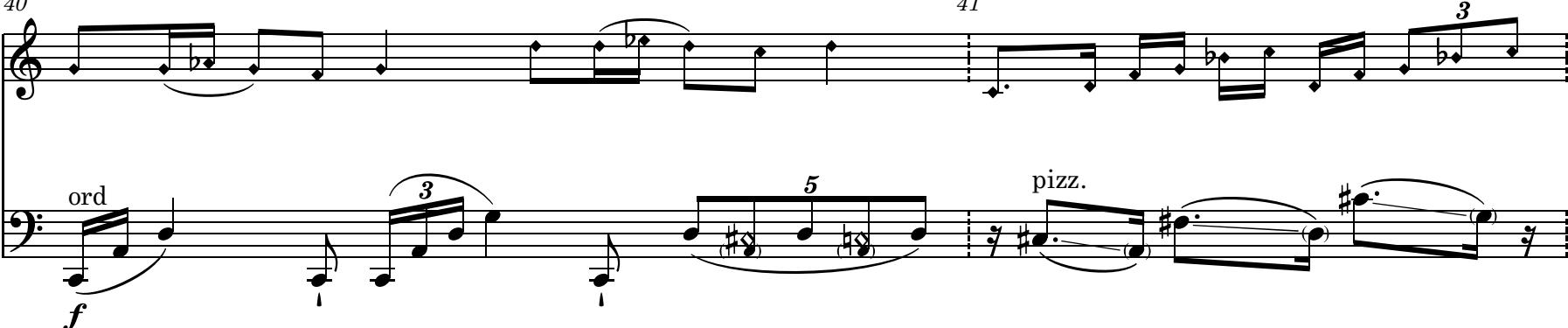
39

D. B. 

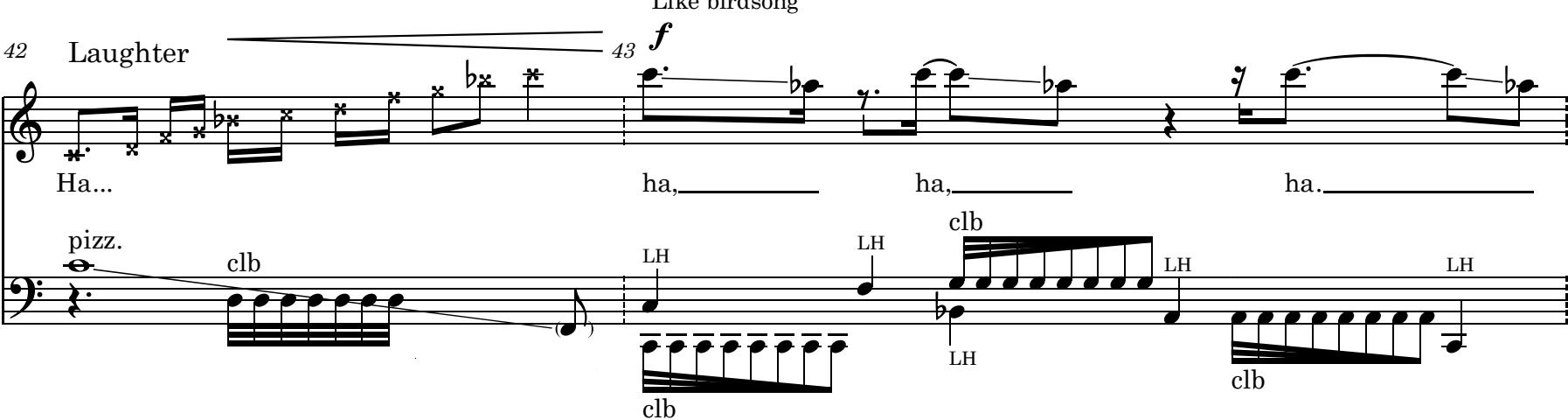
40

S. 

41

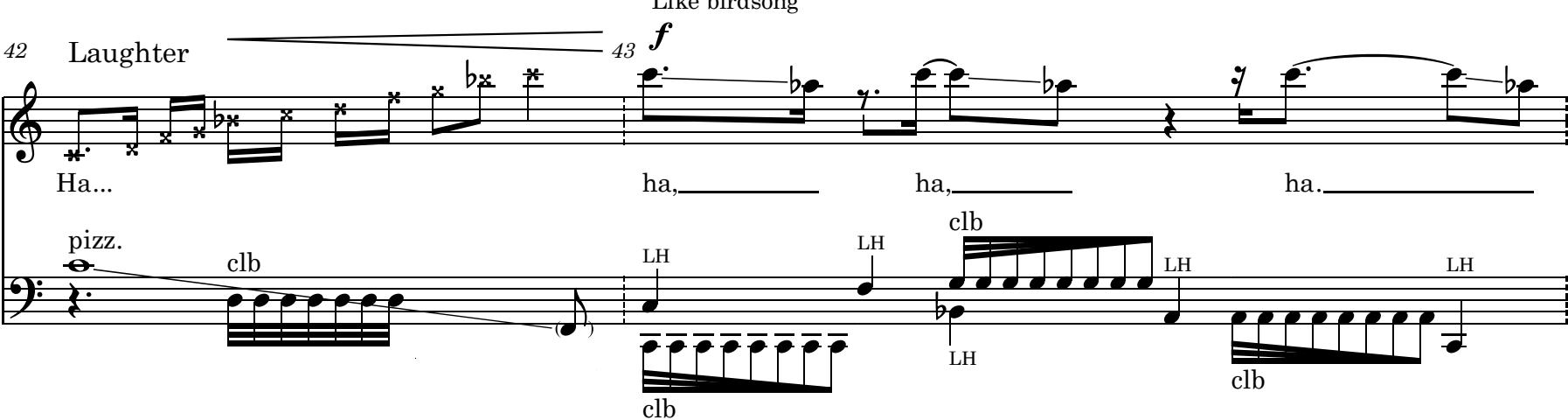
D. B. 

42 Laughter

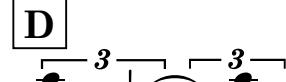
S. 

43

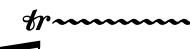
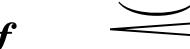
Like birdsong

D. B. 

44 **D**

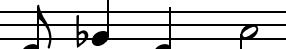
S.    *mp*  *mf* 

ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ha, ha, a a a a a a ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha,

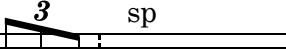
D. B. *ord*    *tr*  *tr*    *f*

fluctuate microtones

46 *ff*

S.    *ff*

I am the sun, the light of day, warmth, once shunned, to whom you pray.

D. B.    *ff*  *sp*  

Dear Daedalus - Full score

48

S. Sun of sea - sons, son of rea - son, lost, un - der - stand to - day:

D. B. LH IV

E

51

S. Stat - ues came to life at your hands. The air was yours to com - mand with sails and masts,

D. B. *p* 6

52

S. 5

D. B. *mf*

53

S. a world so vast, none could match your gen - ius, save I, the for - got-ten neph - ew.

D. B. LH

54

S. On side of bridge; IV tuned to E

D. B. *p* *mp*

55

Dear Daedalus - Full score

9

56 **p**

57

58

S. I saw a world built by us, oh, dear Dae - da - lus,

D. B.

mf

p

59 **mp**

60

61

S. like the sea, your jeal - ou - sy car - ried me a - way. Giv - en flight through death.

D. B. sp → ob → behind bridge

F

mf

Whisper:
Don't fly,
f

Dear Daedalus - Full score

62 S. How fit - ting, then, it was flight that took your son's breath a - way.

63 D. B. don't, don't fly. *mp*

Like a cadenza

64 D. B. *sp* 65 *f* → *ord* *f sub.*

66 D. B. *3* *3* *3* *p*

67 D. B. II st I IV III → *ord* 68 sp *p* *mf*

69

D. B.

70

D. B.

71 *mp*

S. Why do we blame the boy

72 for

73 *3*

74 *mf*

S. Whisper
"mf"
Daedalus, still stuck in a maze.

D. B.