

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 inventor, 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?

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Dear Daedalus

Recitative for soprano and double bass

Blake Cordell

Freely between ♩ = c. 60–100

Whisper
"f"

2

Soprano

Still stuck in a maze.

Like wind and waves
3 *mf*

Sprechgesang
p

3

4

mf

mp

3

Sh_____ Dae - da - lus. Sh_____ Dae - da - lus.

IV tuned to C

Double Bass

mp

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

mf

5

f

6

f

mp

f

mf

S.

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

5

D. B.

5

Spoken:
Don't fly too high. Don't____

mf

Dear Daedalus - Full score

8 *p*

S. dee, doo, Dae, Dae - da - lus. 9 *mf*

D. B. fly too high. *f*

10 *f* warble 11 12 *mp* 13

S. Dear, dear, dear, dear, dear _____ Dae - da - lus. You left your wings on a mar - ble plinth.

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

14 15 3

S. Does A - pol - lon hear your call?

D. B. *mf* 8:5 *p*

"*mf*"

The musical score is written for Soprano (S.) and Double Bass (D. B.). The Soprano part begins at measure 8 with a piano (*p*) dynamic, singing 'dee, doo, Dae, Dae - da - lus.' followed by 'Dae, doo, dee Dae da - lus.' at measure 9, where the dynamic changes to mezzo-forte (*mf*). The Double Bass part starts at measure 8 with a piano (*p*) dynamic, playing a melodic line that includes the lyrics 'fly too high.' and ends at measure 9 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. At measure 10, the Soprano part has a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a 'warble' instruction. The Double Bass part continues with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a triplet of eighth notes. At measure 11, the Soprano part has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes the lyrics 'You left your wings on a mar - ble plinth.' The Double Bass part continues with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the lyrics 'sp ob behind bridge'. At measure 14, the Soprano part has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes the lyrics 'Does A - pol - lon hear your call?'. The Double Bass part continues with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a 8:5 ratio instruction. The score ends at measure 15 with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

16 17 18

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* *mf*

19 20

S. *pp* *B mf*

grief. Feath - ers be - came snow - flakes.

D. B. *p* *mf*

21 22

S. Strings snapped like spi - der - webs. Melt - ed wax flowed like the

D. B. III II

III II

Dear Daedalus - Full score

23 *p*
S. waves s sh s
D. B. *f*

24 *pizz.* *f*
Snow - flakes in the sum - mer sun. *3*

25 *arco* *mf*
Sun, sun, sun. *3*

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

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

28
S. Don't go too low, you'll be pulled in - to the sea. See, dear

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

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

31 *mf* I am the bird that mocks you_____

D. B. pizz. arco *p* 3

32 *pp* in your sol - emn pain.

33 *mp* I am the past that haunts you.

34 *mf* I am the

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

36

37 *f*

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

Whistle, prioritizing gestures and contour over exact pitch

38 39

S.

D. B.

5

behind bridge

"f"

40 41

S.

D. B.

ord

f

3

5

pizz.

Like birdsong

42 Laughter

43 f

Ha...

ha, ha, ha.

pizz.

clb

LH

clb

LH

clb

LH

Dear Daedalus - Full score

48 *mf* 50

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

D. B. 3 3 LH IV LH

E 51 52 *mf*

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

D. B. *p* 6 5

53 54 55 *mp*

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

D. B. LH LH *p* *mp*

On side of bridge; white noise

IV tuned to E

56 *p* 57 58 *mf*

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

D. B. 5 *mf* *p*

59 *mp* 60 61 **F**

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

D. B. sp → ob → behind bridge *mf* Whisper: Don't fly, "f"

62 S. How fit - ting, then, 63 it was flight that took your son's breath a - way.

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

Like a cadenza

64 D. B. *f* *sp* *ord* *f sub.*

66 D. B. *p*

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

The musical score is written for a vocal part (S.) and a double bass part (D. B.). The vocal part begins at measure 62 with the lyrics "How fit - ting, then, it was flight that took your son's breath a - way." The double bass part begins at measure 63 with the lyrics "don't, don't fly." and includes a dynamic marking of *mp*. A section labeled "Like a cadenza" starts at measure 64, featuring a double bass solo with a dynamic marking of *f* and a *sp* (sustained) marking. The cadenza ends at measure 65 with a dynamic marking of *f sub.* and a *ord* (order) marking. The score continues with measures 66, 67, and 68. Measure 66 features a double bass solo with a dynamic marking of *p*. Measures 67 and 68 feature a double bass solo with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a *ord* marking. The score concludes with a dynamic marking of *p* at the end of measure 68.

69 70

D. B.

f *p*

71 *mp* 72 73

S.

Why do we blame the boy for fly-ing too__close to the sun?

D. B.

pp

mp *pp*

74

S.

Whisper
"mf"

Daedalus, still stuck in a maze.

D. B.

mf