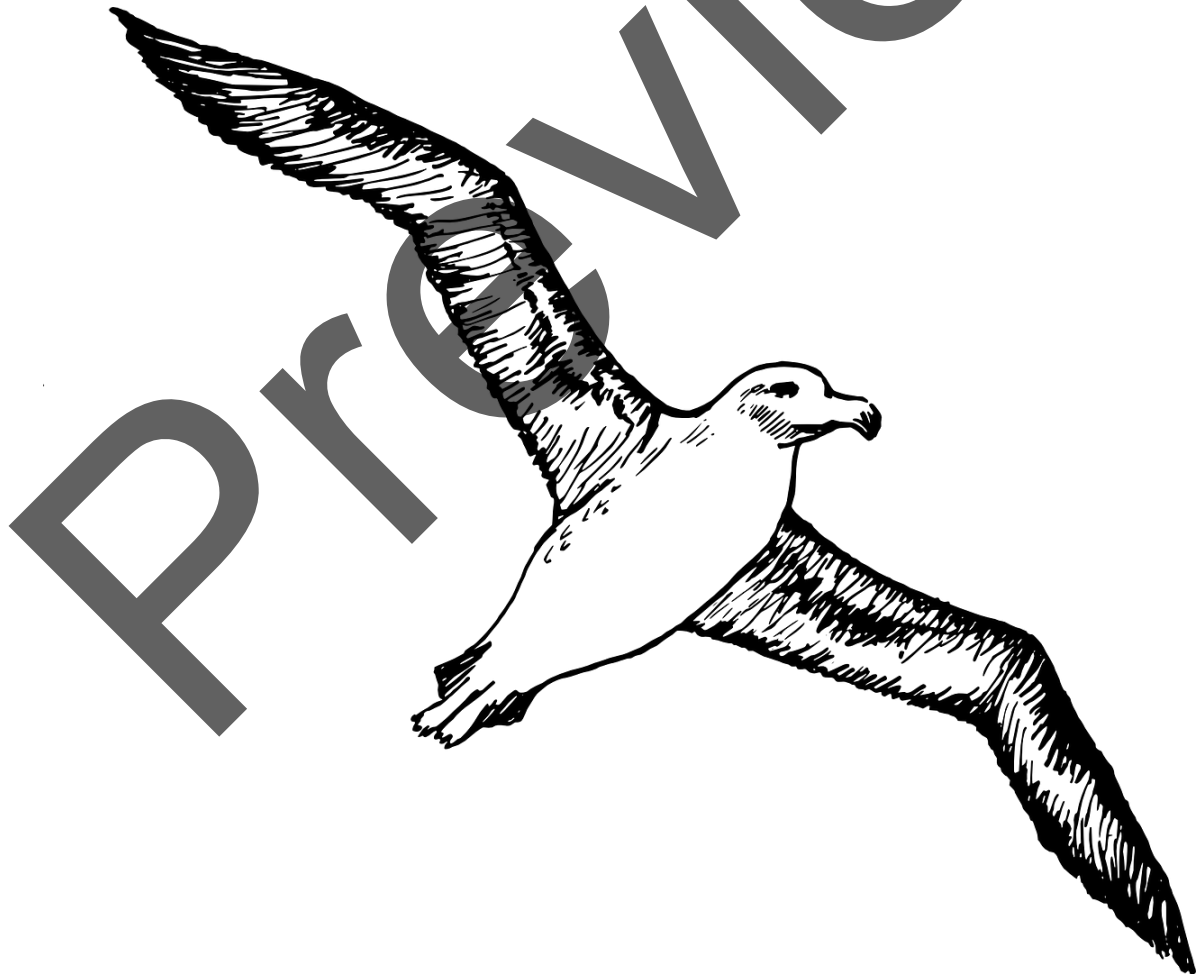


Stephen Mitton

# Albatross

For Mezzo-soprano and Pierrot Ensemble



Written for the 2018 Oregon Bach Festival  
Composers' Symposium

Mezzo-soprano

Flute

Bb Clarinet

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

*About Albatross*

The word “albatross” has a dual meaning, signifying either the common seabird or a deep psychological burden one carries around through life. Chad Crane’s poem is written in the spirit of the metaphor’s origin, in which an albatross following a ship could be seen as either a good or evil omen.

Crane’s poem speaks of both loss and longing – an albatross carried by the protagonist, placed as if by a curse. This piece captures an emotional cycle of obsessive nostalgia, escapist thought, resignation to the darker realities of life, and, finally, a return to repetitive wistfulness as the cycle begins anew.

-Stephen Mitton

Duration: c. 4:40

## Albatross

just say the word—

like balm    tincture    Novocain

to sooth the doldrums

of dull dumb January

My bones  
ache with boredom

marrow    boiling like    stew

the puncture wound  
of  
grey

pavement    mirrored by

gray

Albatross

Albatross

give me the pungent

push of feathers

let the night

smack

of briny sea

Foam

Froth

Albatross

Take me in your beak  
like some scrap combed  
from the beach

Lift me high above the earth  
where light and gravity  
spin the music of clouds  
into atmosphere

and let me  
loose—

a wispy bit of nothing  
tossed by an ocean of air

-Chad Crane

# Albatross

Written for the 2018 Oregon Bach Festival  
Composers' Symposium

Stephen Mitton  
Text by Chad Crane

Wistfully ♩ = 68

The score is for a chamber ensemble. It consists of six staves: Mezzo-Soprano, Flute, Clarinet in B $\flat$ , Violin, Cello, and Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked 'Wistfully' with a quarter note equal to 68 beats per minute. The Mezzo-Soprano, Flute, and Clarinet parts are mostly rests. The Violin and Cello parts enter in the third measure with a melodic line marked *mp*. The Piano part features a complex accompaniment of chords and arpeggios, starting with a *p* dynamic and a *Ped.* (pedal) marking. A large 'PREVIEW' watermark is overlaid diagonally across the score.

Musical score for measures 4-7. The score includes vocal lines, piano accompaniment, and a grand staff. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*. A '7' is written above a piano line. A 'Ped.' instruction with an asterisk is at the bottom.

7

Musical score for measures 7-10. The score includes vocal lines, piano accompaniment, and a grand staff. Dynamics include *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. A section labeled 'A' is marked. A 'Ped.' instruction with an asterisk is at the bottom.

A

Just say the word

10

*mf*

like balm tinc-ture No - vo - cain to soothe the dol - drums

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*Ped.*

*Ped.*

14

of dull - - dumb Jan - u - a - ry

*mp*

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

*f*

*Ped.*

*Ped.*

18

*mp* **B**

My bones ache with

*mf* *mp* *p*

*mf* *mp* *p*

*f* *p* *p* *subito p*  
Ped. throughout

22

bore - dom mar - row boil - ing like stew

*f* *f*

*f*

sim. *mf*

25

*mf*  
the punc - ture wound of

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*  
Ped.

29

gray pave - ment mir - rored by gray sky

*mf*





41

Musical score for measures 41-44. The score is written for a piano and includes a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate staff for the right hand. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). A *gva* (grace note) is indicated above the first measure of the right hand in measure 42. A *loco* marking is present in measure 43. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

45

Musical score for measures 45-48. The score continues from the previous system. It features a grand staff and a right-hand staff. The music is characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *pizz.* (pizzicato). A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "PREVIEW" is overlaid diagonally across the score.

*rit.*

**D** Introspectively ♩ = 70

let the night smack of briny sea \_\_\_\_\_ Foam, \_\_\_\_\_ Froth \_\_\_\_\_

*gliss. over strings (with fingertips)*

*harmonic gliss.*

*sim.*

*hold Pedal down*

62

*rit.* -----

**E** *a tempo* (♩ = ♩)

Al-ba-tross

Take me in your beak

*pp*

*p*

*p*

*pp*

L.V.

rapid gliss. over strings (with fingertips)

*p*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

69

like some scrap

combed from the beach

Lift me high

*p*

*mp*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

harmonic gliss.

*pp*

*pp*

— a - bove the earth —

*p*

*p*

This system contains the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the first part of the piece. The vocal line starts with the lyrics 'a - bove the earth' and features a melodic line with a fermata. The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with a melody and a left-hand part with a bass line. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and a crescendo leading to a forte (*f*) section.

**F** *a tempo*  
*mf* 2

Lift me high a - bove the earth

*pp* *p* *mp*

*pp* *p* *mp*

*ppp* *mf*

*ppp* *mf* 2

*mp*

*Ped*

This system contains the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the second part of the piece. The vocal line starts with the lyrics 'Lift me high a - bove the earth' and features a melodic line with a fermata. The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with a melody and a left-hand part with a bass line. Dynamics include piano (*p*), mezzo-piano (*mp*), pianissimo (*pp*), and pianississimo (*ppp*), as well as a crescendo leading to a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section.

86 *accel.*

Musical score for measures 86-87. The vocal line includes the lyrics "where light and grav - i - ty". The piano accompaniment features a complex texture with multiple staves, including a grand staff with a piano part and a bass line. A large, semi-transparent watermark "PREVIEW" is overlaid on the score.

Tempo I

88

Musical score for measures 88-91. The vocal line includes the lyrics "spin the mu - sic of clouds in - to at - mos -". The piano accompaniment is highly detailed, featuring a grand staff with a piano part and a bass line. Dynamics include *mp*, *f*, and *ff*. A large, semi-transparent watermark "PREVIEW" is overlaid on the score.

*Ped.* This score is not authorized for performance. Authorized copies may be purchased at [www.stephenmitton.com](http://www.stephenmitton.com)

91

*rit.* -----

phere

Musical score for measures 91-94. The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex texture with triplets and various dynamics like *p* (piano). The tempo is marked *rit.* (ritardando).

95

*a tempo*

*rit.* -----

Musical score for measures 95-98. The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a section marked *arco Con sord.* (arco with mutes) and *subito p* (subito piano). The tempo is marked *a tempo* and *rit.* (ritardando).

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G

99

*a tempo*

Musical score for measures 99-103. The score includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. Dynamics range from *pp* to *mp*. Performance markings include *ppp*, *Ped.*, and *sim.*

104

Musical score for measures 104-108. The score includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. Dynamics range from *p* to *mp*. Performance markings include *pizz.*, *Con sord.*, and *Ped.*



107

*mp*

and let me

Musical score for measures 107-110. The score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf*, *mp*, *p*, and *f*. There are markings for *arco* and *Ped.* (pedal). A large watermark 'PREVIEW' is overlaid on the score.

110

loose

a wispy bit of

noth-ing

Musical score for measures 110-113. The score includes vocal lines and piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. There are markings for *arco* and *Ped.* (pedal). A large watermark 'PREVIEW' is overlaid on the score.

113

tossed by an ocean of air.

*p* *pp*

*p* *pp*

Empty musical staves for vocal and piano accompaniment.

Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. throughout

*rit.*

116

*ppp*

Empty musical staves for vocal and piano accompaniment.

Empty musical staves for piano accompaniment.