

Full Score

Katharina S. G. Mueller (2024)

The Great Albatross

for small string ensemble

Duration ca. 3''

Written for the Upper Valley Music Center, and dedicated to my former violin teacher, Alicia Casey.

About the Piece

The great albatross is among the largest flying birds on the planet, with a wingspan of 9-11 feet (3+ meters) and infamously can glide over the ocean for miles at a time, coasting on the air with barely any movement in their wings. The soaring melody of this piece, based in E major and the E dorian mode, sails above a continuous rocking pattern of waves in C minor. The wave motif ebbs and flows in asynchronous shapes through the entire piece. The albatross melody eventually appears in several octaves as the piece swells to its peak, and one can imagine a whole flock of these great sea birds moving smoothly through the sky.

Instrumentation

Violin 1
Violin 2
Violin 3/Viola
Violoncello

The violin 3 part works as a viola part, with an additional viola solo on the open drone C at mm. 40-48. A viola part in alto clef is available. If no violist is in the group, a cello player should take the drone solo on the low open C.

Additional Notes

Notes with *Tentuto* are a slight accented with a greater dynamic and bow speed emphasis to shape the phrase.



This piece has no key signature. Pitches are written in a diatonic context as much as possible, though sometimes that means enharmonic equivalents alternating between **#** and **b**.



A **#** or a **b** carries through its entire measure unless it is cancelled by a **natural**, i.e. an **E natural** at the beginning of the bar means all following written Es are **E b** unless otherwise indicated.

Grace notes fall before the beat

Contact composer Katharina S. G. Mueller at katya.mueller.24@gmail.com with any questions

The Great Albatross

for string chamber group

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♩ = 60 As Waves

6 Gliding Above

Musical score for measures 1-6. The score is for a string chamber group consisting of Violin 1, Violin 2, Violin 3, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 60 As Waves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Violin 1 part starts with a rest in the first measure and then enters in the fifth measure with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a half note B4 in the sixth measure. The Violin 2 and Violoncello parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of quarter notes.

10

Musical score for measures 7-10. The score continues for Violin 1, Violin 2, Violin 3, and Violoncello. The tempo remains ♩ = 60. The time signature changes to 3/4 in measure 7 and back to 4/4 in measure 8. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Violin 1 part has a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a *mf* dynamic in measure 9. The Violin 2 and Violoncello parts continue with their accompaniment.

16 ♩ = 72 Moving More

Musical score for measures 11-16. The score continues for Violin 1, Violin 2, Violin 3, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 72. The time signature changes to 3/4 in measure 11, 5/4 in measure 12, and back to 4/4 in measure 13. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *p* (piano). The Violin 1 part has a melodic line with a crescendo leading to a *p* dynamic in measure 15. The Violin 2 and Violoncello parts continue with their accompaniment.

23 Ascending

19

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vln. 3 *mp*

Vc. *mp*

accel.

30 $\text{♩} = 80$ Soaring, with Delight

25

Vln. 1 *mp* *f*

Vln. 2 *mp* *mf* *f*

Vln. 3 *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf* *mp* *f*

36 Turning Homeward

32

Vln. 1 *mp* *f*

Vln. 2 *mp* *f*

Vln. 3 *mp* *f*

Vc. *mp* *f*

38

Vln. 1
mf *p*

Vln. 2
mf *mp* *pp*

Vln. 3
mf *mp* *pp*

Viola
mp

Vc.
mf *mf* *pp* *p*

SOLO

change bows as needed

44

48 *change bows as needed*

Vln. 1
pp

Vln. 2
mp

Vln. 3
p *pp*

Vla.
Viola Rejoins Vln. 3

Vc.
pp

51

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

pp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 51 through 56. It features four staves: Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Violin 3 (Vln. 3), and Violoncello (Vc.). The music is in 4/4 time. Vln. 1 has a melodic line with several slurs and ties. Vln. 2 has a similar melodic line, with a *pp* dynamic marking and a hairpin crescendo leading to it. Vln. 3 plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Vc. part consists of a steady eighth-note bass line.

57

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vln. 3

Vc.

Div.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 57 through 60. It features the same four staves as the previous system. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 at the beginning of measure 57. Vln. 1 has a melodic line with a slur and a *f* dynamic marking. Vln. 2 has a melodic line with a slur. Vln. 3 has a melodic line with a slur. The Vc. part has a melodic line with a slur and a *f* dynamic marking. A box labeled "Div." is placed above the Vc. staff in measure 60. The system ends with a double bar line.