



Jump!

A sonic saga of falling and flying, with words by Ray Bradbury

SSA, narrator and string quartet

OR

SSA, narrator and piano



Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

Jump!



“Go to the edge of the cliff and jump off.
Build your wings on the way down.”

- Ray Bradbury



From an interview in the Brown Daily Herald, March 24, 1995
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Composer’s Note:

The musical parameters given to me by Northfield Youth Chorus were few and open-ended, exactly the kind of commission that offers a composer both structure and freedom: a treble choir, a handful of auxiliary instruments, and the following theme: “To remember and renew.” At first I considered the sounds of history and change. Minnesota’s big woods, families, main streets, factories, wind farms... Perhaps a collage of nature, wind, voices, and machines?



As often happens, my initial idea went nowhere. It just sat there, week after week. But during that time I kept asking myself: What comes between remembrance and renewal? What makes authentic renewal happen?

It wasn’t until I happened to take an airplane trip that this piece finally “took off.” As I looked down at the clouds, I remembered Ray Bradbury’s pithy quote about taking risks: “Go to the edge of the cliff and jump off. Build your wings on the way down.” Aha, I thought, that’s it! Leaps of courage. Blind faith. Guts.

In the end, I surprised myself (and the choir!) by asking the singers to sing just one word: “jump!” Within this small syllable lies a plethora of phonetic possibilities, like “j,” “uh,” “um,” and of course, the final “p.” Using only these vocal building blocks, I created a sonic landscape tracing Bradbury’s journey from solid ground to thin air, as the chorus considers, hesitates, jumps, falls — and finally flies!



Jump may be performed with string quartet OR with piano accompaniment.
In either case, choir members sing from the Choral Score

Conductor’s Score (SSA and string quartet): SEA-090-00

Choral Score (SSA and piano): SEA-090-04

String Quartet Parts: SEA-090-02 / Download string parts free at www.seafarerpress.com/works/jump

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Part 1: In which our heros contemplate the jump

(♩ = 120) Tense, energetic, alive

Piano

Tutti

Piano

A

Narr.

Spoken:

Go to the edge of the cliff and jump off.

Piano

p

*

* All sung lyrics are derived from the word "jump," so each individual word component should be pronounced as it is in the complete word. For example, the "j" sound will contain a tiny hint of "uh".

SSA and string quartet version © 2009 by Elizabeth Alexander

SSA and piano version © 2020 by Elizabeth Alexander

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13

Tutti

Piano

j *j j j* *j* *sfz*
Ped.

B

17

Narr.

Build your wings on the way down.

Piano

p
pedal with each note

22

Tutti

Piano

pp *mf*
j *j j j* *juh*
mp
*

27

Tutti

Piano

p *molto cresc.* *mf*
j j j j *juh_ juh_* *juh_ juh_ juh_ juh_ juh_ juh_*
mf

31 **Senza misura**

Piano

Ped.

Pianist, in the string quartet version, this gesture is a long cello glissando. Take your time and enjoy it! The fingerings are for left hand only, but feel free to divide the scale between both hands if you prefer.

**Part 2: In which our heros take steps to undertake said jump.
(Two steps forward and one step back, that is.)**

C

33 **a tempo** *with determination* *mp* *mp*

Tutti

Piano

mp

4 3 2 1

37 *f*

Tutti

Piano

f

f *mf*

rall. molto *mf* *mp* *pp*

41

Tutti

Piano

mp *pp*

Our heros take a deep, collective, audible breath -- but are not deterred!

D

A tempo

mf with more determination

45

Tutti *gliss.* juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh

Piano *mf*

49

Tutti *gliss.* juh juh juh juh juh, *f*

Piano *mf*

52

Tutti *gliss.* um

Piano *mp*

slightly faint of heart

54

Tutti *gliss.* um

Piano *mf*

E

Part 3: In which our heros come close to deciding that jumping off a cliff is a seriously bad idea.

57 *p*

S I
um, * um, um, um, um,

S II
um, * um, um, um,

A
um, * um, um,

Piano
p subito

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

61

Piano

*

63 *p*

S I
um, um, um, um, um,

S II
um, um, um, um,

A
um, um, um,

Piano
fp

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

67

S I *mf* full of doubt *f* *ff*
um, um, um, um,

S II *mf* full of doubt *f* *ff*
um, um, um, um,

A *mf* full of doubt *f* *ff*
um, um, um, um,

Piano *mf* *f* *ff*
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

73

Piano *p*
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. Ped.

F

Part 4: In which our heros decide it's now or never!

77 *mf*

Tutti juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh juh

Piano *mf*
*

Opal Palmer Adisa, poet • Paul Adams, technological hero • Stephen Alexander, lyric consultant • Ginny Allen, Agile coach and friend • The great people at American Composers Forum • Yehuda Amichai, poet • A. R. Ammons, poet • Jennifer Anderson, conductor and composer advocate • Scott Bates, poet • Abbie Betinis, initiator of collaborative endeavors • Beth Norton, conductor and composer advocate • Dennis Blubaugh, more than just a music dealer • Michael deVernon Boblett, poet • Edna Busby, my first piano teacher • Ray Bradbury, writer • Augustin Cadena, translator • Norbert Capek, minister and advocate for religious freedom • Jessica Corbett, editor • David Cummings, poet • Philip Dacey, poet • Catherine Dalton, composer and scrum partner • Emily Dickinson, poet • Evelyn Dudley, poet and caregiver • Rob Eller-Isaacs, minister and composer advocate • Ralph Waldo Emerson, philosopher and poet • Louise Erdrich, writer • David Allan Evans, poet • Sophia Lyon Fahs, writer • Richard M. Fewkes, minister and writer • Sasha Gertler, poet • Jack Gallagher, composer and teacher • Paul Gerike, proofreader • Jocelyn Hagen and Michael Hakan, founders of Graphite Marketplace • Steve Harper, just about everything • Steve Harkins, web designer • Edie Hill, composer and friend • Langston Hughes, poet • Margaret and George Heald, piano technician • Karel Husa, composer and teacher • David Ignatow, poet • Kabir, mystic • Linda Kachelmeier, composer and scrum partner • Ruth Palmer, conductor and composer advocate • Joan Wolf Prefontaine, poet • Paul Rardin, conductor and composer advocate • Kalidasa, poet • Steve Kaul, recording engineer • Søren Kierkegaard, philosopher and poet • Dorothy Knost, piano teacher • Ben Krywosz, artistic director of Nautilus Music-Theater • Denise Levertov, poet • George Ella Lyon, poet • Jonathan Machen, vocalist • Dawna Markova, writer • Anne Matlack, conductor and composer advocate • Nancy Menk, composer advocate • Edna St. Vincent Millay, poet • Jane Ramseyer Miller, conductor, composer, social activist • Joe Mish, conductor and composer advocate • J. David Moore, composer • Gerald Rich, poet • Carl Sandburg, poet • friend • King Sigismund III, religious reformer • Ann Silsbee, composer, poet and friend • Simon Alexander-Adams, sounding board, fellow creative, and awesome son • Steven Stucky, composer and teacher • Rabindranath Tagore, poet • Sister Peronne Marie Thibert, teacher and writer • Oliver Alexander-Adams, unconventional thinker and light of my life • Howard Thurman, civil rights leader and writer • Everyone whose work supports the Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries • Charles Varney, high school choral director • Anna Vonhuben, illustrator and graphic designer • Nancy White, poet • John Greenleaf Whittier, poet • Theodore Chickering Williams, poet • Daniel Winter, pianist and teacher • Nancy Wood, poet • Yehudi Wyner, composer and teacher

**A lot of hard work
and creativity went
into bringing this
music to you...**



**...and some of it
was even mine.**

**This page has been intentionally omitted.
(You know why.) A complete perusal score may be
purchased through any music store or dealer.**

Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

The Music of Elizabeth Alexander

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**Part 5: In which our heros' wings make their appearance,
as foreshadowed in measure 17.**

H

88

mp ethereal, of course

ah

mp ethereal, of course

ah

mp ethereal, of course

ah

mp

mp ethereal, of course

mp

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

89

p

ah (m)

p

ah (m)

p

ah (m)

One by one, singers slide down to the lower end of their ranges,
beginning all new glissandos in the middle of their ranges. All glissandos finally end on D:

p

gliss. (ah) *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* (m)

p

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Epilogue: In which one last hero take a courageous leap into thin air.

I **Senza misura**

90

Solo

Tutti

Piano

juh - - - - - (m)

93

Tutti

Piano

Whispered: (pah!) *

schmaltzissimo

* Singers are usually encouraged to maintain a perfectly composed posture after a cut-off. But in this case, you're not just a singer; you're also an actor. Your job is to convey to the audience that you're a bit exhausted, delighted and relieved. After all, you've just gotten your courage up, jumped off a cliff, aquired wings, and landed safely! What would that look like?

Selected Choral Music by Elizabeth Alexander

A Palette To Paint Us As We Are (Gerald Rich)
SATB, piano • SEA-014-01
SSA, piano • SEA-014-02

Beware the Winter Settin' In (Alexander)
SATB, Celtic band, opt. children's choir • SEA-139-00

Blessed Be the Flower That Triumphs (Boblett)
SATB • SEA-078-00

Cherish Your Doubt (Alexander)
SATB, piano • SEA-063-01
SSAA, piano • SEA-063-02

Die Gedanken Sind Frei (German protest song, arr.)
SATB, piano • SEA-087-00

Do Not Leave Your Cares at the Door (Norman Naylor)
SATB • SEA-071-00

Even a Fist Was Once an Open Palm (Yehuda Amichai)
SATB • SEA-026-01

Faith Is the bird that feels the light (Tagore)
SSA • SEA-068-00

Fighting Over What We Believe (Alexander)
SATB, soloists, piano • SEA-099-01

Finally On My Way To Yes (Pesha Gertler)
SSATB, piano • SEA-019-00

Folks, I'm Telling You (Langston Hughes)
SSATB, piano • SEA-027-00

Glen Song (Scott Bates)
SSATB, piano • SEA-025-00

Handles (Alexander)
SSA, piano • SEA-148-00

How To Sing Like a Planet (Alexander)
SATB, piano • SEA-105-01

If You Can Walk You Can Dance (Zimbabwean Proverb)
SAB, piano, claves • SEA-022-03
TBB, piano, claves • SEA-022-05
SSA, piano, claves • SEA-022-06
SATB, piano, claves • SEA-022-07

Immortal Love (John Greenleaf Whittier)
SATB • SEA-017-00

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (Polish carol, arr.)
SSA • SEA-020-00

Jump! (Ray Bradbury)
SSA, string quartet • SEA-090-00

Kindling (Alexander)
SATB, chamber ensemble • SEA-123-00
SATB, piano • SEA-123-09

Let it Matter (Alexander)
SSA, piano • SEA-125-03
SATB, piano • SEA-125-04

No Other People's Children (Alexander)
1-4 part choir, soloist, piano • SEA-141-03

...or a musician (Philip Dacey)
SATB, orchestra • SEA-007-00

A Palette To Paint Us As We Are (Gerald Rich)
SA, piano • SEA-014-00
SATB, piano • SEA-014-01

Praise Wet Snow Falling Early (Denise Levertov)
SATB, piano • SEA-015-00

Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery (Alexander)
SSAA • SEA-091-00

Same Birds (David Allen Evans)
SATB • SEA-128-00

Song of Kabir (Kabir)
SATB • SEA-119-00

The Gate is Open (Sister Peronne Marie Thibert)
SATB • SEA-097-01

They Have Freckles Everywhere (Alexander)
SSAA, piano • SEA-076-00

To Make a Prairie (Emily Dickinson)
SSA, piano • SEA-016-00

We Lift Up Our Hearts (Richard Fewkes)
Unison children's choir, SATB, piano • SEA-021-00

We Remember Them (Sylvan Kamens, Jack Riemer)
SATB, piano • SEA-083-01

Where there Is Light in the Soul (Chinese proverb)
SAB • SEA-070-00
SATB • SEA-070-01
SSA • SEA-070-02
TBB • SEA-062-03

When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled (Thurman)
SATB • SEA-062-00
TTBB • SEA-062-02
SSAA • SEA-062-04
SATB, flute • SEA-062-05

Why I Pity the Woman Who Never Spills (Prefontaine)
SSAA • SEA-058-00