

# SHE'LL FIND THE SKY

for SSAA Choir and piano

Text by Christy Ann Martine

Commissioned by Skyline High School Choirs  
Ann Arbor, MI

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**Gabriel Movak**

**2019**

DURATION: ca. 5 minutes and 30 seconds

INSTRUMENTATION: SSAA Choir and Piano

## She'll Find The Sky by Christy Ann Martine

You can't keep her in a cage,  
clip her wings, tell her lies,  
say that fragile birds  
were never meant to fly.  
Watch her live behind  
a rusted door, latched tight,  
her spirit slipping away  
so you can keep her in sight.  
Beautiful creatures  
cannot be confined.  
Her wings will grow,  
she'll find the sky.

**Christy Ann Martine's** poems have been published in several books, including Gill Education's Over the Moon: The Wild Explorers, O'Words Anthology, Gamemaster from the Biodome Chronicles book series and Latitudes Inspirations nature photography book. Her poetry has been shared in online magazines such as Good Housekeeping, Woman's Day, Country Living, Parade, and Cosmopolitan.

Christy Ann Martine lives in Ontario, Canada, and is married to American poet and author John Mark Green who is the author of "Taste the Wild Wonder." She is the mother of four adult children and two adult stepchildren. Christy is an abuse survivor who has struggled with anxiety and depression since early childhood. Her greatest hope in life is for her poetry to offer hope, encouragement, and comfort to her readers.

# Performance Notes

## TEMPO:

When feasible, it is important that the tempi be performed as indicated in the score.

## DYNAMICS:

There are character markings throughout the piece to capture the spirit of each section of music. Additionally, meticulous dynamics are provided for ease of performance, however ensembles should feel free to take liberties in pursuit of your own interpretation. In cases where there are no hairpins or dynamics marked, musicians should maintain their most recent dynamic marking indefinitely. In the rare case that a hairpin is not followed immediately by a dynamic, singers should grow or decay to the next nearest dynamic (i.e. “*f* >” would indicate a move to *mf*).

The markings “*sub.*” — or simply “*s*” — (*subito* [i.e. *sp*]) are often used when a dynamic suddenly changes.

## CLEAN CUT OFF NOTATION:

Often, held notes are tied into a 16<sup>th</sup> note. These are notated to try to ensure a very clean (yet subtle) cut off on the indicated beat, rather than elongating each note by a 16<sup>th</sup> note. Additionally, the ending consonant (if applicable) is often included.

## RUBATO:

*Rubato* is sometimes indicated and means that it is not necessary to mechanically play the exact tempo (or rhythm in the case of piano). *Rubato*, in the case of this composition, does not mean to drastically slow down the tempo, but rather ebb and flow musically.

## SOLO / SOLI:

The marking *solo* or *soli* indicate only one singer should be assigned to each note. The marking *soli* (2) indicates 2 singers should be assigned to each note.

## GLISSANDI:

All Glissandi should begin immediately once the note resonates, lasting the entire duration of the first pitch and ending on the beat of the arrival pitch.

## STAGGER BREATHING / SNEAK A BREATH:

Singers should stagger breathe freely whenever necessary. When a breath is taken, please re-enter on the note from *niente* and seamlessly so that the re-entry is inaudible.

## PIANO PEDALING:

If possible, all instances of notated pedal markings should be followed as written. In the absence of pedal markings, pianist should pedal musically as they see fit, given the character of the passage. *Non. ped.*, *secco*, and *staccato* are used interchangeably to indicate passages that should not be pedaled. Rests of any length above a pedal marking do *not* negate the pedal, but are rather used for rhythmic clarity.

# Program Note

*Commissioned by Skyline High School Choirs | Ann Arbor, MI*

The world premiere of this piece was given by Skyline High School's Bel Canto Choir

Conducted by Lyn CieChanski on October 25, 2019

At Skyline High School in Ann Arbor, MI

**She'll Find The Sky** is the result of an ongoing collaboration between myself, Choral Director Lyn CieChanski, and the incredible young musicians of Skyline High School. As I often do when I'm beginning a vocal commission, I invited the students to choose the text, which I find fosters a unique sense of ownership and connection to the music. The chosen poem, by Christy Ann Martine, captures a journey from confinement to liberation, a theme that resonated powerfully with the choir.

The piece is full of text painting, where the music vividly reflects the poetry's imagery. For instance, the oscillating C's in the piano at the beginning represent the "cage" mentioned in the poem—an enclosure that holds the opening theme within this octave, before the music and momentum gradually allows the melody to break free. As the narrative unfolds, the music expands, reflecting the release from confinement, with the "cage" returning only to disintegrate in the piece's final gesture. Other moments of text painting include the gradual fading of the voices on the text "slipping away" and the contraction from an expansive harmony to a single unison on the line "cannot be confined."

In my compositional approach, I strive to balance the familiar with the unexpected. Harmonies often resolve in unconventional ways that might surprise, subtly subverting listener expectations. This sense of bittersweet resolve affords the music its fluidity, with a sense of forward momentum that mirrors the emotional arc of the text. I want the music to evoke both empowerment, struggle, and reflection, with harmonies that lift the listener while also inviting contemplation and tension. There's a deliberate balance between moments of freedom and moments of restraint, reflecting the journey of breaking free that the poem captures so beautifully.

Ultimately, *She'll Find the Sky* is not just a piece of music, but an invocation of its text—to overcome; to ascend; to assert a presence in a world that often seeks to constrain. It speaks to the strength required to rise above oppression and find one's place in the face of adversity.

— Gabriel Novak

# She'll Find The Sky

for SSAA Choir and Piano

Commissioned by Skyline High School Choirs  
Lyn Ciechanski, director | Ann Arbor, Michigan

Christy Ann Martine (b. 1972)

Gabriel Novak  
(b. 1995)

**Pulsing | Ominous** ♩ = 132

Soprano 1

Soprano 2

Alto 1

Alto 2

Piano

*p*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

5

S1

S2

A1

A2

Pno.

*p*

*rit.*

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \* *Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

10 **A tempo** **Entrancing**

S1  
S2  
A1  
A2

You can't keep her in a cage \_\_\_\_\_ (g)

*P*

**A tempo** **Entrancing**

Pno.

*pp*

Red. \* Red. \* Red.

16

S1  
S2  
A1  
A2

clip her wings, \_\_\_\_\_ (s)

*mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

clip her wings, \_\_\_\_\_ (s)

*mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

clip her wings, \_\_\_\_\_ (s)

*mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

clip her wings, \_\_\_\_\_ (s)

*mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

Pno.

\* Red. \*

21

S1 clip her wings, tell her lies, say that fra - gile  
*mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *mp* *soli*

S2 clip her wings, tell her lies,

A1 clip her wings, tell her lies,

A2 clip her wings, tell her lies,

Pno.

*Ped.* \* *Ped.* \*

26

S1 birds were ne - ver meant to ah  
*mf* *f* *sp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

S2 birds were ne - ver meant to ah  
*mf* *f* *sp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

A1 birds were ne - ver meant to fly ah  
*mf* *f* *sp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *f* *tutti* *ah* *(tutti)*

A2 birds were ne - ver meant to ah  
*mf* *f* *sp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

Pno.

*rit.* *A tempo*

**Melancholic**  
♩ = 64

**rit.**

30

S1  
ah *mp* Watch her *p*

S2  
ah *mp* Watch her *p*

A1  
ah *mp*

A2  
ah *mp*

Pno.

**Melancholic**  
♩ = 64

**rit.**

35

S1  
live *mp* be - hind *mf* a rust - ed *f* *mf*

S2  
live *mp* be - hind *mf* a rust - ed *f* *mf*

A1  
Watch her *p* live *mp* hind a rust - ed *mf* *f* *mf*

A2  
Watch her *p* live *mp* hind a rust *mf* *f*

Pno.



40 Dissolving

S1  
door *mp* latched *mp* tight *mf* her *p*

S2  
door *mp* tight *mf* her *p*

A1  
door *mp* latched *mp* tight *mf* her *p*

A2  
latched *mp* tight *mf*

Pno.

Dissolving

47

S1  
spir - it slip - ping *mp* a - way *mf*

S2  
spir - it slip - ping *mp* a - way *mf*

A1  
spir - it slip - ping *mp* a - way *mf*

A2  
spir - it slip - ping *mp* a - way *mf*

Pno.