

SKY ABOVE CLOUDS

for wind ensemble

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
2 Flutes
Oboe(s)
2 Bassoons
Clarinet in B-flat 1 (at least two players for each clarinet part)
Clarinet in B-flat 2
Clarinet in B-flat 3
Bass Clarinet
Contrabassoon or Contrabass Clarinet in BB-flat (opt.)

Soprano Saxophone*
Alto Saxophone
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone

3 Trumpets in B-flat
4 Horns in F
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tubas
Contrabass (opt.)

Piano

Timpani

Percussion 1: Vibraphone, Xylophone, Suspended Cymbal, Lg. Splash Cymbal, Crash Cymbals (shared)
Percussion 2: Crotales (2 8ve), Ride Cymbal, Tambourine, Crash Cymbals (shared)
Percussion 3: Chimes, Glockenspiel, Tambourine, Snare Drum
Percussion 4: China Cymbal, Splash Cymbal, Suspended Cymbal, Hi-Hat, Bongos, Lg. Woodblock, Crash Cymbals
Percussion 5: Medium Tam-Tam, Bass Drum, Med. Triangle, Sm. Woodblock, Finger Cymbals

Duration: ca. 7 minutes

Program Notes:

Sky Above Clouds is a symphonic poem for wind ensemble inspired by Georgia O'Keefe's iconic painting *Sky Above Clouds IV* that has been exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago since the 1970's. Her largest work ever created, it depicts repetitive cloud forms seen from an airplane that stretch towards an infinite horizon. Striking not only for its overwhelming size but also its bold and harmonious composition, my work seeks to capture these qualities as well as the dramatic and exciting Chicago skyline that the painting calls home. Utilizing an altered triple chaconne form, a slowly evolving and repetitive harmonic progression is joined by the voice of the lonely traveler represented by soprano saxophone. This melody and harmony build towards a massive cadence only to suddenly transition to the angular rhythms of Chicago's modernist architecture. An energetic finale blends both of these skyward views together as the brilliant orange hues of the horizon blaze in the distance. This work is dedicated to the American Bandmasters Association with the world premiere at the 91st ABA Convention, Chicago, Illinois. The composition was written in memory of composer Ron Nelson (1929-2023).

-notes by the composer, Summer 2025, Fort Collins, Colorado

Composer Biography:

Dr. James M. David (b. 1978) is an American composer and professor of music theory and composition at Colorado State University. His symphonic works have been performed and recorded by many prominent ensembles including the U.S. Air Force Band, the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own", the U.S. Army Field Band, the U.S. Navy Band, the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra, the Fort Collins Symphony Orchestra, the Showa Wind Symphony (Japan), the Osaka Shion Wind Orchestra, and the North Texas Wind Symphony. His music has been performed at more than sixty national and international conferences including the Midwest Clinic, the College Band Directors National Association Biennial Conference, the American Bandmasters Association Convention, the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles Conference, the International Clarinet Fest, the International Trombone Festival, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, the International Horn Symposium, and the World Saxophone Congress. Dr. David was the winner of the 2025 Frederick Fennell Prize, the 2022 William D. Revelli Composition Contest, three-time finalist for the Sousa-ABA Ostwald Award, winner of an ASCAP Morton Gould Award, and won national contests sponsored by the Music Teachers National Association and the National Association of Composers (USA). Commissions include projects for the National Band Association, the Atlantic Coast Conference Band Directors Association, Joseph Alessi (New York Philharmonic), John Bruce Yeh (Chicago Symphony), James Markey (Boston Symphony), and hundreds of university faculty and ensembles. His works are represented on over twenty commercially released recordings on the Naxos, Summit, Mark, Albany, Parma, MSR Classics, Bravo Music, GIA Windworks, and Luminescence labels and are published by Murphy Music Press, C. Alan Publications, Potenza Publishing, and Excelcia Music.

As a native of southern Georgia, Dr. David began his musical training under his father Joe A. David, III, a renowned high school band director and professor of music education in the region. This lineage can be heard in his music through the strong influence of jazz and other Southern traditional music mixed with contemporary idioms. Dr. David received degrees in music education and music composition from the University of Georgia and the Florida State University College of Music. He studied composition with Guggenheim recipient Ladislav Kubik, Pulitzer recipient Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Lewis Nielson, and Clifton Callender as well as jazz composition and arranging with Sammy Nestico. More information at www.jamesmdavid.com.

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Singing, Freely (♩ = 58)

rubato

The score is a transposed score for a large ensemble. It features the following parts and instruments:

- Flute:** Part 1 (Flute 1) and Part 2 (Flute 2). Part 1 includes a *mf* dynamic marking and a *rubato* instruction.
- Clarinet:** Clarinet in Bb 1, Clarinet in Bb 2, Clarinet in Bb 3, and Bass Clarinet.
- Saxophone:** Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone. The Alto Saxophone part includes a *mf* dynamic marking.
- Trumpet:** Trumpet in Bb 1, Trumpet in Bb 2, and Trumpet in Bb 3.
- Horn:** Horn in F 1/2 and Horn in F 3/4.
- Trombone:** Trombone 1-2 and Bass Trombone.
- Euphonium and Tuba:** Euphonium and Tuba.
- Piano:** Piano.
- Percussion:** Timpani and five different Percussion parts (Percussion 1-5).

The score is written in 3/4 time, with a tempo of ♩ = 58. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The score includes various dynamics such as *mf* and *p*, and a *rubato* instruction. The score is divided into measures 1 through 10.

11

a tempo

poco rall.

This page of a musical score, titled "SKY ABOVE CLOUDS - p. 2", features a variety of instruments. The top section includes Piccolo (Pic.), Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Flute 2 (Fl. 2), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon 1 & 2 (Bsn. 1-2), Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Clarinet 2 (Cl. 2), Clarinet 3 (Cl. 3), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Saxophone (Sax.), Alto Sax (A. Sax.), Tenor Sax (T. Sax.), and Bass Sax (B. Sax.). The middle section includes Trumpet 1 (Trpt. 1), Trumpet 2 (Trpt. 2), Trumpet 3 (Trpt. 3), Horn 1 & 2 (Hr. 1-2), Horn 3 & 4 (Hr. 3-4), Trombone 1 & 2 (Tbn. 1-2), Trombone 3 (Tbn. 3), Euphonium (Euph.), Tuba (Tuba), and Cymbals (Cb.). The bottom section includes Piano (P), Trombone (Tbn.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), Percussion 2 (Perc. 2), Percussion 3 (Perc. 3), Percussion 4 (Perc. 4), and Percussion 5 (Perc. 5). The score is divided into measures 11 through 18. The time signature alternates between 3/4 and 4/4. The tempo is marked "a tempo" and "poco rall.". Dynamics include *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *f*. Performance instructions include "Sings" and "Sings *mf*".

This page contains a full orchestral score for the piece "Sky Above Clouds". The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Picc. (Piccolo)
- Fl. 1
- Fl. 2
- Ob.
- Hrn. 1-2
- Br. Cl. 1
- Br. Cl. 2
- Br. Cl. 3
- H. Cl.
- Chm.
- S. Sax.
- A. Sax.
- T. Sax.
- B. Sax.
- Hr. Trp. 1
- Hr. Trp. 2
- Hr. Trp. 3
- Hr. 1st
- Hr. 2nd
- Trbn. 1-2
- E. Trbn.
- Euph.
- Tuba
- Ch.
- Pf.
- Temp.
- Per. 1
- Per. 2
- Per. 3
- Per. 4
- Per. 5

The score features several key musical elements:

- Tempo and Meter:** The piece begins at measure 19 with a tempo marking of *a tempo* in 3/4 time. It transitions to *poco rit.* at measure 22 and then to *Expansive (♩ = 50)* at measure 24. The meter changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at measure 22 and back to 3/4 at measure 24.
- Performance Markings:** The score includes various dynamics such as *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). There are also performance instructions like "colla, con 2. Bass." and "Vibrato".
- Instrumentation:** The score is for a full orchestra, including woodwinds, brass, strings, and percussion.
- Measure Numbers:** The page is numbered 19 at the top left, and the bottom of the page is numbered 19 through 31.

This page of a musical score, titled "SKY ABOVE CLOUDS - p. 5", contains measures 43 through 46. The score is written for a large ensemble, including woodwinds, brass, strings, and percussion. The time signature is 3/4, and the tempo is marked "a tempo".

Instrumentation and Parts:

- Flutes (Fl. 1, Fl. 2):** Flute 1 has a melodic line with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. Flute 2 plays a similar line. Both have dynamic markings like *f* and *mf*.
- Oboe (Ob.):** Plays a melodic line similar to the flutes.
- Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1):** Plays a melodic line with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- Clarinet 2 (Cl. 2):** Plays a sustained note, likely G4.
- Clarinet 3 (Cl. 3):** Plays a sustained note, likely G4.
- Bassoon (B. Sn.):** Plays a sustained note, likely G4.
- Trumpets (Trp. 1, 2, 3):** All three trumpets are marked with an asterisk (*), indicating they are silent.
- Horn 1 (Hr. 1):** Plays a melodic line with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- Horn 2 (Hr. 2):** Plays a melodic line with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- Trumpets 4 and 5 (Trp. 4, 5):** Both are marked with an asterisk (*), indicating they are silent.
- Drum Set (Dr.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- Timpani (Timp.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- Snare Drum (Sn. Dr.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- Tom-tom (Tom.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- Cymbals (Cb.):** Both are marked with an asterisk (*), indicating they are silent.
- Percussion (Perc.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5.
- String Ensemble (Str.):** The strings are marked with an asterisk (*), indicating they are silent.

Measure 43: The score begins with a dynamic marking of *f*. The woodwinds and strings enter with a melodic line. The percussion section is marked with *mp*.

Measure 44: The score continues with the melodic line. The woodwinds and strings are marked with *f*. The percussion section is marked with *mp*.

Measure 45: The score continues with the melodic line. The woodwinds and strings are marked with *f*. The percussion section is marked with *mp*.

Measure 46: The score concludes with the melodic line. The woodwinds and strings are marked with *f*. The percussion section is marked with *mp*.