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# David LANCASTER

(b. 1960)



**David Lancaster** David Lancaster is a composer whose work has been performed, recorded and broadcast internationally.

Much of David's music forges links with the medieval heritage which surrounds him at home in York and on his many visits to castles, cathedrals and abbeys around the UK and Europe. For example, his choral *Apocalypse* (which was performed in Copenhagen and broadcast by the Danish Radio Vocal Ensemble, conducted by Robert Hollingworth) tells of the world's end as depicted in York's medieval stained glass, and the woodwind quartet *Grotesques* was prompted by stone carvings in the Chapter House of York Minster. David's extended work for vocal ensemble *At the Edge of the World* (written in collaboration with poet and novelist Abi Curtis), was inspired by the extraordinary visions of 14th century York anchoress Emma Raughton, and, completed in 2025, *A York Passion* sets words drawn from York's cycle of Mystery Plays.

More recent visual art has also played an important role: *Strata* (given its first performance by the Orchestra of Opera North and subsequently recorded for CD by the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra under Mikel Toms) was inspired by an early 20th century depiction of

class structure, whilst the brass quintet *Breathless* was a response to Cornelia Parker's sculpture that hangs in the V&A Museum.

In recent years David's music has been characterised an economy of means and a search for further clarity of form and expression. In this respect, David sometimes draws upon cinematic techniques, applying such ideas as montage, assembly, dissolve and intercutting to his compositional practice; *Strike* for ensemble (which draws upon the theories of Eisenstein), and *Jump Cut* for solo clarinet are examples of this, but it permeates much of his work.

David enjoys collaborating with poets, film makers, choreographers and performers, and recent projects include settings of poetry by Dylan Thomas: *As Long As Forever Is* has been recorded for CD release on the Prima Facie label for release in 2025. He has previously also set older texts by David Vogel (who perished at Auschwitz in 1944) in *The Dark Gate* for soprano and piano, and John Donne, whose Holy Sonnets provided the text for a major choral/orchestral work *Of Trumpets and Angels*, commissioned by the Oxford Harmonic Choir in 2019.

His music has been recorded for CD by performers including the Delta Saxophone Quartet, Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, Juice Vocal Ensemble, baritone Paul Carey Jones and pianist Duncan Honeybourne; a recording of *Apocalypse*, *Magnificat* and *At the Edge of the World* (all UYMP publications) by the Ex Corde Vocal Ensemble was released on the Resonus Classics label in 2023.

Originally from Wigan (Lancashire, UK), David began his musical career on trumpet before studying music at York and Cambridge

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universities. As a young composer he gained several important awards including the Lloyds Bank Young Composer Award, Michael Tippett Award, LCM Centenary Prize and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival Composer Award; his music was performed by Kronos Quartet, Lontano, Electric Phoenix, Nancy Ruffer, Alexander Baillie and others, and for three years he was RVW Composer-in-Residence at Charterhouse.

David Lancaster was awarded PhD in Composition at the University of York, where he was supervised by Professor Roger Marsh. He is currently Associate Professor of Composition at York St John University and MD of York Railway Institute Band. David lives in York with his wife Bridget.

## PRESS QUOTES

*David Lancaster's Anatomy of Angels (for clarinet, cello and piano) ... had an assured, neo-classical drive and polish that gave much pleasure. This accomplished score was heard to full advantage in the Amabile Trio's glowing, committed performance.*

Paul Conway – Musical Opinion

*The stand-out works for me were the opening three tracks...and David Lancaster's Feathers, featuring a gorgeous stratospheric solo for soprano Miranda Johnson. A cracking album to which I'll be returning.*

Clare Stevens – Choir & Organ

*The title track of this fascinating and impressive recording (Apocalypse) includes descriptions of earthquakes, floods, collapsing buildings, raging fires, madness and unexplained death, depicted using extended vocal techniques and three high soprano soloists. A rapturous Magnificat leads to the other substantial work At the Edge of the World, documenting the life of anchoress Emma Raughton.*

Clare Stevens – Choir & Organ

*What carved a more specific profile and won the laurels was David Lancaster's Ricercare...a significant piece. His command of brass vocabulary is broad but beautifully precise - a genuinely idiomatic piece of work.*

Michael John White – The Independent

*Echoes from a Phantom City for flute, viola, and harp is an intriguingly different conception — a grave little processional of interacting musical images, somehow much more imposing than its small dimensions and gentle scoring would imply.*

Malcolm Hayes – Tempo

*David Lancaster...used the difficult medium with bold ingenuity.*

John Martin – The Guardian

*Long melancholic lines were tastefully placed with more rhythmic material in this heartfelt piece. This was the highlight of the evening.*

Martin Scheuregger – York Press

*Lancaster's piece was one of nobly fashioned melodies becoming fractured and frenzied, then quiet in portrayal of madness and death.*

Paul Griffiths – The Times

*David Lancaster's cleverly-planned Six Downie Nocturnes...combined a deep melancholy with evanescent bursts of inspiration.*

Martin Dreyer – York Press

*The clarinet and piano duo ... radiated a consistent brightness in David Lancaster's punchily spirited, tough Seconds into Infinity.*

Stephen Pettitt – The Times

*David Lancaster's intriguing Bliss, to words from an old English carol, brought an enigmatic dissonance to its title word and omens of the Passion to "in excelsis gloria".*

Martin Dreyer – York Press

*David Lancaster's Swan was a very impressive work. The opening had a mysterious, almost elemental sound that was very distinctive. The transition to a funky, driven last section was as pleasing as it was unexpected.*

York Mix

*David Lancaster's After Ophelia was an intensely dramatic piece, well constructed, and given an absorbing, thoughtful performance.*

Michael Tumelty – *The Scotsman*

*David Lancaster's Snow / Dance took Debussy's The Snow is Dancing as its source material. The resulting score wove a series of intricate variants on the original material rather than departing too far from the source. Lancaster's own idiom eventually came into focus but the transition was effected subtly and with considerable panache. In the upper reaches of the keyboard and sounding like a distant chiming of bells, the final section was especially evocative.*

Paul Conway – *Musical Opinion*

*Song of Light by David Lancaster is a different matter altogether. Juxtaposed verses from Isaiah and St John's Gospel provide an ideal text for lilting phrases ... with delicious harmonic shifts at the ends of those phrases. The delicate accompaniment is perfectly judged. In this anthem the composer has built a lovely little house from very few bricks.*

Jeremy Jackman – *Choir & Organ Magazine*

## **LIST OF WORKS OVERLEAF**

## LIST OF WORKS

### ORCHESTRA

**Strata (2013)** 13'  
for orchestra  
first performance: Orchestra of Opera North, conducted  
by Justin Doyle, Howard Assembly Rooms, Leeds, 29<sup>th</sup>  
November 2013.  
ISMN M 57036 883 9 score: £11.95  
ISMN M 57036 884 6 performance materials for hire

### LARGE ENSEMBLE (8-12 PLAYERS)

**Revelation (2023)** 5'30"  
for seven trumpets and timpani  
first performance: Orichalcum Brass, St. Michael and All  
Angel's Church, Hathersage, May 2023  
ISMN M 57080 090 2 score: £25.95  
performance materials for hire

### SMALL ENSEMBLE (4-7 PLAYERS)

**Breathless (2016)** 11'  
for brass quintet (2tpt, tbn, hn, tuba)  
first performance: Orichalcum, Victoria Hall, Settle, 27<sup>th</sup>  
November 2016  
ISMN M 57036 879 2 score and parts: £29.95

**Grotesques (2017-18)** 8'  
for fl, cl, ob, bsn  
first performance: Atea Winds, April 2018  
ISMN M 57036 859 4 score and parts: £18.95

**Strike (2014-2015)** 10'30"  
for fl(=picc), bass cl, vln, vc, pf  
first performance: AMGA Ensemble, Sha Tin Town Hall,  
Hong Kong, 28th April 2015  
ISMN M 57036 868 6 score and parts: £36.95

**Swan (2011)** 7'  
for saxophone quartet  
first performance: Lunar Sax Quartet, Late Music, York,  
June 2011  
ISMN M 57036 891 4 score and parts: £24.99

**Velocity (2012)** 10'  
for string quartet  
first performance: Ligeti String Quartet, Late Music,  
York, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
ISMN M 57036 880 8 score and parts: £19.95

## SOLOS, DUOS AND TRIOS

**Au Lapin Agile (2020)** 5'40"  
for flute and guitar (or piano)  
commissioned by Susie Hodder-Williams  
ISMN M 57080 059 9 score and parts (guitar): £9.95  
ISMN M 57080 058 2 score and parts (piano): £8.95

**The Anatomy of Angels (2024)** 7'45"  
for clarinet, violoncello and piano  
ISMN M 57080 121 3 score: £14.95

**Before I fall asleep, the city again... (2021)** 18'  
for flute, viola and harp  
first performance: Trilogie Ensemble, in an  
online broadcast from Helmsley Arts Centre, Yorkshire,  
20<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
ISMN M 57036 970 6 score and parts: £20.95

**Canzone Sospesa (2023)** 6'15"  
for cello and piano  
first performance: Giorgio Lucchini and Marta Ceretta  
of Trio Chimera, Teatro dal Verme, Milan, 2nd  
November 2023  
ISMN M 57080 083 4 score and parts: £6.15

**Chartres (2022)** 7'40"  
for solo viola  
dedicated to Rachel Miller  
first performance: Rachel Miller, Hull Minster, Hull,  
November 2022  
ISMN M 57080 034 6 score: £5.95

**Hiraeth (2015-16)** 13'  
for piano trio  
ISMN M 57036 995 9 score and parts: £13.95

**Jump Cut (2017)** 3'  
for solo clarinet  
dedicated to Zoe Fagerhaug  
first performance: Zoe Fagerhaug, February 2018  
ISMN M 57036 857 0 score: £5.95

**Perle (2024)** 8'30"  
for solo harp  
first performance: Ruth Lee, Late Music, York, March  
2023  
ISMN M 57080 122 0 score: £6.95

**Rough Cut (2015)** 5'10"  
for solo violin  
winner of the CMRC Call for Scores 2015  
first performance: Peter Sheppard-Skaerved, National  
Centre for Early Music, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
ISMN M 57036 676 7 score: £5.95

### Three Pieces for Piano (2015-2020) 13'50"

for solo piano

first performances:

*Angelus* - Duncan Honeybourne, Contemporary Piano  
Soundbites series, Lockdown 2020;

*Metronome* - Mark Hutchinson, York St. John University;  
*From New York to Bedlam* - Josephine Peach, Ripon

Cathedral, 2019

ISMN M 57036 972 0

score: £9.95

### VOICE AND 0-3 INSTRUMENTS

#### The Dark Gate (2017) 12'

for soprano and piano

text by David Vogel

first performance: Peyee Chen and Kate Ledger, Late  
Music, York, July 2017

ISMN M 57036 858 7

score: £8.95

#### As long as forever is: Two Songs of Dylan

##### Thomas (2023-24) 12'5"

for tenor and piano

Dedicated to John and Nicola Goodby

text by Dylan Thomas

first performance: Christopher O'Gorman & David Pipe,  
November 2023

ISMN M 57080 098 8

score: £15.95

### CHOIR, ACCOMPANIED

#### Of Trumpets and Angels (2018) 15'

for soprano soloist, chorus and orchestra 0.0.2.2; 0.2.3.0;  
timpani, strings

text: John Donne, *Sonnets VII and X*

commissioned by Oxford Harmonic Choir

dedicated to the memory of David Cutter

first performance: Sarah Redgwick (soprano) with  
Oxford Harmonic Choir and Orchestra of Stowe Opera,  
conducted by Robert Secret, Oxford Town Hall, 29<sup>th</sup> June  
2019

ISMN M 57036 904 1

full score: £16.95

ISMN M 57036 905 8

vocal score/piano reduction: £11.95

ISMN M 57036 906 5

parts/conductor's score – for hire

#### Fell (2018) 9'

for SATB choir and natural horn

text by Ovid and Shakespear

commissioned by Soon Amore

ISMN M 57080 072 8

full score and part: £8.95

ISMN M 57080 073 5

choral score: £2.95

### CHOIR, UNACCOMPANIED

#### At the Edge of the World (2022) 40'

for SSAATTBB choir and soprano soloists

text by Abi Curtis and medieval sources

first performance: Ex Corde Vocal Ensemble with Anna  
Snow (soprano), dir. Paul Gameson, All Saints Church,  
York, July 2022

ISMN M 57080 076 6

score: £8.95

#### Apocalypse (2012) 25'

for SATB chorus with high soprano soloist

text from *Pricke of Conscience* (modern translation by  
Daniela Nunnari and David Lancaster)

first performance: The 24, cond. Robert Hollingworth,  
June 2014

first broadcast: Danish Radio Vocal Ensemble,  
Christian's Church, Copenhagen, February 2016

ISMN M 57036 856 3

choral score: £8.95

#### Fallen (2009) 4'30"

for SATB choir and two soprano soloists

text by Rumi, combined with a traditional Persian  
proverb

first performance: York St. John University Chamber  
Choir, Canterbury Cathedral, 2010

ISMN M 57036 919 5

score: £2.95

#### Feathers (2019) 6'

for SSATB choir

text by Ovid

first performance: Elysian Singers, St Pancras Church,  
London, November 2022

ISMN M 57080 030 8

choral score: £2.75

#### Magnificat (2021) 6'

for SSATB choir

text by Ovid

ISMN M 57080 029 2

choral score: £2.75

#### A York Passion (2023-25) 40'

for S(S)ATB chorus in 8 movements

text from the York Mystery Cycle

first performance: 'Crucifixion' Elysian Singers, March  
2024

## SELECTED RECORDINGS



### Contemporary Piano soundbites

**Includes:** *Angelus*

Performed by Duncan Honeybourne

Label: Prima Facie PFCD140

Released: July 2020



### Orchestra Masters Vol. 3

**Includes:** *Strata*

Performed by the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor Mikel Toms

Label: Ablaze ar-00026

Released: March 2016



### Bowie, Berlin & Beyond

**Includes:** *Swan*

Performed by Delta Saxophone Quartet

Label: FMR CD473-0418

Released: January 2018

## FORTHCOMING CDs

**Resonus Classics,**

For release in 2022

**Includes:** *Apocalypse*

Performed by Ex Corda Vocal Ensemble