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David LANCASTER

(b. 1960)



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

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

In recent times, much of David's music has been concerned with forging 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 has recently completed a new choral work *At the Edge of the World*, in collaboration with poet Abi Curtis, inspired by the extraordinary visions of 14th century anchoress Emma Raughton, to be issued on CD on the Resonus Classics label.

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 of the same name which hangs in the V&A Museum.

In recent years David's music has been characterised by greater 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 his current projects include settings of poetry by John Goodby. He has also set older texts by David Vogel, who perished at Auschwitz in 1944 (in *The Dark Gate*), and John Donne, whose Holy Sonnets provided the text for a major choral/orchestral work *Of Trumpets and Angels*, commissioned by

For more information on UYMP and our composers, and for general inquiries, please contact

Tel: 01904 332434

e-mail: info@uymp.co.uk

For sales, hire and administration, please contact Administrator: Claire Irwin

Tel: 01904 332434

e-mail: claire@uymp.co.uk

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 new recording by the Ex Corde Vocal Ensemble will be released in the autumn of 2022.

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, a director of York's Late Music concert series and MD of York Railway Institute Band. David lives in York with his partner Bridget.

PRESS QUOTES

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

ORCHESTRA

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

SMALL ENSEMBLE (4-7 PLAYERS)

Breathless (2016) 11'
for brass quintet (2tp, tbn, hn, tuba)
first performance: Orichalcum, Victoria Hall, Settle, 27th
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,
Unitarian Chapel, St. Saviourgate, 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,
Unitarian Chapel, St. Saviourgate, York, 5th May 2012
ISMN M 57036 880 8 score and parts: £19.95

SOLOS, DUOS AND TRIOS

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

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

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, 9th 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, Unitarian Chapel, St. Saviourgate, York, July
2017
ISMN M 57036 858 7 score: £8.95

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 TrumpSecret, Oxford Town Hall, 29th
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

CHOIR, UNACCOMPANIED

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

Apocalypse (2012)

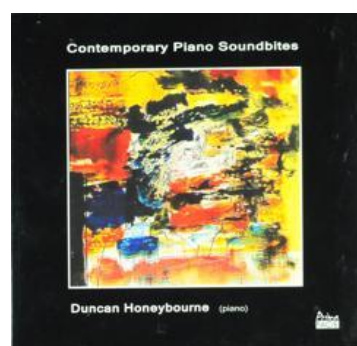
25'

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

RECORDINGS



Contemporary Piano soundbites

Includes: *Angelus*

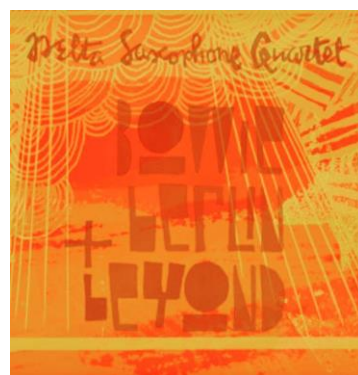
Performed by Duncan Honeybourne
Label: Prima Facie PFCD140
Released: July 2020



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