



Philip W. J.
STOPFORD
(b. 1977)

Sacred Choral Music



Grace Davidson, Soprano
Choir of St Luke's, Chelsea • Chelsea Camerata
Rupert Jeffcoat, Organ
Jeremy Summerly

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11 O sing unto the Lord a new song (2019) Text: Bible – Old Testament, Psalm 98 from <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i> (1662), translated by Myles Coverdale (1488–1569)	4:18		

Philip Stopford began his musical career as a chorister at Westminster Abbey with choirmasters Simon Preston and Martin Neary. He was an organ scholar at Truro and Canterbury Cathedrals and Keble College, Oxford, where he gained a degree in music and directed the college choir. He was appointed assistant organist at Chester Cathedral in 2000 and director of music at Belfast Cathedral in 2003. In 2016, he was appointed director of music at Christ Church Bronxville, New York. He returned to the UK in 2021 to be with his family and continue his composing and conducting work. Much of Stopford's music is published by American companies Hal Leonard and MorningStar Music. Select titles are self-published at www.philipstopford.com, where many of his orchestrations are available for purchase. Music has been commissioned and recorded by choirs such as VOCES8, St Paul's Cathedral Choir, Truro Cathedral Choir and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

The music of Philip Stopford is a product of the English choral tradition, yet much of it is also aimed at the American market, not least because Stopford has an American publisher and worked for over five years as a conductor in the state of New York. Stopford's *Missa Deus nobiscum* (Mass of 'God with us') was written in 2018 and is a fount of memorable tunes and colourful orchestration. Crucially, all of Stopford's music is dynamically amenable – it sounds familiar even on first listening. Most of Stopford's orchestrations are made after the event as a textural expansion of a pre-existing organ or piano part, but the *Missa Deus nobiscum* was conceived from the outset as a piece for choir and orchestra. While some sections have been performed as part of the liturgy, the four-movement *Gloria in excelsis* is too expansive for inclusion in most celebrations of the Roman Mass or Anglican Eucharist: *Missa Deus nobiscum* is at root a sacred concert work. Written for the 150th anniversary of the Methodist College in Belfast, the vocal parts are approachable, the orchestral parts integral and colourful, and the soprano soloist adds scintillating glamour to the whole. The recurring melody of the *Kyrie* is inclusive and stirring, while the central 'Christe' section allows the choir to sensitise the movement with vibrant a cappella singing. The additive rhythms of the

outer movements of the *Gloria* are energetic and ebullient, in contrast to the monolithic *Domine Fili* movement, which acts as the fulcrum for the whole Mass. In both the *Sanctus* and the upper-voice *Benedictus*, the *Osanna* text is woven into the effect of the preceding music rather than standing alone as an isolated shout of jubilation. The *Agnus Dei* which follows makes measured and inexorable progress towards its visceral cry for peace at the end of the work. In Stopford's hands, the setting of the Mass is a journey rather than a sequence of set pieces, although the work's architecture does not rely on charting its progress with self-referential motifs (except within the opening movement, where the tripartite text is clearly delineated).

Canticle of Christening was written for the baptism of Elizabeth Summerly at the London church of St Luke's, Chelsea, where this recording was made. Philip Stopford is Effie's godfather, and this anthem for unaccompanied choir sets words from the Gospel according to St Luke as well as words written specially for the occasion by Effie's mother, Helly. The harmonic gestures are deliberately child-like, in keeping with the texts – the flattened sixth chord on the word 'gift', and the brightly-textured setting of the words 'starlight' and 'highest height' are particularly evident. Indeed, the sentiment of the whole piece is touchingly naïve and wide-eyed. The first performance was given at Baptismal Evensong on 24 July 2016 by the Choir of St Luke's, Chelsea, conducted by Effie's father, Jeremy.

He is risen is scored for brass quintet, timpani and organ, and was composed in 2020 for the centenary celebrations at Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Mrs Alexander's celebratory verses from 1846 receive a patently optimistic setting, initially kept under wraps, but ultimately bursting with evangelical fervour at the words 'brighter far'.

O sing unto the Lord a new song was commissioned in 2019 for the choirs of Bruton Parish in Williamsburg, Virginia on the occasion of the installation of the church's new pipe organ, built by Dobson of Lake City, Iowa. By contrast, the John Compton organ of St Luke's, Chelsea was celebrating its 90th anniversary when this recording was made. The harp and trumpets referenced in *Psalms 98*

allow an organ to show some of its individual colours. Thereafter, the closing words of the psalm that deal with righteousness and equity are given to choir alone.

The Lord is my shepherd was composed at the end of 2021 for the postponed 225th anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina in 2022. Founded in 1795, the church had been looking forward to its anniversary celebrations in 2020, but like so many events in 2020, SARS-CoV-2 put paid to the best-laid plans. The accompaniment of strings forms a quietly sumptuous bed of sound for this well-known psalm text, one of Myles Coverdale's most enduring of Biblical translations. The opening words are repeated at the end of the piece, but adapted to form the sentence 'The Lord is my shepherd for ever'.

O clap your hands was commissioned in 2021 by Duane Wall in celebration and honour of his wife Myrle. First performed by the Choir of The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, the anthem's jaunty word setting becomes a feast of syncopation at the words 'God is gone up with a merry noise'. Irrepressibly celebratory, the ending is one of Stopford's most deliberately final.

Locus iste is the earliest piece on this recording. It is based on the ancient fifth-mode Gradual, which is proper to the Dedication of a Church. This motet was commissioned to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the dedication of St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta, Australia in 2013. The plainchant is sung here by sopranos, and the choir's material grows out of the melody of the chant. The instrumentation is underpinned by the organ, and the brass and timpani writing augments the sound of the pipework. However, at the recapitulation in the closing minute of the piece, the two trumpets begin to fanfare in canon, thereby creating an impressive martial ending to this festal motet.

Psalms 150 was written in 2017 for David Spicer, founder of the Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival in Hartford, Connecticut. Given the nature of the commission, the organ rises to the challenge of describing the battery of

instruments named in the last psalm of the psalter. Trumpets, lute and harp, cymbals, strings and pipe: all are name-checked and word-painted in short order. While this anthem is a showcase for the organ, at the final appearance of the word 'praise', the choir is heard on its own in six-voice harmony, not exactly proving the dominance of animate beings over a machine, but clearly keeping the organ in its place.

I heard the voice of Jesus say was composed in 2022 for Fisherwick Church Choir in Belfast. The words of this well-known hymn were written by Horatius (Horace) Bonar, minister and poet, shortly after he joined the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. Stopford's lilting 5/4 metre and homophonic setting for choir and organ is one of the composer's most lyrical and straightforward settings to date. The words are most usually associated with a folk song chosen by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1906 for *The English Hymnal* (dubbed 'Kingsfold' after the village in the English county of Sussex where Vaughan Williams encountered the tune). Where Vaughan Williams underlines the robustness of the text, Stopford chooses instead to focus on its restfulness and tenderness.

God is our hope and strength was written for the Southwestern Adventist University Singers and was first performed during the 2022 Southwestern Music Festival at the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, Texas. The scoring for choir with brass quintet, suspended cymbal, four timpani, piano and organ is unusual, yet offers a rich variety of sounds to underpin this most dense of psalm texts. Waters rage and swell, mountains shake quietly but threateningly, and the brass instruments act either as a sustained backdrop to the choir or as belligerent protagonists. The filmic closing section ('Be still') dovetails imperceptibly into a recapitulation of the opening of the anthem and offers the listener a glimpse of assured supremacy.

Jeremy Summerly

Photo © Susan Porter Thomas



Grace Davidson

Grace Davidson's vocal and intuitive armoury enable her to project the vivid contrasts of mood at the heart of her favourite Baroque repertoire with near-divine ease, especially so in the works of Monteverdi, J.S. Bach, Handel and Vivaldi. Davidson's purity of tone has also attracted many contemporary composers, most notably as the spine-tingling soloist for Eric Whitacre, Ola Gjeilo, John Rutter, Joe Hisaishi, Harry Gregson-Williams, Howard Shore's *The Lord of the Rings Symphony* and Max Richter, who chose her as the solo voice for his 8-and-a-half hour work *Sleep*. Davidson set the foundations for her career as a scholarship student at London's Royal Academy of Music.

gracedavidsonsooprano.com

Photo © St Luke's, Chelsea



Rupert Jeffcoat

Rupert Jeffcoat was born in Edinburgh and was a scholar at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. Appointed music director of Coventry Cathedral in 1997, he led its choirs on tours to Russia, Japan, South Africa and across Europe, before moving to Brisbane as organist of St John's Cathedral. Jeffcoat studied under Peter Hurford and Peter le Huray, and has recorded as a continuo player with Emma Kirkby, broadcast as an accompanist for the BBC Singers, and works extensively with Ex Cathedra and the University of Birmingham. A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (as a prizewinner), he also holds a doctorate in composition, and has served St Luke's, Chelsea since 2011.

Choir of St Luke's, Chelsea

In 1824 a choir of men and boys was founded within the new parish church of Chelsea in south-west London. The first director of music was John Goss (composer of the hymn *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven*) and in the early 20th century the choir was conducted by John Ireland (composer of the hymn *My song is love unknown*). In 1986 the choir was re-founded as a mixed voice choir. In addition to its liturgical duties, the choir sings evening concerts and undertakes two cathedral tours per year. Usually, these residencies are within the UK, but recently the choir has visited Germany, Belgium and the United States. The Choir of St Luke's featured in all ten episodes of BBC Radio 4's *A Cause for Caroling* and on St Luke's Day 2023 broadcast Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3.



Photo © Nicolas Haigh

Chelsea Camerata

Chelsea Camerata was founded in 2012 in order to work with the Choir of St Luke's, Chelsea. More recently, the orchestra has worked with other choirs in venues outside London, particularly in Oxford and East Sussex. Chelsea Camerata, which also appears as a standalone ensemble, is a modern instrument orchestra, and since its foundation has concentrated on the performance of music by composers as diverse as Mozart, Fauré, Brahms, Orff, Warlock and John Rutter, with a particular focus on compositions of the last 30 years. Comprising anything from 10 to 25 performers, the orchestra brings a transparency to its sound that makes it an impressively supportive partner to choral textures. Chelsea Camerata is currently led by violinist David O'Leary.



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Jeremy Summerly

Jeremy Summerly is the founder-conductor of Oxford Camerata and director of music at the London church of St Luke's, Chelsea. He has conducted local choirs and orchestras in locations as far afield as Melbourne, Cape Town, Tokyo, Helsinki, San Francisco and Bethlehem. Since 2012 he has been the conductor of Mayfield Festival Choir and artistic director of Mayfield Festival of Music and the Arts. He was director of music at St Peter's College, Oxford from 2015 until 2019 and was elected a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music in 2017. In 2019 he began a three-year tenure as visiting professor of music history at Gresham College in the City of London, and since 2022 he has been director of studies in music at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge.

Missa Deus nobiscum (Mass of 'God with us') (2018)

1 Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

*Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.*

2 Gloria in excelsis

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus
bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.

*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace
to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory.*

3 Domine Deus

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

*Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, Father almighty.*

4 Domine Fili

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

*Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us,
who takes away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer,
who is seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.*

5 Quoniam tu solus Sanctus

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus.
Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

*For you alone are Holy,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

6 Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

*Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory:
Hosanna in the highest.*

7 Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord:
Hosanna in the highest.*

8 Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Roman Catholic Mass

*O Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.*

9 Canticle of Christening (2016)

Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Bible – New Testament, taken from the Gospel according to St Luke, 18:16–17

O child of God, O child of mine,
Thou art a gift so rare, so fine.
Thou art the starlight, moonshine, sun,
The silence when the day is done.
Thou art the gleam on Angels' flight,
A blessing from the highest height.

Helly Summerly (b. 1979), (2016)

10 He is risen (2020)

He is risen, he is risen:
tell it out with joyful voice.
He has burst his three days' prison;
let the whole wide earth rejoice.
Death is conquered, man is free,
Christ has won the victory.

Come, ye sad and fearful-hearted,
with glad smile and radiant brow.
Lent's long shadows have departed;
all his woes are over now,
and the passion that he bore,
sin and pain can vex no more.

Come, with high and holy hymning,
hail our Lord's triumphant lay.
Not one darksome cloud is dimming
yonder glorious morning ray,
breaking o'er the purple east,
symbol of our Easter feast.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895), from Verses from Holy Scripture (1846)

11 O sing unto the Lord a new song (2019)

O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things. With his own right hand, and with his holy arm, hath he gotten himself the victory. The Lord declared his salvation; his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and truth toward the house of Israel and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God. Shew yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands: sing, rejoice, and give thanks. Praise the Lord upon the harp; sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving. With trumpets also and shawms, O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King. Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is; the round world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord: for he is come to judge the earth. With righteousness shall he judge the world and the people with equity.

Bible – Old Testament, Psalm 98 from The Book of Common Prayer (1662), translated by Myles Coverdale (1488–1569)

12 The Lord is my shepherd (2021)

The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me; thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. The Lord is my shepherd for ever.

Bible – Old Testament, Psalm 23 from The Book of Common Prayer (1662), translated by Myles Coverdale

13 O clap your hands (2021)

O clap your hands together, all ye people: O sing unto God with the voice of melody.
For the Lord is high, and to be feared: he is the great King upon all the earth.
He shall subdue the people under us: and the nations under our feet.
He shall choose our inheritance for us: even the worship of Jacob, whom he loved.
God is gone up with a merry noise: and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.
O sing praises, sing praises unto our God: O sing praises, sing praises unto our King.
For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.
God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon his holy seat.
O clap your hands together, all ye people: O clap your hands.

Bible – Old Testament, Psalm 47:1–8 from The Book of Common Prayer (1662), translated by Myles Coverdale

14 Locus iste (2013)

Locus iste a Deo factus est,
inaestimabile sacramentum:
irreprehensibilis est.

*This place was made by God,
a priceless sacrament:
it is without reproach.*

Anonymous, from ancient Roman Catholic liturgy – Gradual for the Dedication of a Church

15 Psalm 150 (2017)

O praise God in his holiness: praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him in his noble acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him in the sound of the trumpet: praise him upon the lute and harp.
Praise him in the cymbals and dances: praise him upon the strings and pipe.
Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals: praise him upon the loud cymbals.
Let every thing that hath breath: praise the Lord.

Bible – Old Testament, Psalm 150 from The Book of Common Prayer (1662), translated by Myles Coverdale

16 I heard the voice of Jesus say (2022)

I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was: weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.
I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold, I freely give
the living water, thirsty one; stoop down and drink and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.
I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk till travelling days are done.

Horatius Bonar (1808–1889) from Hymns, Original and Selected (1846)

17 God is our hope and strength (2022)

God is our hope and strength: a very present help in trouble.
The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved: and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea.
Though the waters thereof rage and swell: and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.
God is our hope and strength. The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God: the holy place of the
tabernacle of the most Highest.
God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen
make much ado, and the kingdoms are moved: but God hath shewed his voice, and the earth shall melt away. The
Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge. O come hither, and behold the works of the Lord: what
destruction he hath brought upon the earth. He maketh wars to cease in all the world: he breaketh the bow, and
knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire. Be still then, and know that I am God: I will be
exalted among the heathen, and I will be exalted in the earth. Be still then, and know that I am God. The Lord of
hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.
God is our hope and strength.

Bible – Old Testament, Psalm 46 from The Book of Common Prayer (1662), translated by Myles Coverdale

Philip Stopford is admired in Britain and America for his beautifully crafted music, rooted in the Anglican tradition. His works are memorable and colourful, as these world premiere recordings demonstrate. The biggest piece on this album is the *Missa Deus nobiscum*, a sacred concert work with a scintillating role for soprano soloist that displays Stopford's compositional skill, creating a journey rather than a sequence of set piece movements. Elsewhere, in pieces for a variety of locations and occasions, his music is evocative, filmic and vividly celebratory.

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Sacred Choral Music

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WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Grace Davidson, Soprano **2 5**

Choir of St Luke's, Chelsea • Chelsea Camerata **1-8 10 12 14 17**

Rupert Jeffcoat, Organ **10 11 13-17**

Jeremy Summerly

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