

# 'Sing unto the Lord a newly-released song' - contemporary sacred music through the ages.

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Preacher: Edward Norman

[ 0 : 00 ] I was asked by Alexandra, who's doing a good imitation of the mayor this morning, word of book, or else. I couldn't, for the life of me, she was a very quick, that I'll just message on my cell phone, introduce Edward Norman, please.

So I quickly went through, well, why am I even asked to do this? I said, well, I have coffee with the Normans on a very regular basis, both of them. And I thought that may be the reason for that.

That was a bit vague. And I thought, no, no, I know. Because Alexander Richmond knows that in grade nine, I played the French horn. So that clicked. I suddenly realized that's the reason they have me.

I know a bit about music. I have a background in the French horn. It was very short, and they asked me, I got a passing grade in grade nine if I promised not to take it anymore.

That's not the kind of story that Ed Norman's had with music. He has a very distinguished career in the world of music, especially on the organ. He's been a long-time organist at St. John's Shaughnessy, and he's much in demand around the town and other places, concerts and other music organ events.

[ 1 : 12 ] So I'm a very distinguished gentleman. I'm pleased to welcome him amongst us this morning. Edward. Thank you, Harvey.

Much too generous. One of the things I do do is I'm on faculty part-time at Trinity Western in the music department, working with a delightful and very exciting young choral director called Dr. Joel Tranquilla, who is introducing a lot of new music to the students.

His predecessor, Dr. Wes Jansen, a very dear friend of mine, also did the same thing. It's just that this guy is perhaps emphasizing it a little more and challenging them through music, which is not always predictable at all.

We had a concert in the end of last semester in which some of the magnificent music, including Frank Martin's Mass, which is very, very difficult indeed, double choir and some very original harmonic characteristics was played, as well as a number of other things.

Canadian compose hot off the press. Joel has an ear for music with real integrity and structural integrity. Some people were sitting behind.

[ 2 : 39 ] I don't say this to mock them in the least, but I think it's revealing. There was a group of people behind me, older, and the gentleman at the end of the first half said, well, I was hoping for a Beatles medley.

And one of his female companions announced that she didn't like that music. It didn't sound right. And it was in Latin, reminded me of Catholics, she said.

And off they went for their coffee. And ironic, really, what the gentleman wanted was really what he would probably call an upbeat contemporary kind of service music, when in fact they had been given real contemporary Christian music.

And so I've often been puzzled. One more illustration. In the church, which will remain nameless, in the office I heard a secretary saying, yes, that's quite right, yes, that's the morning service, our upbeat service is in the evening.

Which, if you happen to be the music director, is discouraging. So the term contemporary is being flung around and is being hijacked by a very powerful praise and worship industry to enhance and get people to assume certain things about a certain kind of music.

[ 4 : 10 ] And I thought, therefore, two things were important. And to try and clarify that, and to do so by going back through some salient points in music history and see what contemporary meant.

We're living at a time when this division over music in the church tends to rest on a view, as someone once said to me, I'm tired of singing 500-year-old hymns.

Oh, dear. You know, our history and the richness of past eras and the strengths of different periods in both poetry and music just don't count sometimes in this.

You can hardly call it a debate. There are these assumptions. So let's see what happened. If we listen to a little bit of William Byrd, who here is, let's see now, around 1588, is giving us some music based on Psalm 33.

Who is the man who desires life that values length of days to see good things? Restrain your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. It is, of course, in Latin.

[ 5 : 21 ] Byrd wrote both in Latin and English, as the Reformation upheavals swung around him. Many of these composers in and around the Chapel Royal and London itself had to play safe.

But this is... I wonder why I don't have sound. Ah. Is that too loud?

No, it's just right. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah.

Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. A. Ah. Ah. Ah.

Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah.

[ 6 : 46 ] Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. to a head at certain points in a vertical harmonic ascent. It's very gorgeous music, designed very much with the cathedral chapel royal acoustic in mind.

This wouldn't sound quite so well in there. And then the same composer is able to set this text, which is, I need to remind myself, if women could be fair and never fond, oh, that their beauty might continue still, I would not marvel though they made men happy.

Same things are going on in a different, lighter style.

Imitation, copying, passing off one to another, not unlike in a jazz ensemble. Harmonically and stylistically, you can see there's a lot in common.

This is music designed not necessarily for people who have had detailed professional training, but with an eye, yes, it would have to be for the educated classes at this time, 16th century.

[ 8 : 32 ] Nevertheless, for kind of after dinner, leaning on the mantelpiece, madrigal style singing. The point I want to make there is notice how close the styles are.

And you can kind of almost imagine flipping across. Well, tell me, well, don't tell me, think what this reminds you of.

The point I want to make there is a terrible recording, but what is that?

The sign of... The sign of... Ah-ha! No, it's not. It's a very... It's a salacious text from a secular opera, to which Handel later set...

That with... Yes, yes, yes, yes, thank you. Set, of course. Just listen to a bit more of this.

- [ 9 : 50 ] But isn't that interesting? It could take something out of a totally different context, and apply it in a sacred, if you will, set... Set, uh, segment. Setting.
- That in itself should raise some questions in our mind, and for artists, particularly in this whole issue of Christian music, Christian art, verses...
- This has to be, surely, one of the most glorious of the Messiah choruses.
- This is... Some of those earlier Renaissance features of passing off from one voice to another, and counterpoint, and point-counterpoint, apply here, though it's a mixture, because it comes to this great chordal assertion.
- So as we listen to this, I know I've played it before, but as we listen to this, just, we need to perhaps pick up on the elements in it, the variety.
- [ 11 : 12 ] A bit like looking at a flower, you know, and putting apart, and seeing how it's layered, or a bird's wing. You've got a dance rhythm in the bass line, setting the character.
- You've got this dotted rhythm, which always implies excitement of some anticipation. Sometimes it's in the form of a French overture for the arrival of the king.
- You've got chordal, what we call monody, and you've got counterpoint, polyphony. I find that such a delightful chorus, and of course, right through Handel's Messiah, which is an extraordinarily varied work, stylistically at least.
- Of course, it's also extraordinary for the setting of the text, and the choice of the scriptural text. But musically, it has something of everything in it. It's amazing.
- So, this was, there's still this, a closeness of style, as we move into the Baroque, well, we're well into the Baroque era.
- [ 12 : 32 ] We've had to skip a lot. And then, if we just, we can't leave that era, without looking at the person who brought things to a fine point, indeed, Handel did, but for me, it's Johann Sebastian.
- Christmas Oratorio. We praise you, God, though our voices are weak, we pray that they are acceptable to you.
- So, dance rhythm again. This is very vertical.
- Now you start getting contrasting elements. Notice also the different kinds of orchestration or instrumentation.
- Brass is used sparingly. It had to be because of the difficulty of the instruments, but limitations of the instruments, just like icing on the cake. We have woodwind playing in here, as well as the inevitable strings.
- [ 14 : 02 ] And the voices expected to be as nimble as the instruments. Baroque wrote for his choristers as though for instruments. He made no allowances.
- Another thing, perhaps, to keep in mind is the exuberance and joy in these, these two composers particularly, is so good at expressing.
- That's an important point, I think, especially as we consider the term upbeat. This is a contemporary. Johann David Heineken is a Dresden composer, but writing here in secular style.
- Again, the dance, dance impacts Baroque music deeply. Dance is going way back into the Renaissance and early.
- There is about Baroque music, predominance of major keys, which was limited to some extent by the temperaments they could work in.
- [ 15 : 19 ] But nevertheless, major keys and a lot, the predominance of fast. Later on, in the Romantic period, particularly, there's a predominance of slow.

If you look at a, how much, how many, in the good old days of the long playing record, how much bark you could stuff onto one disc. Or an early Beethoven symphony.

Perhaps you could get two on, number one and number two. But when it comes to the choral symphony, you need two discs just to cover that one work. Things start to expand, and the slow movements, particularly, start to take on a rather, I mean, I don't mean this meanly, a self-reflective intensity.

They require time to work themselves out. These gentlemen are, from the Baroque period, were artisans. They worked within the style they'd inherited, which was deeply influenced by the dance suite, not solely, but, and also opera.

In fact, talking of singing, opera-like, cantata, work, you'll recognize this.

[ 16 : 33 ] Especially if it plays. Come along, please. This thing, sorry, this thing turns itself off.

Dear, oh dear. Oh yeah. So, association of ideas, what do you think of when you hear sheep may safely graze?

This is being sung in German. Where is the young lady and she saying to me please praise God.

I'll ask her if she doesn't me. Amen. To admit she I've and I?

I can't say to her story. this is Bach yeah sheep may safely graze it's cantata 802 I think is that right no 208 oh dear forget that I'm not sure of the BWV number but what I wanted to ask you is would you like that played at a solemn occasion or do you think it's appropriate for communion or things like that because it's got nothing to do with Christianity at all it's it's a secular cantata and celebrating kind of country life rural life in fact the rest of the cantata though he reworked it later for sacred purposes is not that you know it's not park at his best but that of course is a famous piece and rightly but we assume

[ 18 : 37 ] I did for years that we're the sheep we all like sheep who've gone astray and that we can now dwell safely because of the work of Christ and his governance over our life it doesn't matter that I perhaps you slipped up on that it seems to me the world and the Christian church is not going to be shaken by that but it's interesting again how we can be sometime we make assumptions which don't really work there was another there is another instance of Bach crossing crossing the gulf between secular and sacred and remember that all this music is contemporary Bach was told virtually not quite cantata please for Easter wrote 200 of them for church use his chorale preludes the organ music all fresh off you can't say the press very little of Bach's music was printed a little bit but hot off the pen you were getting contemporary music by

Christians Bach found this got to sing it unfortunately a little theme a Dutch folk tune and out of it he made out of it he made a few which he very likely played at the end of a service he often split we think his preludes and fugues fantasies and fugues into before and after they worship so here he is taking poaching if you will from the everyday and transforming it to the glory as all he apparently sought to do in his music to the glory of God and again the fugal skill pedal so different voices have the derivative of this folk tune in different tonalities and they play off against one another it's interesting to me that in the last century early in it especially people like

Ray Form Williams and the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham often said no no this is no good too many notes there's too much going on I think it was Sir Thomas Beecham who said too much counterpoint Protestant counterpoint at that which I think is a great loss but it's a very significant viewpoint there was a suspicion of this music and a neglect of it so that it actually vanished almost from the musical scene until Mendelssohn the 19th century early 19th century set about rediscovering it I'm not sure if he accidentally stumbled on it but he certainly presented a famous concert in which he presented a number of Bach's significant works including some organ music and then from there on Bach came back into the public view but even as late as the late

Victorian era there were people like the conductor Malcolm Sargent who trained as a cathedral apprentice organist which is the way it was done in those days and his organ teacher at Peterborough Cathedral would say Bach hmm all right well you better learn it there's a suspicion there was no big tune and it didn't address in a way that was by then in full flower it didn't address this inward looking my feelings how I feel about things how this affects me the self was not focused on in this music the self is not focused on in that way there's reflective music of course I haven't played much but my feeling as a musician is that it lifts us and points us heavenward and in the case of the secular music for a non-believer it still pushes outwards whereas so much of the romantic heritage and I'm not knocking it it's some gorgeous contributions from the romantic era nevertheless there tends to be a more inward in the internal process in the listening and in the way we're addressed and of course it's very prone to ridiculous manipulation just continuing because I want time for lots of discussions

I'm trying to be good today and not run anywhere near late so let's see if I can keep to that at this point after Bach's and Handel's death in 1750 1759 1759 for Handel it is extraordinary it's not because they die so much but what they represented just comes to a very abrupt end even Bach's own sons there's no time to play an example but CPE Bach or Johann Bach their music you think that sounds like Haydn is quite different now the tune the melody is becoming more prominent at the expense of other parts so instead of being a violinist in a Brandenburg concerto with all this kind of melodic motivic interest that's being handed off to you by the first violin say now you find yourself going and that becomes intensified in the romantic repertoire you know the famous double bass player who says

[ 25 : 18 ] I don't know what are you playing tonight I don't know it goes oh you mean yeah so that's the one whereas if you've just gone through a Bach violin concerto accompanying a soloist or conducting a cantata or singing in it you have lines of requiring constant and equally spread any Marxist will be pleased to notice equally allotted busyness and responsibility musically your notes are no less important than the person even in a Brandenburg concerto or a violin concerto than the soloist or the concertati segment of the ensemble by the time we reach we're getting now to the end of the 18th century we reach Mozart at his in his last year you can see how music has

I know you know these pieces but you can see how music has moved on in an extraordinary way and I know there's some question about the sorry this is very annoying would you just let me do something here a second to stop this there's some question about the the authorship of much of the Mozart Requiem but it's still really Mozart and Mozartish if not you know significantly Mozart so let's try all right we'll try again I do apologize I hate technical glitches but there they are there we go so the opening movement of the Mozart Requiem the arrival of the clarinet or in fact basset horns but close neighbor totally different musical language static bass line at this point building of tension through repetition cascading still though some of that contrapuntal handing off in the vocal lines crescendos and diminuendos now very important all these expressive devices

I don't mean to imply there wasn't such an instinct in Baroque music it's just it had to be handled differently on the harpsichord and the organ you had to move from keyboard one to keyboard two to get a contrast like in the Italian concerto on the organ you sometimes had three different manuals or keyboards upon which you would set predetermined registrations and you've got what they call terraced dynamics loud soft not even NF this gradation characteristic comes in much later actually with some of Bach's sons CPE Bach particularly yet again we still see that the styles are still somewhat close despite this snap with the death of

Bach and Handel these are simple little divertimenti which might it's suggested even have been played by guys sitting in a barbershop this has been done very professionally very simple but still that same kind of expressive language there's no basso continuo going on that's gone meanwhile what I wonder was happening in the churches in the face of all this now this is a very difficult area to cover because so many different things were happening there was both the Calvinist and the

Lutheran approach to music both very different and it's interesting that Anglicanism seems in Britain at any rate England to a being impacted more by the Calvinist view than the Lutheran so if you lived in these are huge generalizations there just isn't time to go into detail but typically Luther looked for music for the congregation which he had a huge hand in developing and creating and composing for that introduced the foundation stone of the chorale or the Lutheran hymn from which our hymns are derived so Lutheran hymns Moravian exiles going across the Atlantic on a ship which John Wesley was traveling and deeply impacted Wesley was by their singing at the height of a storm in the Atlantic and what they were singing were these chorales presumably he then went on but chiefly through his brother

[ 31 : 21 ] Charles to create the huge deposit of Methodist hymnody which then attracted the ears and eyes of the episcopal establishments and through a number of convolutions we end up with hymns ancient and modern in the middle of the Victorian era and it goes on from there that's very sweeping because there are other people involved but yeah the chorale but room left within the church life for talented music making people who had taken time to rehearse people who had taken time to work their way around some of that music we heard earlier of Bach's or yes let's stick to Bach and they could do things like happens here that is the choir does something significant in the liturgy but it's not for us to participate in not without perhaps disastrous consequences so but we have our hymns so we can do the

Calvinist approach I hesitate to go into this with Dr. Packer sitting here but I think it's fair to say that it was much more austere and in some manifestations including apparently a church in Prince Edward Island there must be others Americans have told me of churches they know there where it's no instruments single line music pitchfork and away you go with metrical psalms which apparently by law was what the Anglicans should have been singing that all fell to pieces and was replaced I think or eradicated with the Tractarian movement so this is how it might have sounded in your local parish church chant m m

Maddie Pryor.

Again, all these recordings are idealistic. It would have been a lot cruder than that, but she's trying to recreate the tradition of the gallery instrumentalists or the gallery music.

Non-robed, non-formal, back of the church, where often the organ would be if it survived. It wasn't doing very well until the 19th century. And it might be just people getting together to play like this.

[ 34 : 20 ] It was often, according to some reports, terrible. I can well imagine. But there is a life to this, when she's doing it.

There's an authenticity there. But, of course, now what we're beginning to see is a divergence, aren't we? We've got the art music developing and the need for professionalism and a public that is left somewhat behind in those matters.

And, of course, many other upheavals, especially post-industrial revolution. The city's burgeoning country culture going down the sink. A lot of cohesion in communities broken.

But this all plays in to what we're looking at. With an eye on this. One of the things that's happening, of course...

Yes, I'm going to skimp. No, I don't want to skip. Well, don't then. LAUGHTER Just to show how this gulf is widening... We're now at the end of the 19th century.

[ 35 : 38 ] Verdi's Requiem. Look at this little gesture to Bach, or Baroque. Sorry, Baroque. Verdi's Requiem. So it's fugal.

However, it is only a gesture. You see, you can hear the orchestra's getting restless.

Ah. Now, for the people singing, the choral society is a phenomenon of the 19th century.

There's a fascinating book on it in English terms. The History of Popular Music. But in the industrial cities... Because this is Verdi.

We're not in England. Nevertheless, there are equivalents. Mendelssohn, Liger. The choral society becomes a massive influence. Sometimes they're tied to factories. Or to industrial cities.

[ 36 : 54 ] The famous one being Huddersfield Choral Society to this day. Brass bands attached to actual brand names of vehicles. Like the Foden Works brass band.

They used to make trucks. And these were top-rate ensembles. And yet, that is where, in a wonderful way, people who couldn't have the sophisticated training of a composer or an instrumentalist heading for the symphonic realm, they could enjoy this music that was being, to some extent, written with them in mind.

So that Mendelssohn can write Elijah with a very demanding orchestral part and very demanding solo work.

But now the choir, drawn from people in all walks of life, can enjoy singing the chorus parts for which the lines have been written sympathetically. Often demanding, but sympathetically.

Doable. Meanwhile, in evangelical circles, this was going, we were still at the end of the 19th century.

[ 38 : 06 ] And the old old glory Brown in the old glory Brown in the old glory The fact that I can cut this off a little is because we know what's coming.

It's very predictable. which I think is significant. So, I'm not knocking it. This was music drawn in many ways from popular idioms by Sankey for the Moody and Sankey revival meetings and there were many imitators.

But the Thousand Sacred Songs and Solos book, which I didn't bring along, went through countless printings, mostly in Britain. But of course, it had come from America.

It had come from the revival tradition of Midwest and South America, Southern America. And, what was I going to say?

Oh yeah. So, the music hall bounce to many of their tunes. The classic, I think I've done this before, is When Jesus Came Into My Heart. It occurred to me, When Jesus came into my heart.

[ 39 : 36 ] That's good. But if you speed it up, you have... You have... And with romanticism, in its more careless manifestations, the rise of sentimentality.

Oh, sentimental expression. This particularly shows up in the mass printing of music for the rising... I have to be class conscious here. It's all right, because I was in it.

Working class and emerging lower middle classes. Hat of a piano. Paul Johnston, the historian, makes this point. Piano building became a burgeoning industry in the...

Between 1815 and 18... I think... 18... 185? No, the age of the modern. 1810, is it? To 1820?

Something like that. He says, all these things happened in that short window and everybody had to have a piano or a harmonium. You must have seen harmoniums.

[ 40 : 48 ] They were very widespread in Canada and manufactured in Ontario and exported. My school had one from Ontario. And it said it was mouse-proof, which I thought was very reassuring.

So you have to have that. And of course, business being business, also very significant. The industry started to emerge for providing and meeting and exploiting the new trend in popular taste.

And so, in its extreme form, early 20th century, the sinking of the Titanic yielded scads of sentimental solos and reflections on this tragedy.

and there would be lurid pictures at the front and a lot of this kind of thing. Meanwhile, things in my side of the fence in which I was trained were getting a bit...

They're okay, but everything seemed bogged down in Brahmsian, or possibly Wagnerian, but more likely, certainly for our purposes, Brahmsian kind of tonality, texture, speed.

[ 42 : 00 ] Brahms music is very plundous in many ways. And it resulted in, no question about it, I won't play examples, it takes too much time, a very solemn, a very slow approach to church music.

And you can hear that, I heard it a lot on the BBC, with their weekly broadcast of Evensalm from a cathedral. It was often beautifully and professionally done, but it would start off with the inspiring and lively, uplifting, O Lord, open thou our wings.

And the choir, with an upper-class accent, was seen, And our man shall take forth thy praise. And it went on like this.

Percy Scholes, who was a Christian and a musicologist, and the editor of the Oxford Companion to Music, says, Our present-day difficulties, says he, writing in 1947, special difficulty of the composer, so in mid-century, mid-20th century, church music of the present day may be referred to as a very boldly experimental mood of the age, has brought into existence new idioms that are yet not accepted by the public in general.

And the composer who finds in one of these his natural means of expression is debarred from the composition of church music. Since no choir master would for a moment think of exposing a congregation to the shock of a plunge into the entirely unfamiliar.

[ 43 : 33 ] And he refers to the fact that it's trapped in music that might have been written in the days of Mendelssohn or at any rate of Brahms. Very interesting.

Poor guy didn't know what was lying around the corner just in the 60s. Michael Tippett's Magnificat.

Contemporary. So was Sankey. All the people I played have been contemporary. So, how about that?

I often thought I'd love to put presented that when Harry was here and see what he said. Mr. Norman. Meanwhile, around the time that was written, a great, the gap now had split and I am of a sufficiently ancient age to remember the rupture culturally that occurred when, certainly in England, Elvis Presley and, who's the bloke with the comments?

Bill Haley and the Comets arrived in Britain and with their movies like Jailhouse Rock and so on, behavior, language, attitude, everything shifted with the, if you will, the traditional, as people would refer to it in church terms, getting more and more defensive, already being defensive, now it's even more so and the other side of the spectrum becoming more radical.

[ 45 : 28 ] I think nothing illustrates this better than a humorous little light-hearted moment with Peter Sellers. It's a take-off on an English rock musician called Tommy Steele who really rocked things in Britain.

People go, oh dear, whatever's happened? So, Peter Sellers does a wonderful BBC, mock interview with you. What can's the future? Well, I don't know.



Well, I reckon that I'm going to stick around doing what I am for a while and rocking and rolling, you know, and singing and all that sort of stuff and I like to leave that part of the show business all together and I like to branch out in the straight side, you know.

So, what do you intend to do? Well, we've been the accent of the announcer that the public don't know about. The class distinction is incredible.

We've been in the archives for hundreds of years. We came across one the other day, it was the trumpet voluntary. Do you mean the trumpet voluntary by Purcell? Yeah.

[ 46 : 32 ] Well, yeah, I think that's the fellow, yeah, that's what Purcell is. And what do you tend to do with the trumpet voluntary? Well, first of all, we're going to do a new arrangement of it completely and a nice sort of beat going behind it and, well, you know, something that taught a lot to, you know, do a bit of joy to.

I mean, you know, when you've got a fellow like me covering nothing and suddenly rocketed it aside them, I mean, you know, you've got to sort of keep your feet on the ground or people go around saying you're a bit of a big Eddie.

Yes. Yes. And if you think that culturally that's an exaggeration, here's a BBC announcer from those days. The first song sets Shakespeare's eighth sonnet.

Music to hear, why hearst thou music sadly? Sweets with sweet war not. Joy delights in joy. Then a setting of Ariel's song from Tempest for Fathom Five by Far Alive.

Mr. Winsley's wide-stepping opening notes set up with cold tinted tabulation which is maintained right through to the death knell with which the song ends. You can see that that would leave perhaps about 98% of the listening population completely isolated.

[ 47 : 50 ] I mourn the loss. I mean, look at CBC. But now the extremities are huge and there's this abyss.

Now, still it's possible to find people singing. Here's a thousand Liverpoolians singing at a quite recently. But everyone will turn out for a hymn sing and it's a little bit of nostalgia and I hope a lot more than that in the hearts of the people.

So thank the Lord that it's not quite lost yet. And in the cathedral, particularly the cathedrals, there was this still, this kind of music can be heard to this day.

I think Terry does this. It's a gorgeous piece by C.V. Stanford, Beate Quorum, Blessed are those who walk in the fear of the Lord. But it's pure Brahms.

Stanford studied in Germany but was one of the rescuers of worship music in the more trained, formal branch in Britain and helped to establish the Royal College of Music.

[ 49 : 44 ] I've got to keep moving if we're going to finish in time for questions. And of course, you require trained people to sing that.

though, before we say ah yes, and fall for what the industry would like, this kind of snooty, that's a piece that the students at Trinity Western are learning.

Students from E-free backgrounds, Mennonite backgrounds have never encountered this kind of music before and they are lacking it up. Let's have a little quiz.

Spot the Christian song. I'm going to really skip them quickly.

Obviously, that's Christian. Okay. You know the song. I know you're listening for the words.

[ 50 : 56 ] That's cheating. It's the music. Okay. And then this. And this.

Yes, is the air I breathe. Yes, it's the air I breathe.

Yes, you did say that. Okay, and then... So, you empowered me, you made me strong.

You filled me up and I could do no wrong. Um, so, what have we got here? Excuse me a moment. Oh, yes. right.

Um, so, do you know which... I expect you know the pieces because you all listen to pop music. So, the last one was, what was that? Who thinks it's Christian?

[ 52 : 10 ] Oh, okay, you're right. Um, it's Madonna. Was it Britney Spears or something? No, it's Madonna. The previous one was Christian. Though I, unfortunately, I don't have the details of the singers because I, um, took it from a medley.

This, that's, any offers? It's a country, isn't it? Hmm? It sounds like a country singer. Yeah, it's Rihanna. And she's not singing about our Lord.

Um, and then this one at the beginning was, um, but the thing is, there's a closeness, isn't there?

At a certain level. They'll say, oh no, it's all the difference in the world, but it's a very, very tightly contained word. Very. Um, um, and the first one was, of course, Christian.

Um, you can tell actually by the quality of the voice sometimes. Here's a gentleman who's a rapper. Um, Toby Mac.

[ 53 : 16 ] It's a rap singer.

He sings overtly about being a good husband and a good father. As a Christian, he does express his faith very specifically. I'm sorry there isn't more time to illustrate it. Um, but with this stuff that's happening across this abyss, you've got this frightening aspect.

He sings the word far off, Betelmania. Who loves Justin Bieber? He's sold over 12 million albums.

Whoa. He's the third most powerful celebrity in the world. Wow. It's after Bieber's show, theology schools, everywhere waiting home to get a picture to get a glance. But these girls are insane.

They are so great with that. Like this boy. It's, it's ridiculous. I mean, and that cannot be discounted as just a bit of fun when growing up.

[ 54 : 31 ] I think the damage could be huge. But anyway, um, I'm just trying to show, that's contemporary. And as we can see and know very well, the church has bought into that.

for, you may feel that's good, necessary. Um, can't have music locked into CB Stanford imitating brands. But, what contemporary, this careless use of the term contemporary, which has now become in itself commodified, it's a weapon almost, is that it can blot out that which is really interesting and really good and really rich in its offering for the church.

And I just want to close by playing a piece which you would never have thought the students of Trinity Western. I accompany them so it's fascinating this whole experience is, uh, watching their reaction to things.

This is brand new for them and the piece is brand new and it's, depicts the angels beaming down on the infant Jesus. It's very moving.

It's called Lux e Arumque, Light and Gold. you can get, this is a high school choir from America, Wichita.

[ 55 : 50 ] It can be done. in Canada.

come out went out Downward bending, looking down on the manger.

Let me just read something from a Benedict, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, when he wrote this. Then we can talk.

The question of how far enculturation can go soon became a very practical one for early... Oh, I'm quoting the wrong thing, I'm so sorry.

Yay! After the cultural revolution of recent decades, we are faced with a challenge no less great than that of the three moments of crisis that we have encountered in our historical sketch.

[ 57 : 33 ] The Gnostic temptation, the crisis at the end of the Middle Ages, and the beginning of modernity. And the crisis at the beginning of the 20th century, which formed the prillion to the still more radical question of the present day.

This is contemporary, but who's contemporary? Who's, by choice, contemporary?

It's odd, isn't it? Satire can often sum it up.

I feel the Sellers interview, which is very old, it's late 50s, mid-50s, sums up the dilemma. It isn't just preference of music. Contemporary in one sense, in its destructive sense, means the way you carry yourself, the way you talk, the way you dress.

Everything starts to go down. And then the behaviour and the language and a lot of other things follow. And faith, as expressed in the church, looks increasingly an object of mockery or irrelevance.

[ 58 : 54 ] It's not fun. You're not going to have girls screaming at the gates when David Short arrives in his car. Which is yet another aspect, the whole issue of fame.

Celebrity? How does that fit into our Lord's teaching and will for us? So there we are. There's a ridiculously fast and very skimpy look at some moments of being contemporary.

Response to, you know, write a new song now. Now, well, we'll talk about it. There we are. So, questions?

Yes? The origins of the pipe organ, because there's the accordion. How did they end up blowing wind into the organs to what they are today? I see in India they have accordions.

Where did the pipe organ originate from? Well, I think it originated with the Chinese sheng. Which was a bowl with just a few pipes sticking out of it. And it blew into that.

[ 60 : 12 ] The Romans apparently had some kind of hydrolys organ. And it's difficult to see how that would have worked. But I suppose there is a carving of it. A pressed water pressure which would push air through a pipe.

I can't imagine it would be very good for the Bach fugue. But it starts there and then grows. It's a fascinating history. Subject of another time.

Question? Yes. Sorry to interrupt. This is a big question. You know, let's face it. Types of music have always made me come out of worldly music.

And then you have the kind of sort of counterpart. As we've shown, yeah. Yeah. The big question today is, do you stay mainline with more which is sacred and more to the holy aspect of God?

Or do you realize you've got young people who've been cultured with contemporary music. And would you have the number of young people, especially here at night, if you didn't have Christian contemporary music.

[ 61 : 09 ] What do you do with worldly people if you're going to invite them into the sound of the gospel in a place? If they've been used to a certain type of music and they hate mainline music, you know, from a past era.

So, you know, the Bible does say, love not the world. It says he was a friend of the world, he was the enemy of gods. But, you know, with these two variations of thought, you yourself being in the music, what do you think of?

Well, I battled with that long and hard, especially with our evening service when I was here. Just, I mean, philosophically I did. I joined in. But I feel that last piece I played and watching these kids, by the way, these are not music students necessarily who are learning this stuff and taking to it and going, wow.

Wow. Now, that's ridiculous. We can't have that every night at St. John's. And I'm not, and I actually want to lift myself out of the St. John's. I'm not being personal about this.

But a typical, I live under a family that goes to a distinguished church here and their children are in this mode right now as young teenagers. I don't quite know how you get around this, but I do think the knee-jerk reaction, the predictable response of young people shouldn't be capitulated and shouldn't be in some loving kind of way.

[ 62 : 27 ] It's a huge undertaking. It's educational. But I do think we can start in the church by nudging in options, alternatives. I think Celtic music is a very good start.

I know of churches where that is the case. Everything is fret, bass. Incidentally, that's being driven by the fact that churches like Fireside are portable.

They have to get out of there at the end of their service. They can't even have a piano. They have to pack their instruments and get out. Get rid of the PA.

Why stop imitating vocally and compositionally the pop industry? And I think one key is to try and point out to kids that they are marketed and targeted in a severe way.

This is bottom line, multi-billion dollar industry. And Wittenbach, writing in *Worship for the Glory of God*, a recently released book, he's in Wheaton, says one of the major tasks of the evangelical church in its worship is to rescue it from the praise and worship industry.

[ 63 : 38 ] And I think if there's authenticity, and above all, if there is truth, the power of the word evident, it will take longer perhaps for the word to get around, you will still get your young.

I'm convinced of that. Yeah, there's no question. The leading people in the world are probably practicing sickness who are at the top of the music industry. Do you study on... Oh, there's certainly some, yes.

I mean... What do you do on the other hand? You've got a group like Down South, I am they, and the lead singer. It's a Christian group. And the lead singer was saved because there were so suicidal tendencies.

He came to acknowledge the Lord through his wife who instructed him, who's in the group of that, and you know, they're going on. Yes. There's been a change in their lives, and yet they sing contemporary music.

So what do you say to them? Well, I don't think it's contemporary. It's old hat music which is commodified. It's really commercialized Christian music. Commercialized music, sorry, which is being adapted for Christian use.

[ 64 : 39 ] And that's funny, I was reading a book about that very kind of story out in the Trinity Western Library. A whole slew of stories of that kind of thing. And a lot of people who've come out of the band, right out of the band idiom, because they suddenly realized what was going on.

And what goes on seems to be part of the culture. That culture. I mean, if you look at Keith Richards' book, or you dip into that Mick Jagger's book, their references to young girls is sickening.

Well, just enough to say that's how we like them. We'll do. And the stories around even the sweet bands, like I can't remember the Osmond, in his book, he writes of how these underage girls, mostly girls, who were groupies, in his words, I'm sorry to mention these things on the Sabbath, but you know, the band got the first pick, and then he got the second.

I think our task is not to say, oh, you know, we really want to understand your culture. It was to come out of that culture. And how we do that has to be imaginative and loving and imaginative.

This is a fantastic way, because the director I'm referring to, Joel, is young. Here's a guy who is almost our age. Wow. And he's giving us, he thinks this stuff's cool.

[ 66 : 03 ] We just need more people like that. And I think the church's job is to start encouraging, in a very practical way, that kind of authenticity in music.

It doesn't have to be that elaborate. And I think Celtic is a good start. So actually, I've got a question which is partly answered, but just a comment, what you're saying about bands.

So many years ago, I was on flight from England to Finland, and I was sitting with a band from England who was going over to play in the sort of mid-summer festival. And so the person next to me was saying, you know, we'd play a bit, and then at the end of the concert, the girls come round to the stage entrance.

Yes. And, well, you know, we had fun. Yes. Yeah. So that's my little story, which I wasn't planning to mention it to you, but my question is...

It's not implying, by the way, that morality rests solely in classical music. No, no, no. Sure it does. Not quite so many girls come round. Exactly so. They're not... They're at the end of the Tchikovsky programme. They're not there outside of the world here.

[ 67 : 03 ] Now I know. But the question I have was, I mean, which has already partly been answered, you might have some clergymen or preachers who say, our job is to preach the gospel to people where they are.

It's not... Our job is not to improve what may be a bad culture, but to take Christianity to people in the culture that they're at. Yes. Now, I think...

You often do that. I mean, that seems a fairly strong argument in a way. How would you respond to that argument? Well, it's modelled on our Lord's example, but we must remember that Jesus, when he met people where they were, didn't leave them there very long.

There was an immediate raising, lifting out of, saving action. And we somehow have to show that.

One of the characteristics for me, and this is Roger Scruton's view, the St. Andrews philosopher statistician and so on, who says the characteristic of pop music, of what we tend to call contemporary is that it's predictable, utterly predictable musical form.

[ 68 : 10 ] Yes, there are little variations, and there's some imaginative stuff on the fringes, but it's a predictable form on which to hang the personality of the performer. And I think that, for me, is a brilliant revelation.

But all this stuff has come about to fill a vacuum left, I'm sorry to say, by the evangelical tradition, which, after the death of Handel in England, a few composers tried to imitate him, but music slid desperately.

There are no composers really to mention Mendelsohn, of course, but he wasn't really in England, until the Stanford revival. And there was interest in certain areas, but there was this vacuum.

And certainly there was a vacuum in the church. So when I became a Christian in London, we're still singing Sankey choruses from the 1870s. There was, you weren't allowed, like, children's special service mission, you weren't allowed to go beyond that.

One guy tried, a Christian composer, said, I've got some new choruses for you, submitted them to Scripture Union, Golden Bells, and they said, no, thank you. So there's this stifling kind of, you know, we sing, give me that old, old story, indeed.

[ 69 : 26 ] Don't disturb it. And music can contribute to that. So we've invited this dilemma, but it is a dilemma, and I think it needs a very, a very, well, a lively response.

At least, just think of it in terms of, NDP terms, of taking on big industry. I'm kidding. Yes. Oh, well, let's think of the verse, the sons of this age are wiser in the generation than the children of light.

One time I met in media, attended a, quote, drunk concert at the School of Music, humorous concert. One thing I remember is a mock history of music and dance.

It starts off with a supposed ancestor, savage drumming and dancing, and, you know, different stages, you know, finally disco was just fading away, and then they dared appear into the future, back to the caveman.

Yeah. And, uh... Yeah, some people have argued that, especially with his slap beat. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, there is, there's no doubt, you look at the videos on YouTube and the crowd behavior is fascinating.

[ 70 : 37 ] I want to pick up on Moody and Sanky. Yes. You and I had that discussion once before. Yes. So I kind of know what to think about it. And, and you have to be careful about the bad theology that is reflected in some of their hymns.

Yes. But I grew up in a church that did continue to use that kind of music, not exclusively. Yes. But, um, there were people who understood the message through the music and were brought to Christ that way.

Yes, absolutely. And so I'd like you to comment on, does the church's music still do that? Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yes. I, I...

It's a good question. And, and in that clip I played, it's actually a video. And you can see, um, the... We're not dealing here with a superficial performance.

It's people who've gathered, much like the ones in Liverpool Cathedral, to sing something, I think, with a good deal more intention. Um, and I, I do know, having been immersed in it to some extent, um, the value of that because it, but it has characteristics which, again, if they're, if they are hijacked, if that's the right word, um, tend to blot out anything more imaginative and creative.

[ 71 : 53 ] Where other, I mean, for me, personally, that, um, Whittaker piece is, I played it three times last night. I couldn't get over it. And, uh, but of course it does tie into some extent as to how we think, how we're wired.

Some people think in pictures, other people, um, might find that invalid. Whereas the chorus, the Sankey chorus is very specific. It's syllabically set.

There's no melisma. It isn't like foreign to us is born alone. It's everything is when Jesus came into my heart.

Um, and that's good for memorizing. And I, I think the important thing with the Sankey tradition is to, um, keep a slightly critical eye out for the poetry, as you say, theology, and some of the musical crassness.

I'm sorry, it is. It's, it's not skilled often. Some of it is, but not all of it. Um, and see its value, especially in helping to memorize scripture and so on, um, but not let it block out other offerings of people who think, oh, why differently?

[ 73 : 06 ] That's what I feel about it. And the other thing I noticed in my early evangelical days was there is a danger, there always is a danger, of, um, I won't say the church we went to when we first came here, but it just, it was rote.

It was just kind of down to, I know it's him, and they can look around, singing it, after singing it, um, um, over time, this can happen in any, any idiom, over familiarity and repetition, to indulge the perceptions and the response even.

Um, but of course it was cast in a very Victorian musical language. And that inevitably, that's not the richest musical period of history, and inevitably it's, it's a musical impoverishment is going to have some consequences, I think.

I must, there's a hand that's been up for a long time. Yeah. Um, if it's not over-centrifing, could you say that the ideal objective of Christian music is to promote a mindful and emotional and meditative understanding of the Word of God?

And that, if so, uh, it would fall that any music in which the worthy is obscure, indiscernible, vague, indiscernible, uh, non-recognizable, is inherently defective.

[ 74 : 30 ] Would you agree? No. No, I wouldn't. Uh, probably because, uh, with notes in the bulletin and A's of that kind, you can, uh, we're talking now about the overall picture of music in worship, not just hymns.

Um, it is possible for people, I think Catholics before the Vatican too, knew jolly well what was being sung, not a curia, the sanctus, the endless day, and the benedictus. It didn't require a kind of, um, detailed understanding application throughout.

There was, there's another, there is, I think, in us another name, which is, um, which carries us in different ways. So, I think, uh, obscurity for the sake of it, um, of course, is a problem.

Um, but, um, it seems to me when Bach sets a union or a, um, um, a sanctus, that it's, well, for that matter, you know, you sort of know what's happening.

Um, so, and I feel if we just go for the kind of utilitarian, we lose something in life, in general, we get utilitarian architecture, like the BC high schools that were built in the 50s, you know, cinder block and glass you can't look out of, versus the attempt to do things to the buildings today, which have no utilitarian justification at all.

[ 75 : 59 ] But, actually, actually, we have beauty. And I think beauty is, is a very important, in this lecture, totally neglected aspect of this debate.

Beauty has to be part of the Christian, uh, understanding and sensitizing. Otherwise, you can end up with a very grim kind of Christianity, I think.

Now we've got the forest of hands, and I think Harvest was the first. Oh, I'm sorry, actually it wasn't. Can I just, yes? Yeah, I'd just like to pick up a little bit on your, your sense that it's, uh, predictable as modern music that, um, people, kids that are coming to the union services, etc.

Can I just clarify that, not that it's harmonically? One, two, four, five, one, four, one, four, one, four, one, four, one, four, one, four, and I would just like to say, from my knowledge of the history of music, you could say that about from medieval to the Renaissance to the book, there was certain predictability until it started to decay and go into the next phase.

When there was innovation happening. So, so to me, um, looking at, uh, religiosity, uh, and people's relation to their own worship and their own choice of what kind of church they go to, it is generally, and I want to bring the young people in particularly, it is based not so much on the rational feeling that I, of elevated, uh, music.

[ 77 : 22 ] It's feeling, it's feeling that engenders religiosity. It doesn't matter whether you're an old person like me or a young person. And so I can't see how we can, as older people, try and impose that on a young culture that needs to be able to relate from a feeling point of view, uh, to that music.

And I, I don't think that we can, we can get, we can get judgment on that so much. And when you look at the evangelical churches, I'm from Tawasin, and the South Delta Baptist Church, it's, it goes to families.

And the families have young people to teenagers. And there's thousands of them that go to all these evangelical churches. And they're up there unabashedly with the rock and roll and the hip hop and all the sub-genres that all the, and the parents largely go for that because, and the pastors, because that's how churches grow, how Christianity grows.

I, I'm not an evangelical, but I don't think we can discount it because it is all about feeling. Yeah, that's the trouble, I think. Um, in a sense that we have been, we have been concentrating on feeling for half a century.

Um, you see, I don't, the whole idea that we, people are going to turn away from the words of life because there is, let's just say, a well done hymn, hymn based program.

[ 78 : 48 ] See, there's another illustration, I find that very difficult. There's another illustration I've got, which is Paul Jones at 10th Presbyterian in Philadelphia. Um, and his book is prefaced by a visiting cleric who's been there for a year.

And he said, I can't, as somebody had told me, a young person had told me, I couldn't believe that here's a church jammed with young people and their worship is hymn based.

But it's done well. See, this is another debate. It's the level of performance and whether hymns are done with life. And, uh, yes, of course, I think some hymns are really embarrassing.

Wiling flowers all over the place and all that kind of thing. But then take a Wesley hymn. Maybe sometimes you need a little bit of sensible editing. You can't sing nine verses today. People tolerate it.

But, um, you can cut back a little and very, you know, careful editing. Those hymns are so powerful. And there are modern poets and modern hymn writers who are fantastic.

[ 79 : 52 ] So there's a lot in America. A lot. And I think some, again, some of the, uh, um, sacred harp, old folk hymn melodies.

Um, brother, we are meant to gather. And we're giving them, ba-dum, ba-dum, ba-dum. So imaginatively, get away from the organ. Have a little. Um, uh, fret music.

I think we have to come up with a unique music for worship. But we're borrowing from the contemporary over here. And we have relied perhaps too much on the contemporary over here.

getting, um, things written in the mold of a post-Bramanian idiom. Which people, you know, present. There's not enough imagination.

Um, and my conviction is that, is the music is imaginative. It will draw people. Yeah, you might have some, you might have a change in your clientele. But that's another debate.

[ 80 : 51 ] I'm sorry, let's get back to you. A, a, a, a, a, um, footnote to that good previous question. Because, ever, I don't find evangelical music, I don't know, whatever that is.

It, it's feely, but it doesn't carry mystery. No. In my mind. In my mind. You mentioned Harry a few times during your talk. I, I'm going to close this, by the way. He used, I've never seen him beside Harry in a St. John's service.

God engaged, and he would say to me after the service, where's the mystery? That was his comment about us. Well, clarity, yes. Clarity of the gospel, yes.

But the gospel itself opens out into something beyond mere, uh, uh, clear and distinct ideas. Yes. From the heart. But it's, it's, there's something else there, and it can be missing.

Yes. Anyway, could you comment on that? Before I close this video. I think the aspect of mystery, it has not sat well. In my experience, in the evangelical culture, um, not exclusively, they're all sweeping statements.

[ 81 : 53 ] I know they are, but time makes it so. Um, something we have to guard against, and I'm sure it's not limited to the evangelical wing of the church, but, um, we are driven by that post-industrial revolution.

Numbers equal success. Our church is successful because we have numbers, and that kind of Finney-style 19th century evangelicalism, which insisted that we get people in at all costs, and if we have to, you know, move people by devices and means, we do it.

Um, whereas, of course, the opposite of that would be, no, God, the Holy Spirit determines, moves people's hearts, and bring, convicts them, and brings them in, gets them searching.



Um, and then, like running a very good restaurant, a healthy restaurant, we provide the food, and if we do it well, people will go, ooh, that looks interesting.

Um, and they'll be nourished. At the moment, I feel sometimes we have Mac worship. Mm. That's right. Walfa encouraged Ed.

[ 83 : 02 ] I wish he'd, uh, be more, you know, speak his mind more bluntly. It's too subtle and, you know, underneath our radar. But I was, uh, in my youth, I went to the first, uh, Beatles concert.

They're being calm. So I don't know why. I still have, uh, bruises on one of my shoulders from some of those young women that Ed was talking about, who were behind me, going, yes, yes.

And I knew that they were onto something at that moment. They need to. Sorry, I don't know. Why don't you hear about it? I don't know. I don't know. But anyway, this is just a wonderful talk today from, uh, from our good friend Edward, and, uh, I think we should, uh, express our appreciation.

Thank you.