

For Immediate Release: December 10, 2020

VST ANNOUNCES 2021 HONORARY DOCTOR OF DIVINITY RECIPIENT INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED CONDUCTOR, COMPOSER, EDUCATOR AND PERFORMER

VANCOUVER, BC, December 10, 2020. The **Vancouver School of Theology** is delighted to announce that **Rupert G. Lang** has been selected as its 2021 Honorary Doctor of Divinity recipient.

This distinguished award is granted to individuals who exemplify the values of VST, and who have made significant contributions through the integration of theology and practice of ministry in one or more of: theological scholarship, ecumenical dialogue, the life and ministry of the Christian community, and interdisciplinary scholarship involving theology with other fields.

Rupert Lang holds a Bachelor of Music with Honours from the University of Manitoba, an M.A. (Music) from the University of Cambridge, St. John's College (studying with George Guest, Gillian Weir and John Scott) and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Certificate in Church Music, The Royal School of Church Music. He also holds Diplomas from The Royal College of Music and Royal College of Organists. In addition to serving as the Director of Music and Organist with Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, since 1986, Lang is the Founding Artistic Director of the Vancouver Children's Choir. His conducting and choral work, musical composition and performance as an organist has attracted national and global recognition. His many compositions have been published by Boosey and Hawkes, and recordings of works from around the world can be heard on YouTube. The outpouring of acknowledgements of Rupert Lang include:



Rupert Lang is one of those rare Anglican composers and musicians who can do it all: compose congregational choral music that is both complex and singable, play the organ Sunday after Sunday in a way that supports the spiritual life of congregants with excellence, and lead a choir Sunday after Sunday whose singing both sends chills down the spine and makes one feel utterly at home in the Church. We in the Diocese of New Westminster have looked to Rupert to show us what the best of our Anglican musical tradition looks like and sounds like. It is a tradition that avoids a simple-minded view of the Divine while embracing holy simplicity. It is a tradition that inspires the soul, enlightens the mind, and, through the gift of music, confidently leads us into an experience of our oneness in Christ.

The Most Reverend Melissa Skelton
Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC and Yukon, and
Archbishop of the Diocese of New Westminster 2014 to 2021

Not since Healey Willan has Canada known such a prolific composer of church music nor a church musician whose work is so widely appreciated. Bridging two centuries, Rupert's compositions possess the unusual quality of being very rooted in their time yet transcending that to join with the classical treasures of the Anglican choral repertoire. As a Cathedral Director of Music and Organist, he combines a deep sense of pastoral care with liturgical sensitivity. In every way his ministry as a church musician is outstanding.

The Very Reverend Peter Elliott DD
Dean of the Diocese of New Westminster, and
Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver, BC 1994-2019

Rupert is a gifted organist, composer, and conductor – and in the years that Rupert has served as Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, BC, he has established the Cathedral as Vancouver's finest setting for traditional worship music both in the city and across western Canada. In fact, the Cathedral Choir has received numerous awards over the years affirming their status as one of Canada's leading amateur choirs. Yet, it is Rupert's skill as worship leader that sets him

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apart in an elite class of church musicians. Rupert's choices of liturgical music, choral anthems, hymns, organ settings, descants, chants, introits, and postludes – and the execution of them – are transportive, and are spiritually transformative on both aesthetic/emotional as well as intellectual levels. This feature of Rupert's work and service is what distinguishes his contribution to the church, and which characterizes his dedication and contribution to the Anglican Church of Canada.

Dr. Graeme Langager
Director of Choral Activities
University of British Columbia School of Music

About VST

VST's core mandate is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the church in the 21st century. Among theological schools, VST is viewed as a change agent and an innovator for the church. As an affiliated college of the University of British Columbia, VST is now ranked in the top 50 schools globally and in the top 10 of most improved theological schools. VST is accredited by the Government of British Columbia, and internationally by ATS (Association of Theological Schools).

The Vancouver School of Theology welcomes students from many Christian communions, other faith traditions and Indigenous communities, while celebrating its core relationships with the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and United Church of Canada. The Indigenous Studies Program at VST is central to the school's identity and commitments. In 2021, the Vancouver School of Theology will celebrate its 50th Anniversary as a leader in theological education.

Graduation ceremonies in 2021 will feature the graduating classes of both 2020 and 2021, with over 60 individuals completing their degree programs. In addition to acknowledging Rupert Lang, VST will also publicly recognize its 2020 honorary degree recipients: Professor Santa Ono (UBC President and Vice-Chancellor), Rabbi Marcia Prager (Director and Dean of ALEPH Ordination Programs, a non-denominational Jewish Seminary in Philadelphia, PA), and Reverend Douglas Goodwin (Past Executive Minister, Pacific Mountain Region, United Church of Canada). These honorary degrees will be conferred during the Vancouver School of Theology's upcoming Convocation Ceremony on May 11, 2021 either in-person on the UBC campus or virtually, as guided by the directives related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Vancouver School of Theology acknowledges that the land on which they are located is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) People.

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