

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

High as the heavens



SSA (unacc./optional percussion)

andagio

High as the heavens

I've always wanted to set these words from Psalm 103 because they remind me of Irving Berlin's lyrics for his love song 'How deep is the ocean': *How much do I love you / I'll tell you no lie / How deep is the ocean / How high is the sky?* In the Psalm, the love being described is God's and this time it's the height of the heavens above the earth rather than the depth of the sea which is chosen to represent the true extent of that love. The Psalms are full of great imagery such as this, making them ideal for musical settings.

I've chosen to set the words in a three-part gospel style for unaccompanied upper voices. The piece should be sung with plenty of expression and with a rock-solid pulse; I've suggested optional percussion because this will help your singers to maintain the groove throughout. Above all, the words should be clear and as speech-like as possible and the "h" on each iteration of "high" should be generously aspirated!

'High as the heavens' is a joyful and uplifting piece so sing it with a smile and you can't go wrong.

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

Commissioned by Helen Vickery for Francis Holland School, Sloane Square, London.
The first performance was given on April 1st 2019 at Cadogan Hall, London, by pupils of Francis Holland School.

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Scoring:

SSA + optional percussion (eg shaker, cajon)

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High as the heavens

Words from Psalm 103

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

Unhurried but with groove ♩ = 90

INTRO

SOPRANO 1
SOPRANO 2
ALTO

mf High, high, high, ha high,
mf High, high, high, ha high,
mf High, high, high, high, high, high, high, high,
5 *mf* High, high, high, ha high, For as
mf High, high, high, ha high, For as
High, high, high, high, high, high, ha high, For as

CHORUS 1

9 *f* High as the hea - vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love_ for those who fear_ him; And as
f High as the hea - vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love_ for those who fear_ him; And as
13 *f* High as the hea - vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love_ for those who fear_ him; And as
far as the east ___ is ___ from the_ west, So far has He re - moved_ our trans - gres - sions.
far as the east ___ is ___ from the_ west, So far has He re - moved_ our trans - gres - sions.
far as the east ___ is ___ from the_ west, So far has He re - moved_ our trans - gres - sions.

VERSE 1

17 *mp*
 As a fa - ther has com - pas - sion on his chil - dren, So the Lord has com - pas - sion on us;
P
P
 ooh com - pas - sion on us;
 ooh com - pas - sion on us;

21
 For He knows just what we're made of And He re - mem - bers that we are dust. For as
 ooh that we are dust. For as
 ooh that we are dust. For as

CHORUS 2

25 *f*
 High as the hea - vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love for those who fear him; And as
f
 High as the hea - vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love for those who fear him; And as
f
 High as the hea - vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love for those who fear him; And as

29
 far as the east is from the west, So far has He re - moved our trans - gres - sions.
 far as the east is from the west, So far has He re - moved our trans - gres - sions.
 far as the east is from the west, So far has He re - moved our trans - gres - sions.

VERSE 2

33

p
 hoo _____ the flo-wer of__ the field__

mp
 The life of mor-tals_ is like the grass,___ They flou-rish like___ the flo-wer of__ the field.

p
 hoo _____ the flo-wer of__ the field.

37

gliss.
 hoo hoo _____ re-mem-bers it__ no more. For as

The wind blows ov-er it__ and it is gone; And its place__ re-mem-bers it__ no more. For as

gliss.
 hoo hoo _____ re-mem-bers it__ no more. For as

CHORUS 3

41

f
 High as the hea-vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love_ for those who fear_ him; And as

f
 High as the hea-vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love_ for those who fear_ him; And as

f
 High as the hea-vens are a - bove the earth, So great is his love_ for those who fear him; And as

45

far as the east__ is__ from the__ west,___ So far has He re - moved__ our trans-

far as the east__ is__ from the__ west,___ So far has He re - moved__ our trans-

far as the east__ is__ from the__ west,___ So far has He re - moved our trans-

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange (b.1971) is an English soprano, composer and choral leader who receives engagements throughout the world. A Master of Arts graduate in Music of Oxford University, she began her career as soprano and Musical Director of the five-time Grammy® Award-winning *a cappella* group *The Swingle Singers* and her compositional output reflects her love of choral music, close harmony and jazz. She writes songs (including her own lyrics), sacred anthems, Christmas carols, television production music and arrangements, regularly collaborating with her husband Alexander L'Estrange on their award-winning series of large-scale community choral works.



A passionate advocate for gender equality, Joanna has become the go-to composer for songs about women. Recent commissions include *We will remember them* for the Military Wives Choirs', *A woman (wearing bloomers) on a wheel* which has been made into a film by the NYCCGB, *Suffragette March*, *Give us grace* and *A place for us maids*, celebrating 40 years of female undergraduates at Trinity College, Cambridge. Her single *Twenty-first-century Woman* was launched on International Women's Day 2019 and raises money for girls' education globally.

Joanna lives in Hertfordshire, UK with her husband Alexander L'Estrange, also a composer, and their two sons.

www.joannaforbeslestrange.com

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- book Alexander and Joanna's jazz duo *L'Estranges in the Night*

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