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MARCH 2023

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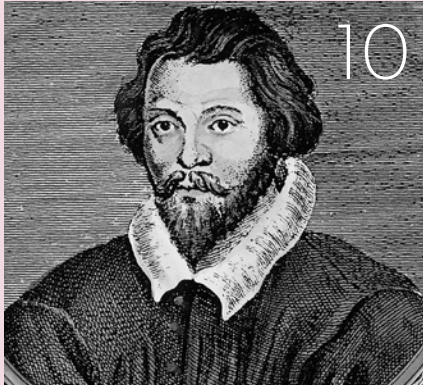
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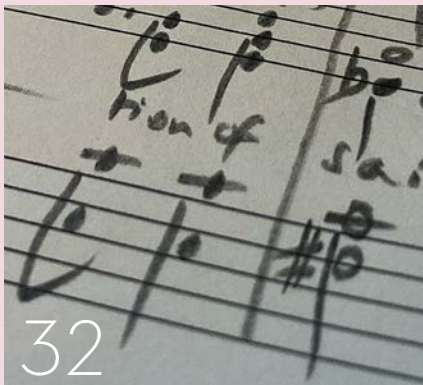
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## WELCOME

The coronation of King Charles III will be 'a solemn religious service, as well as an occasion for celebration and pageantry' on Saturday, 6 May at Westminster. According to the Palace, the ceremony will be rooted in the past but reflect the role of a contemporary monarch. The music chosen by King Charles for the service has not yet been made public, but the list is likely to feature many British composers. The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II included music by, among others, Tallis, Purcell, Gibbons, Walton, Wood, Parry and Elgar. It also premiered eight pieces of music written especially for the occasion, including Vaughan Williams's *O taste and see*, William Harris's *Let my prayer come up into thy presence* and Arnold Bax's *Coronation March*.

King Charles is known to be fond of the music of Parry. In 2011, for example, he presented a BBC documentary called *The Prince and the Composer* about Parry's life and music. Parry's *I was glad* featured at his mother's coronation and is certainly a contender to feature in his service in May. Doubtless, we will also get to hear several newly commissioned pieces written for the event.

*The mountains shall bring peace* is a new anthem published by the RSCM, commissioned for the King's coronation. Written by best-selling composer Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, it is available for SATB and organ, and as a digital download pack with three versions: SATB and organ, SATB and piano, and unison and piano. It is part of the RSCM's Sing for the King initiative, which is an open invitation for choirs to celebrate the upcoming coronation by uniting in song. You can read more about *The mountains shall bring peace* by turning to page 32 of this magazine.

Regarding milestones, it has been 400 years since the death of composer William Byrd. In this issue of CMQ, Sandy Burnett looks at Byrd's enduring legacy and explores how his music was shaped by the political landscape of his age. Elsewhere in this magazine you will find details of the RSCM's upcoming 2023 conference, advice on setting up a plainsong choir, and an insight into sacred music making in Canada. To see a full list of your membership benefits, including new benefits for 2023, turn to page 17.



STEFAN PUTIGNY

## CONTRIBUTORS

**SIMON AIKEN** is Rector of Boksburg on Johannesburg's East Rand. Since beginning ministry in South Africa in 2006, he has served as dean of Kimberley and dean of the Highveld. Prior to that he served in the Diocese of Blackburn and was active in RSCM Lancashire as well as chaplain to many residential and cathedral courses. He is National President of RSCM South Africa.



**SANDY BURNETT**, a graduate of St Catharine's College, Cambridge, spent a decade as one of the core team of presenters on BBC Radio 3. He leads cultural holidays, runs an online Listening Club, was appointed the AAM's Hogwood Fellow for 2018-19, and is the author of *The Idler Guide to Classical Music*.

**IAN CLETHERO** is the founder of Chorally and organist and director of music at the Church of the Annunciation in Chislehurst, Kent. His choral life began at the age of eight as a chorister at Ripon Cathedral under Ronald Perrin in the 1970s.



**SIMON DIXON** is a classically trained organist, pianist, conductor and worship leader. He trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and spent 20 years as organist and choir director at Holy Trinity Brompton, London. Simon was presented with the Mellitus Medal shortly before accepting the role as director of worship and music at The Falls Church Anglican, USA in 2010.

**RSCM STAFF MEMBERS CONTRIBUTORS**  
Hugh Morris, Director  
Tim Ruffer, Head of Publishing



**JOANNA FORBES L'ESTRANGE** is a British composer, singer and choir director of international acclaim. She began writing music during her tenure as soprano/musical director of the Grammy award-winning jazz vocal group The Swingles, her compositional style reflecting an eclectic musical background. Several of Forbes L'Estrange's church pieces have become RSCM best-sellers.



**GORDON GILES** is Canon Chancellor of Rochester Cathedral. He has written various books on church music and hymnody published by BRP and SPCK and was on the editorial team of the latest *Ancient & Modern* and *The Revised English Hymnal*.



**ALAN TAVENER** is director of music at St Bride's Episcopal Church, Glasgow and regularly leads the music at St Columbkille's RC Church, Rutherglen. He focused on the holistic benefits of group-singing activities for a Master's qualification, and seeks to facilitate choristers' vocal longevity. He received the ARSCM in 2015 and, in 2020, the British Empire Medal for 'services to choral music in Scotland'.



**DANIEL WEBB** is director of music at St Clement, Toronto and organist and choirmaster at Upper Canada College. He was a Cambridge organ scholar and later director of music at South Hampstead High School before moving to Canada in 2013 to start a new life with his family.







# IN ACTION CHRISTMAS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The joint RSCM and Churches Conservation Trust carol evening in December at the church of All Hallows by the Tower in London was a memorable evening for all. We were delighted to work with nine talented members of the Square Mile Choral Scholars, conducted by our own Paul Hedley and accompanied by Hugh Morris on the organ. The congregation joined in enthusiastically, and the whole evening was enriched by a narrative on ‘The Sounds of Christmas in our Historic Churches’ by Zeb Soanes, broadcaster, presenter and author. Zeb spoke about the history of Christmas carols and their usage, and gave readings from literary works, including excerpts by Thomas Hardy.

Hugh Morris said of the event: ‘There is something special about the way that music is entwined with the

story of Christmas. The evening showed us how it is not simply a recent phenomenon, but has been an important relationship for hundreds of years. The excellent Square Mile Choral Scholars brought the music vividly to life, and it was good to highlight with our friends at the Churches Conservation Trust how churches still have a vital part to play in telling that story. For Paul Hedley and me, it was a lovely start to the Christmas music-making season, and I thoroughly enjoyed playing my part from the organ bench.’

For exciting news about our Membership Conference, turn to page 31, and for information about Music Sunday 2023, please turn to page 22.

## RSCM CAROLS HIT THE AIRWAVES



Did you catch the RSCM carols on the airwaves over Christmas? On 22 December, the BBC Singers featured Bryan Kelly's setting of *This lovely lady* and Thomas Hewitt Jones's setting of *The Holly and the Ivy*.

Thomas featured again in a BBC Radio 3 Afternoon Concert on 19 December, when his *Carol of the Shepherds* was performed by the BBC Singers, conducted by Bob Chilcott.

BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong on 28 December from Croydon Minster included Martin How's *Lullaby*. Previously, on 25 December on BBC One, David Ogden's *Love came down at Christmas* was performed by the Exultate Singers, conducted by the composer. The programme is still available to watch via BBC iPlayer at [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001gnjw](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001gnjw)



For more highlights of events being held across the period March to July 2023 and for full details of the events listed below, visit our website: [www.rscm.org.uk/search-events/](http://www.rscm.org.uk/search-events/) or contact the named person.



## AREA FESTIVALS

### SE WALES

#### Choral festival

**Saturday, 17 June » times tbc  
Margam Abbey, Port Talbot  
SA13 2TA**

Choral festival for SE Wales Area. Members £8, non-members £10, students and young people £3. Contact Emma Gibbins on 07952 514117 or at [emmagibbins1978@gmail.com](mailto:emmagibbins1978@gmail.com)



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## COME AND SING AND SOCIAL

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE

#### Saint Cuthbert – Adrian Self

**Saturday, 11 March » 14:00 to 20:30 (performance 19:00)  
Christ Church, Malvern Road,  
Cheltenham GL50 2JH**

Rehearsal and performance of Adrian Self's *Saint Cuthbert*, by RSCM affiliates. Cost £10. The performance will start at 19:00. For more information contact Fiona Brown on 07775 926584 or at [fmbfoundmatters@gmail.com](mailto:fmbfoundmatters@gmail.com)



### ELY

#### Compline at Ely Cathedral

**Tuesday, 14 March »  
19:00 to 20:40 (service 20:00)  
Ely Cathedral Lady Chapel,  
Cambridgeshire CB7 4DL**

Come and Sing plainsong and polyphony in the magnificent acoustic of the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral. Singers are rehearsed and conducted by Peter North, head of vocal studies at King's Ely School. Rehearse at 19:00 for compline at 20:00. All welcome. Contact Canon James Reveley on 01353 660302 or at [james.reveley@elycathedral.org](mailto:james.reveley@elycathedral.org)



### SOMERSET

#### Come and Sing with

#### David Ogden

**Saturday, 22 April »  
10:30 to 16:00 (service 15:30)  
St George's Catholic Church  
& Parish Centre, Billet Street,  
Taunton TA1 3NG**

RSCM Somerset Area is delighted to welcome back David Ogden for an all-day Come and Sing workshop at which he will introduce music and repertoire in a range of styles to unite singers and musicians of all ages, enabling them to enrich their Sunday worship week by week. David will explore RSCM collections such as *Anthem for Sopranos, Altos and Unison Men* and *Psalm Songs*, both of which he edited, together with other repertoire composed by himself and others. Registration from 10:00. £15 members and friends, £18 non-members, £5 U18s and those in full-time education. Contact Brigid Parkin on 07593 688599 or at [RSCMSomerset@gmail.com](mailto:RSCMSomerset@gmail.com)





# WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

## 📍 ESSEX & EAST LONDON

### **'The Elvers' chorister training workshop 2**

**Saturday, 11 March »**

**14:00 to 17:00 (service 16:30)**

**Brentwood Cathedral, Ingrave Road, Brentwood CM15 8AT**

'The Elvers' – RSCM EEL youth training choir – Workshop 2.

Rehearsals will focus on learning new repertoire as well as additional *Voice for Life* training, vocal coaching, young conductors and an opportunity for socializing. The day will culminate in a short act of worship at which the choir will sing. £15 registration fee for choristers for 2023 Elvers Project. Contact Jonathan Venner at [rscmeel@gmail.com](mailto:rscmeel@gmail.com). (Workshop 1 will be held on 25 February: see [rscm.com](http://rscm.com) for details.)

## 📍 THAMES VALLEY

### **Three-day course**

**Tuesday, 11 April (08:30) to**

**Thursday, 13 April (18:00) »**

**Exeter College, Turl Street, Oxford OX1 3DP**

A fantastic opportunity to sing choral music under the direction of the director of the RSCM, Hugh Morris. The course is non-residential, based in an Oxford college with the final service being sung in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. The course is open to all choristers between the age of 9 and 18. Fee £100. Contact Sue Scott or Alexandra Scott on 07779 855615 or 07896 851317, or at [rscmthamesvalleythreedaycourse@gmail.com](mailto:rscmthamesvalleythreedaycourse@gmail.com)



## 📍 ESSEX & EAST LONDON

### **'The Elvers' chorister training workshop 3**

**Saturday, 22 April »**

**14:00 to 17:00 (service 16:30)**

**Ss Peter & Paul, Chingford Parish Church, The Green, Chingford Green E4 7EN**

'The Elvers' – RSCM EEL youth training choir – Workshop 3.

Rehearsals today will focus mainly on repertoire for evensong at St Paul's Cathedral, as well as additional *Voice for Life* training, vocal coaching, young conductors and an opportunity for socializing. The day will culminate in a short act of worship at which the choir will sing. £15 registration fee for choristers for 2023. Contact Jonathan Venner at [rscmeel@gmail.com](mailto:rscmeel@gmail.com)

## 📍 SCOTLAND

### **Study and sing the Psalms**

**Saturday, 13 May »**

**9:30 to 16:00 (service 16:30)**

**Laidlaw Music Centre, University of St Andrews, Queen's Terrace, Fife KY16 9QF**

This event will help singers, worship leaders and churchgoers of any confessional background to explore different Christian musical traditions associated with singing the Psalms. Learn, discuss and sing together in workshops led by the University of St Andrews Music Centre. Followed by service of worship at St Andrew's Episcopal Church, Queen's Terrace, St Andrews KY16 9QF. £12 members, £15 non-members. Contact Dr Jane Pettegree on 01334 462239 (work) or 07790 842148 (mobile) or at [Jkp1@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:Jkp1@st-andrews.ac.uk)

## 📍 ELY

### **John Bell lecture and workshop**

**Saturday, 20 May »**

**10:00 to 16:30 (service 15:30)**

**Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire CB7 4DL**

Ely Cathedral welcomes John Bell to give a lecture and music workshop. Following a lecture entitled 'Imagination as a key to unlocking Scripture', John will lead a workshop drawing on his wide experience of empowering congregational singing to enrich worship. All are welcome. No previous singing experience necessary. £10 (or £12 if after 10 April). Accompanied under 18s are free. Advance booking is essential: [www.elycathedral.org/events/john-bell-lecture-and-music-workshop](http://www.elycathedral.org/events/john-bell-lecture-and-music-workshop). Contact Canon James Reveley on 01353 660302 or at [james.reveley@elycathedral.org](mailto:james.reveley@elycathedral.org)

## 📍 SCOTLAND

### **RSCM Dunblane Summer School**

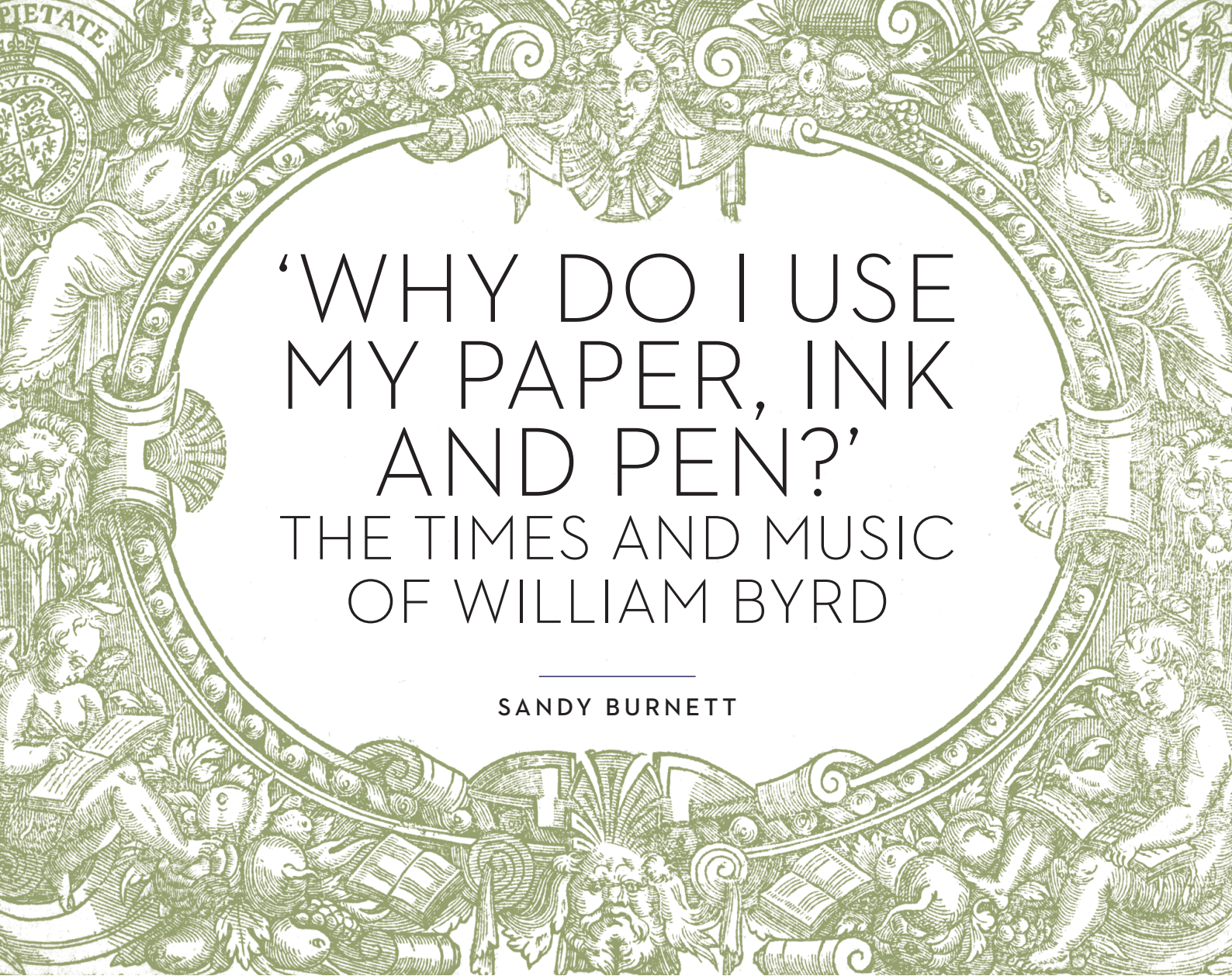
**Monday, 17 July (12:00) to**

**Thursday, 20 July (12:00) »**

**Dunblane Cathedral, The Cross, Dunblane FK15 0AQ**

Running since 1998, the RSCM Dunblane Summer School is primarily a singing course for adults, preparing music for services sung each day in the stunning setting of Dunblane Cathedral. Afternoon workshops will use material from the RSCM Education Plan. Everybody is welcome (un-auditioned). All meals are provided in Old Churches House. Services will be held at 20:00 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and at 10:30 on Thursday. £315 (members), £375 (non-members), £50 (day rate). Contact Brian Baker on 01786 821294 or at [bbaker55@sky.com](mailto:bbaker55@sky.com)





# ‘WHY DO I USE MY PAPER, INK AND PEN?’ THE TIMES AND MUSIC OF WILLIAM BYRD

SANDY BURNETT

Four hundred years ago this year, on 4 July, the great William Byrd (c.1540–1623) died. His body lies in the churchyard of St Peter & St Paul, Stondon Massey in Essex. His death, at the ripe old age of eighty-something, ended an amazing career spent in the service of English music.

If Byrd’s grave had a headstone (which it doesn’t), perhaps we would be able to make out a mossy tribute from one of his many distinguished former pupils: Thomas Tomkins (1572–1656), for example, who described him as ‘my ancient, and much revered Master’; or Thomas Morley (1557–1602), for whom Byrd was ‘never without reverence to be named of the musicians’.

Fast-forwarding to the 21st century, how does Byrd’s legacy look today? This is a key question for someone like me, a musician and broadcaster who makes a point of exploring the world of classical music with non-specialist audiences. Anniversaries always offer a handy opportunity to take a fresh look at a great

composer’s life and work, and to make a clear assessment of what they achieved. This year, I’m introducing Byrd’s music to new audiences in lectures across the United Kingdom and Australia, directing a choral programme of his music in Valletta, Malta, and presenting a Zoom lecture series on William Byrd and Elizabethan England to online subscribers of my Listening Club wherever they have an internet connection.

Putting my thoughts in order for these projects, it’s been a pleasure to reacquaint myself with works that I first came across as an undergraduate. My director of studies, Peter le Huray, is the person to thank for that – an eminent musicologist who literally wrote the book on Tudor church music. Two of those works, both motets, come into focus in this article, as I explore what they reveal about Byrd’s creative approach and his mindset at an unstable time in English history – a time when Byrd found himself right in the thick of the action.



19

Superius Primus  
te tu - a, in men - te tu - a: Di - li - ges

Superius Secundus  
to - ta men - te tu - a, tu - a: Di - li - ges pro -

Contratenor Primus  
men - te tu - a, tu - a: Di - li - ges pro - xi -

Contratenor Secundus  
tu - a, in men - te tu - a: Di - li - ges pro - xi -

Tenor Primus  
ta men - te tu - a, tu - a: Di - li - ges pro - xi -

Tenor Secundus  
ta men - te tu - a, men - te tu - a: Di - li - ges pro -

Bassus Primus  
te tu - a, in men - te tu - a: Di - li - ges pro -

Bassus Secundus  
et in to - ta men - te tu - a: Di - li - ges pro -

Above: Bars 19 to 23 of Byrd's *Diliges Dominum*, first published in 1575.

### AUDACIOUS NOTE-WRANGLING

The 1575 *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* are an obvious place to start, the groundbreaking joint venture between Byrd and his teacher Thomas Tallis (c.1505–85). This first major printed collection of music in England offers plenty to chew on, starting with that mouthful of a title. The ‘Songs which due to their subject matter are called sacred’ number 34 in all, comprising 17 motets each from both composers: think of it as an elegant courtly bow to Queen Elizabeth I in the 17th year of her reign.

While many of Byrd's *Cantiones Sacrae* contributions are forward-looking and innovative, he shows that he can also do the old stuff well – just as well as his English predecessors John Taverner (c.1490–1545) and William Mundy (c.1529–91), and most significantly Tallis. The motet *Diliges Dominum* sets the ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ section from Matthew's Gospel (22.37–39) as an ingenious canon with music that goes backward as well as forward. It's such an audacious piece of note-wrangling that writers on English music were to refer to it in hushed tones for decades, nay centuries, to come. Thomas Morley refers to *Diliges Dominum* in his famous *Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* of 1597, and nearly three centuries later, in 1879, it is quoted in the first volume of Sir George Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

For this is a tour de force of technical writing: a two-in-one canon *per recte et retro*. We have eight voice parts, SSAAT'TBB, in canon. Each independent voice sings its own music right up to the halfway point, at which juncture it adopts the music of its counterpart and sings those notes backwards all the way to the end (or the beginning, if you see what I mean). Bar 22 is the pivot point in modern editions – from the start of that bar, superius 1 sings a paused B, then switches to superius 2's D, and sings S2's music in reverse with fresh words. The lower contratenor, tenor and bassus parts do the same thing. Byrd must rein himself in to make this musical palindrome work, it's true. Note values are restricted to semibreves and minims, with just one long breve at the end. The normal light sprinkling of dissonant suspensions is out because the system of tension and release doesn't work with music that goes backward as well as forward. But if the result is a thick texture and lots of delicious choral chords one after each other, then that's fine in my book, and *Diliges Dominum* is none the less enjoyable for that.

### STRONG WILLED BY NATURE

Intellectual note-flexing isn't, however, the most important thing about Byrd. What interests us, and what I'd love to ask him if I could, is how he coped with the religious instability of the time, and, in particular,





Above: A line engraving of William Byrd, 18th century.

how he managed to survive as a defiantly Catholic musician in Protestant England.

The *Cantiones Sacrae* were the first fruits of a monopoly on printed music granted to Byrd and Tallis by Queen Elizabeth I. Both men were Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal and, as such, among the most privileged musicians in England. Both men were also Catholics operating within the increasingly hostile environment of the new Church of England.

It was a turbulent time for religion, and Tallis could be forgiven for feeling a little dizzy: serving under four monarchs, he had witnessed four swings of the pendulum to and from Catholicism and Protestantism. But while Tallis seems to have kept his head down, the same can't be said for the younger Byrd. He was strong-willed by nature – the many legal disputes we know he got involved in bear this out – and in any case, life for the next generation of Catholics in the 1580s was becoming increasingly tricky. The offence of recusancy, failing to attend Church of England services, could attract severe punishments. Byrd, his wife, Juliana, and their servant, John Reason, were cited for recusancy at their home in Harlington, Middlesex, although Byrd himself was let off his substantial fines on the orders of the Queen. More dangerous than that was Byrd's habit of hanging around with Jesuit missionaries such as Henry Garnet and Robert Southwell, men who had made it their mission to train on the continent and return to England to re-convert people to Catholicism. If they were caught and prosecuted, Jesuits came in for especially violent treatment. Take Edmund Campion,

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*Byrd's 'Vigilate' features some spectacular examples of the vidi art of word painting - it is Byrd out-madrigaling and madrigalians*

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for example: seized by priest hunters while leading underground services in England, he was convicted of high treason and hanged, drawn and quartered.

A young witness to that shocking execution, Henry Walpole (1558–95), commemorated it in a poem entitled *Why do I use my paper, ink and pen?*, which ran to 20 heartfelt verses. William Byrd set a shortened version to music, which, even though he left the most controversial sections out, was a risky thing to do. The poem's printer was arrested and had his ears cut off as punishment, while William Byrd escaped without penalty. Once again, he escaped censure because, as a superb musician of high standing, he enjoyed the favour of the Queen.

The fear that Byrd and Catholics like him felt, though, was real, and he wrote plenty of anguished music that offers a thinly veiled commentary on the situation. However, not all of it is mournful and reflective. *Vigilate*, from the 1589 collection of *Cantiones Sacrae* – all Byrd's own work this time – is a striking motet that's designed to grab you firmly by the ears and shake you into awareness. The Latin text comes from the Gospel of Mark chapter 13, which in the King James version reads as follows:

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh: at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch.

Cue some spectacular examples of the vivid art of word painting. This is Byrd, who's not generally thought of as writing madrigals, out-madrigaling the madrigalians. We have the superius part sternly intoning the *Vigilate* like a watchman in his tower; cocks crowing with an angular figure in the music; fast cross-rhythmic agitation to reflect the suddenness of 'repente' before the rhythmic halving of speed at 'dormientes' where things get strikingly drowsy. All this could make for a disparate mishmash of techniques, but it's held together by the *Vigilate* calls that begin and end the motet. And there's an additional *Vigilate* thrown in in the middle; just there for



59

Superius  
 - pen - te, re - pen - te, re - pen - te, ne cum ve - ne - rit re - pen - te, re -

Medius  
 re - pen - te, re - pen - te, re - pen - te, ne cum ve - ne - rit re - pen - te, re - pen -

Contratenor  
 ne cum ve - ne - rit re - pen - te, ne cum ve - ne - rit re - pen -

Tenor  
 re - pen - te, re - pen - te, re - pen - te, ne cum ve - ne - rit re - pen - te,

Bassus  
 ne cum ve - ne - rit, ne cum ve - ne - rit re - pen - te,

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- pen - te, re - pen - te, in - ve - ni - at vos,

- te, in - ve - ni - at vos, in - ve - ni - at

- te, re - pen - te, re - pen - te, in - ve - ni - at vos, in -

re - pen - te, re - pen - te, in - ve - ni - at vos,

re - pen - te, in - ve - ni - at vos, in -

67

in - ve - ni - at vos dor - mi - en - tes,

vos dor - mi - en - tes, dor - mi - en - tes,

- ve - ni - at vos dor - mi - en - tes,

in - ve - ni - at vos dor - mi - en -

- ve - ni - at vos dor - mi - en - tes,

71

tes, in - ve - ni - at vos

dor - mi - en - tes, in - ve - ni - at

dor - mi - en - tes, in - ve - ni - at vos,

- tes, dor - mi - en - tes, in - ve - ni - at vos, dor -

dor - mi - en - tes,

Above: Extract from Byrd's *Vigilate*, first published 1589.





A. Edmundus Campianus Societatis Iesu sub patibulo concionatur. statimque cum Alexandro Brianto Rhemensis, et Rodulpho-Sheruino huius Collegij alumno suspenditur.  
 B. Illis adhuc tepentibus cor et uiscera extrahuntur, et in ignem projiciuntur.  
 C. Eorundem membra feruenti aqua elixantur, tum ad urbis turres et portas appenduntur, regnante Elizabetha Anno M.D.LXXXI. die prima Decēbris. Horum constanti morte aliquot hominum millia ad Romanam Ecclesiam conuersa sunt.

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*Perhaps it is when composers are most in distress that they produce their greatest music. It's an idea that's as thought-provoking as it is troubling*

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Left: The executions of Edmund Campion, Alexander Briant and Ralph Sherwin in 1581. Print, taken from the anti-Protestant *Ecclesiae anglicanae trophaea* (The Victories of the Anglican Church), published in Rome, 1584.

structural reasons, as Joseph Kerman points out, this is Byrd's own creative addition.

Byrd is saying to his fellow Catholics, keep your eyes open and your wits about you. He may have been protected by his powerful court connections on several occasions, but his run-ins with the law were repeated and must have been terrifying. In this context another great composer comes to mind, from a different time and place, but whose concerns were similar. Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75) spent his entire professional life in the Soviet Union doing his best to express himself as a free artist while managing to stay just on the right side of the authorities. Shostakovich was so convinced that they would come for him in the middle of the night that he kept a packed suitcase in his hallway. Although he did survive, the fear never went away. And he had the uncanny knack of composing his greatest music – the Symphony No. 5, for example – at a time of greatest personal difficulty.

The same could be said for Byrd. Cutting his ties with London and moving to Essex in his 50s helped up to a point, since it was there that he could find himself among Catholic friends. But even there he was not safe – the acrid atmosphere that hung around after the Gunpowder Plot led to continued difficulties. The reason that there is no stone to mark his grave in Stondon Massey is simple: as a practising Catholic, he wasn't entitled to one. The oppression that Byrd suffered followed him to the grave.

With the concise and expressive Latin works of Byrd's last decades – the moving Mass settings and two books of Gradualia – the power of Byrd's late music is greater than ever. Although his fear may have never slackened off, maybe his music is all the better for it. Whether it's Byrd, Shostakovich or anyone working today, perhaps it is when composers are most in distress that they produce their greatest music. Now that's an idea that's as thought-provoking as it is troubling.



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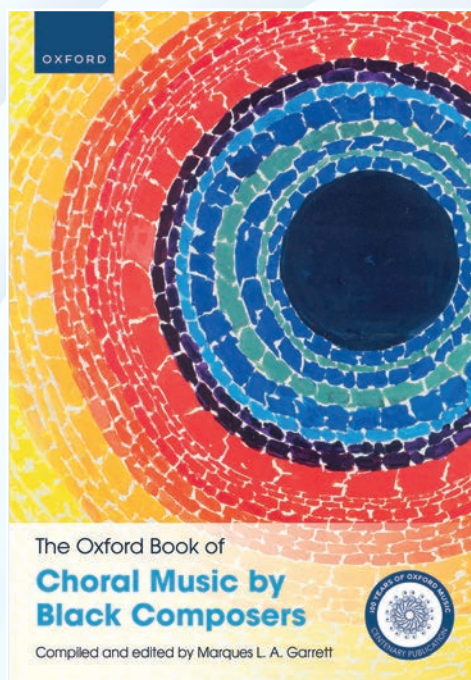
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A portrait of Hugh Morris, a man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

HUGH MORRIS

Over Christmas, three things happened that inspired this article: watching the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*; being encouraged by the priest in church on the Sunday after Christmas that, with no choir present, all of us in the congregation had a responsibility to sing; and a walk in the winter sunshine that took me past a new wedding venue on a converted farm.

Watching *Four Weddings* for the first time in years, I was struck by the fact that all the weddings and the funeral took place in church, that all the events included singing, and that the congregation joined in heartily (in one case, with a church choir). While the film depicts a narrow band of society, the conventions of what happens in church were understood by the characters (and, by extension, the millions who watched the film). The huge rise in secular weddings and venues has changed and challenged that narrative over the last 20 years. One consequence is that singing doesn't feature as a formal part of a secular ceremony unless someone performs for the (passive) guests. It is becoming less and less normal to sing in a gathered, collective way and, as a result, when people do come into church, they feel increasingly self-conscious about singing.

Church music is precious. There are plenty of ways that keen singers can sing sacred music, but nothing surpasses it being offered in service to God, because then the words have meaning. And this is why the RSCM advocates the power of music in worship as one of our key strategic priorities. It is also why we are now offering and deploying a whole raft of things to help church music to flourish: from *Hymnpact!* to sessions that will help church leaders to sing from

the front with confidence. Our RSCM church music conference, which this year will be online, also features some of these elements. We need to take an active stance to keep the living tradition of music in worship vibrant.

So, what can you do to help? First, engage with some of the resources and offerings described above. Your membership of the RSCM enables us to help church music flourish. If you encourage others you know – whether within your church or your wider networks – to join as individual members, or perhaps simply by offering support by becoming a Friend, then we can increase the number of people we actively support in a direct relationship. The RSCM is a membership organization, and we are proud to be so. We act as a voice to represent all those who care deeply about church music.

Second, take what opportunities you can to encourage others to engage with church music, whether that's encouraging better congregational singing in church on Sunday, or simply talking openly about the fact that you go to church. RSCM's Music Sunday helps with these things, so encourage your church to be part of it this year (you will find lots of information and support resources on the website). It just needs a little enthusiasm from someone to plan – someone like you!

The RSCM's motto is 'I will sing with the spirit and with the understanding also.' Let's focus on getting people to come and sing with us in our churches as one way of enabling growth. For, as it says in the Chorister's Prayer, 'what we sing with our lips we believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we show forth in our lives.' Amen!

# NEW RSCM MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



In January 2023 RSCM membership categories were simplified to Group (for churches, schools and other organizations), Individual and Under 25. The different types of membership attract different benefits and have different levels of fees, and the exact fees and benefits available also depend on where you are.

We are pleased to announce several significant new benefits for 2023, which are now available to Group Members. Director, Hugh Morris said:

*We are excited to enhance the range of member benefits. Whatever the musical style and resources in your church, or your own role as an individual, we have lots to offer, including service planning tools, peer support opportunities, and discounts on new products and events. We hope all our members will engage with and make full use of these exciting enhancements, which are all part of our being a source of relevant and effective help and support to members worldwide.*

For full details of Group, Individual and Under 25 memberships, or to become a member, visit:

[www.rscm.org.uk/join-us/membership](http://www.rscm.org.uk/join-us/membership)

## Group Membership now includes the following benefits:

- ▶ 1 x A4 size Certificate of Affiliation and Principles document for your church, school or organization to display
- ▶ 1 x CMQ printed magazine per quarter + digital copy (in addition, a digital copy is also available to a second Correspondent)
- ▶ 1 x *Sunday by Sunday* magazine per quarter + digital copy (in addition, a digital copy is also available to a second Correspondent)
- ▶ **New for 2023!** *Sunday by Sunday Plus* – an intuitive, new, interactive way of using *Sunday by Sunday* to plan your services, and to organize your church music and musicians
- ▶ **New for 2023!** Access to the RSCM Choral Coach App – a learning support resource for choral singers, enabling independent home practice of repertoire from our extensive RSCM Publications catalogue, including live feedback
- ▶ **New for 2023!** Invitation to access the RSCM's moderated discussion forum on Chorally ([www.chorally.co](http://www.chorally.co))
- ▶ **New for 2023!** Discounted Voice for Life Digital access
- ▶ Church Musicians Fees guidance document
- ▶ Downloadable 'Lift up your voice' resources
- ▶ The Members' Music Book (a free eBook released periodically of 4–5 chosen pieces for Group Members)
- ▶ Discount on classified adverts online and in *Church Music Quarterly*
- ▶ 25% RSCM Music Direct discount for RSCM publications
- ▶ A tiered discount system for bulk buying all non-RSCM publications on RSCM Music Direct (10–29 copies 10% off, 30–49 copies 12.5% off, 50+ copies 15% off)
- ▶ Discount on selected RSCM centrally organized courses, lectures and events for individuals or groups
- ▶ Eligibility to enter singers for RSCM Voice For Life awards
- ▶ Eligibility to purchase RSCM medals and ribbons
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- ▶ Guidance and support documents from the RSCM office
- ▶ Access to 1:1 RSCM member support





# A GAME OF CHANTS

ALAN TAVENER

Forming a plainsong choir, one of several choral initiatives with which I have been involved over the years (decades), has had many unexpected and happy outcomes. Plainsong aficionados among you will observe a lack of discussion about questions of notation and post-medieval performance traditions. My primary aim is to demonstrate that the practice of plainsong need not only belong in certain rarefied situations. Instead, offering an accessible and inclusive approach to singing plainsong opens a window on an extraordinary breadth of possibilities.

## ESTABLISHING A CHOIR

Together with my partner, soprano Rebecca Tavener, many years ago we directed, with Cappella Nova and Cauty respectively, a series of 'premiere performances in modern times' of chant preserved in Scottish and Irish manuscripts. These were followed up by CD recordings and accompanied by a community project comprising a series of Gregorian chant workshops for the public. The participation level well exceeded expectations and demonstrated a healthy demand for something more regular, the outcome of which was the formation of the Scottish Plainsong Choir. Initially, this contributed a community choir strand to the ensembles' professional concerts, preparing and singing appropriate chant items, but as the years unfolded the choir increasingly undertook events in its own right. Looking back, this journey might have had a different starting point or taken different turnings: other possibilities that come to mind are

a church choosing perhaps to trial the workshop model in the hope of establishing a liturgical choral group, or maybe an already-established church choir adopting it to widen access and breadth of repertoire.

From the beginning, the Scottish Plainsong Choir has operated an open-access policy: there is no entrance audition and participants gather on an ad hoc basis from project to project. With this (intentionally) fluid situation, more of a 'workshop' approach to preparing the choir is needed. This allows us to apply two beneficial principles that offer the participants enhanced learning and development opportunities. The first is the allocation of a good 20 minutes of a three-hour workshop-rehearsal to prepare for singing/warming up (processes that are repeated every time we reconvene); secondly, applying Rebecca's carefully targeted and easy-to-follow advice on bel canto singing, including placement of the organs of articulation (tongue, teeth, lips, jaw, hard and soft palate), open throat, released breath and attention to vowel and consonant production, together with the offer of brief one-to-one vocal surgeries in many sessions. The overriding aim is to encourage healthy vocal production, a constant legato and vocal blend: participants quickly appreciate the value of these through the enhanced beauty of the singing of monody, and often singers also report how much this helps their general singing and participation in other choirs. What they often do not realize – until they are well into involvement with the Scottish Plainsong Choir – is that they have been learning healthy vocal technique

Figure 1

## Ubi Caritas

11th Century liturgical poem Antiphon for Maundy Thursday  
ed. Drew Collins

U - bi **ca** - ri - tas et a - mor, **De** - us i - bi est.

3  
 Con - gre - **ga** - vit nos in **u** - num **Chri** - sti a - mor.  
**Si** - mul **er** - go cum in **u** - num con - gre - **ga** - mur:  
**Si** - mul **quo** - que cum be - **a** - tis vi - de - **a** - mus.

5  
 Ex - sul - **te** - mus, et in **ip** - so ju - cun - **de** - mur.  
 Ne nos **men** - te di - vi - **da** - mur ca - ve - **a** - mus.  
 Glo - ri - **an** - ter **vul** - tum **tu** - um, **Chris** - te **De** - us:

7  
 Ti - me - **a** - mus, et a - **me** - mus **De** - um **vi** - vum.  
**Ces** - sent **jur** - gi - a ma - **lig** - na, **ces** - sent **li** - tes.  
**Gau** - di - um, quod est im - **men** - sum, **at** - que **pro** - bum.

8  
 Et ex **cor** - de di - li - **ga** - mus nos sin - **ce** - ro.  
 Et in **me** - di - o **nos** - tri sit **Chris** - tus **De** - us.  
**Sae** - cu - la per in - fi - **ni** - ta sae - cu - **lo** - rum.

9  
 A - - - men.

by stealth! And, to emphasize accessibility, all of this is carried out in a relaxed, often fun environment.

In our experience, all kinds of people from all kinds of backgrounds are attracted to plainsong, but by no means *all* choral singers, nor *all* choral directors. While this is often attributed to plainsong being, literally, ‘plain’, it might be a symptom of being uncomfortable with the peculiar challenges of such apparently simple music and how to teach it. Singing by example is by far and away the best answer. So, as

a leader, understanding and owning those principles of healthy vocal production is also essential.

Furthermore, where the leader sings by example, this will help participants to embrace the apparent lack of pulse and develop the necessary flexibility of pace and expression to find the full beauty of the single line. In the process, participants take pride in their ability to make the plainsong ‘sing’ and take pleasure in achieving something they might not otherwise have achieved in their choral singing activities.





Above: The Scottish Plainsong Choir rehearsing.

## FLEXIBILITY AND TEAMWORK

In a musical world where a regular pulse (beat) has become the accepted norm, flexibility is one of the special characteristics of the successful realization of plainsong. The text guides the shaping of phrases through a growing towards and moving away from the accented syllables – not by accenting them as such, but by arriving at them naturally. The extract (figure 1) from *Ubi Caritas* helpfully indicates the ‘accented’ syllables, and you will notice that the positioning of these varies from one iteration to another of the same musical phrase. The flexibility inherent when respecting the shapes of individual words is enhanced by encouraging a forward motion during melismatic moments (where multiple notes are assigned to one syllable) and therefore sung on an unchanging vowel.

An asset that any choir director will surely encourage is teamwork, and this comes into sharp focus when rehearsing and performing plainsong together. The principles of preparation for singing are undertaken by everybody in unison (which also enhances listening skills), as is the corporate learning of the music, in view of the inherent nature of Western chant (no part-singing). In the process other skills are consolidated, such as staggered breathing and shared energy. We also focus (again, all together at the same time) on vowel production and vocal blend/release, and we develop the ability to deconstruct diphthongs and consonants, in the process discovering the added benefit this has on the holding of pitch. We also develop an ability to deconstruct intervals, particularly the third, which leads to enhanced note-pitching skills and has a positive impact on singing (‘reading’) from music notation. In other words, we hone the choral tools of the trade, which are applicable to and beneficial in any group-singing context. Finally, by using drones (vocal or organ) and harmonizing at the fourth or fifth, we not only add extra occasional musical interest but also further encourage listening and fine-tuning within the choir, enabling individual participants to listen to the group rather than to themselves alone.

The benefits of thorough preparation of any piece of chant, however short or otherwise, will carry over to the other music in a liturgy or a concert. So, the outcome of applying the principles of healthy vocal production to the learning of plainsong is a wonderful educational and developmental experience for your choristers – and, from personal experience, I can say that this applies just as much to the leader – and, in the process, a beautiful end-product that can enhance many a liturgy or concert programme. Additional benefits that participants have reported from the preparation and singing of plainsong include:

- ▶ The de-stressing value of diligent postural preparation.
- ▶ The application of the warming-up processes in their own choirs.
- ▶ A lack of vocal tiredness.
- ▶ A relatively narrow vocal range.
- ▶ Heightened awareness of intonation.
- ▶ The wonderful, emotional impact of a sudden and rare rise in pitch or addition of a drone.
- ▶ Expressive fluency of line.

Add to this the most general of feelings of relaxation and enjoyment that participants take with them from the workshops, rehearsals and performances, and it seems that there is still very much a place for the encouragement and practice of plainsong for all in these times.

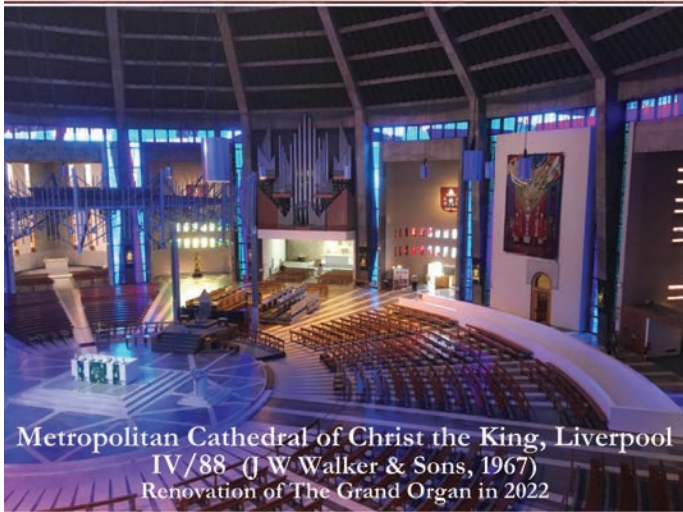
<sup>1</sup> *Columba, most holy of Saints* (ASV CDGAU 129), *The Miracles of St Kentigern* (ASV CDGAU 169), *Apostle of Ireland* (Divine Art DDA25065).

<sup>2</sup> *Singing for Health* is freely available on the RSCM website at [www.rscm.org.uk/online-resources/singing-for-health](http://www.rscm.org.uk/online-resources/singing-for-health)

<sup>3</sup> Musical extract from *Ubi Caritas* shared by Drew Collins at [www.cpd.org/wiki/images/a/aa/Chant-ubi\\_caritas.pdf](http://www.cpd.org/wiki/images/a/aa/Chant-ubi_caritas.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> A suggestion in the case of *Ubi Caritas* is to harmonize the first musical line with D, falling to C on (*a*)-*mor*, falling to B flat on *De-us*, and rising to C on *est*. The same process applies to the following two musical lines.

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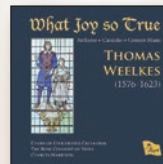
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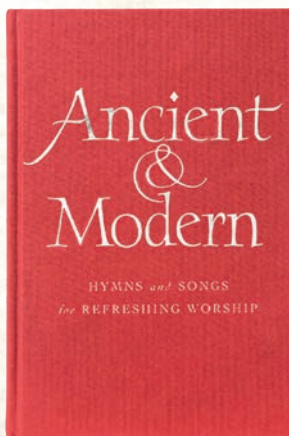
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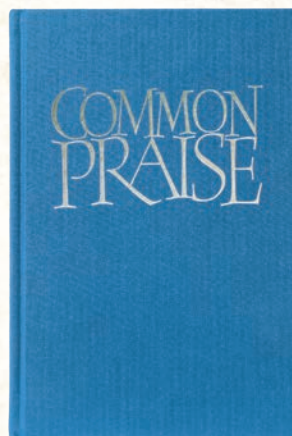
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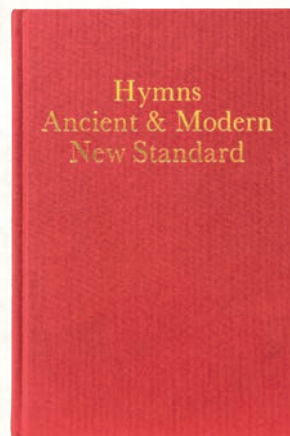
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# RSCM NEWS

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## MUSIC SUNDAY, 11 JUNE 2023

The power of music to enhance worship, lift spirits and connect us to others is well documented. On Music Sunday we give thanks for all the musicians who use their talents to create sacred music, and we celebrate their contributions to music making.

Participating in Music Sunday allows you to celebrate your own musicians, and to reach out into the community, whether by inviting different groups to the church, putting on special services or events, or joining for an event with another church. Here in Salisbury, we are looking forward to holding a joint Music Sunday service with Harnham churches.

Music Sunday can also be a vehicle for fundraising, both for your church and for the RSCM. You could organize a special collection on the day, put on a fundraising concert or sponsored event, or just sell tea and cakes. It doesn't matter what you do, we just encourage you to take part.

Visit our website for more information and inspiration. And please do let us know of your plans.

## THIS YEAR'S MUSIC SUNDAY ANTHEMS

One of the easiest ways to join in with Music Sunday is to sing one of this year's Music Sunday anthems. The words for *In the Sound of Song* were written by the Revd Canon Dr Gordon Giles to reflect the themes of this special day; the two composers, Anthony Gray, director of music of St Wilfrid, Harrogate, and Chris Artley, one of New Zealand's leading writers of choral music, have each brought their own styles to the music. Visit [www.rscmshop.com](http://www.rscmshop.com) to see flip-book samples so you can choose your preferred anthem.

Speaking of his composition, Anthony Gray said: 'My setting of *In the Sound of Song* is intended to be musically accessible and catchy, as well as fun for singers, organists and conductors, with interest for each part and some big tunes for everyone to get to grips with.' While Chris Artley said: 'My setting of *In the Sound of Song* is designed to work for a small parish church choir with limited forces, while also providing a satisfying musical challenge for the singers and congregation alike. Despite being limited to three vocal parts, I've included a range of textures, catchy melodic lines, together with colourful and, at times, unexpected harmonic twists to the accompaniment.'

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## REGIONAL MANAGERS

In December we said goodbye to two of our Regional Managers, David Scott-Thomas (South and South-West England) and Elena Henriquez (Ireland). Both brought unique talents to their roles and worked hard in the interests of the RSCM. We wish them well for the future.



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## THE DIRECTORS' FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE

Hugh Morris and assistant director Paul Hedley are in training for a sponsored tandem ride from Addington Palace to Salisbury. The journey will be approximately 96 miles, the equivalent age of the RSCM, and the distance between our previous offices in Croydon and our current home in Salisbury's beautiful Cathedral Close. The riders will stop at several member churches en route to worship and play music with local people. You can support their efforts from anywhere in the world by donating to their sponsorship fund. And if you are near the route, why not join one of the special events? You can read more on the Music Sunday page on our website.

Speaking of the fundraising challenge, Hugh Morris said: 'This is a great way to celebrate the role the RSCM has played in shaping church music over the decades (hence cycling from our past offices to our present home), also making music in churches along the way. Through these encounters, we can show how music joins churches and communities together.'

**Left:** Hugh Morris and Paul Hedley, who will ride 96 miles to raise money for the RSCM.

## NEWS FROM ACROSS THE UK

### A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

In Advent 2019, prior to Covid, St Oswald's church choir was the beneficiary of an RSCM-commissioned anthem composed by Stuart Beer. (See CMQ, December 2022, page 30 for an article by the composer.) This commission was a first for our choir, so there was a sense of pride, trepidation and excitement. We are delighted with the resulting composition. Covid, of course, ensured that learning the music did not take place for almost three years. We allowed time for preparation so that a first performance in church could take place during Parish Communion on Christ the King, 20 November 2022.

Stuart was able to be with us that day, which made it even more special. As you would expect, the choir rose to the occasion and helped to make it a moving experience. It feels odd delivering music when it is out of season, and it is a Lenten anthem. When you can't get bits of the anthem out of your head, though, then you know you have engaged fully with the music. Learning music without any existing aids was also quite tough for some of our choristers. However, where there was doubt, choristers were converted! Thank you RSCM and thank you Stuart for adding a beautiful anthem to our repertoire.

*Michael Halls*

**Right:** Michael Halls pictured alongside composer Stuart Beer.

**Below:** Singers from St Oswald's church choir.  
Photo by Peter Walker.





## A FESTIVAL CELEBRATING CREATION

This year's Area festival was a great success. The format was different from usual, being built around a single work: Andrew Carter's 1989 *Benedicite*, a multi-movement piece with music that is moving, fun and challenging. *Benedicite* was an ideal work for a festival, featuring SATB singers from across Essex, and a children's choir made up of trebles from several churches, including Chelmsford Cathedral. The day was generously hosted by St Andrew, Hornchurch and culminated in a well-attended service featuring hymns, readings and prayers, with the Carter work divided into sections between.

The theme of 'creation' was chosen for the festival because it took place just after St Francis's day, and at a time when many churches in the diocese were celebrating harvest festival and pet services; the Carter was therefore a natural choice. The familiar one-day format saw 62 singers assembled, with just under half working with Chelmsford Cathedral organist (and RSCM Area chair) James Davy to learn notes in the morning, before being joined by the cathedral choirs later. Chelmsford's new assistant organist, Hilary Punnett, rehearsed and conducted the movements with children's choir and accompanied the full choir movements on the organ with colour and sensitivity. Hymns and voluntaries were played by Hornchurch's organist, Andrew Losq.

Everyone gave their best during a long day, and the joyful service included a terrific performance of *Benedicite* – a piece with technical challenges, but that hit home with its evocative depictions of 'Whales and Waters', 'Butterflies and Moths' and 'Ice and Snow', and its fun movements 'Badgers and Hedgehogs' and 'Grannies and Grandads'. We were blessed with fine weather, a good congregation and a great group of happy and satisfied singers. The Area committee is grateful to all who participated and supported the event. We wish Andrew Carter a very happy 80th birthday year, and thank him for his immensely enjoyable music.

*James Davy*



The Laidlaw Music Centre at the University of St Andrews.

## PSALMS IN ST ANDREWS

The psalms lie at the heart of Old Testament sacred music and were the earliest form of Christian hymnody. Their wide-ranging themes have helped Christians to articulate personal responses to life's joys and sorrows, and, used in liturgical contexts, to respond congregationally to scripture. The RSCM Scottish Area Team and the University of St Andrews are co-hosting a 'study-and-sing the psalms' day, in St Andrews, Fife on Saturday, 13 May, to celebrate and explore this repertoire. This will be an opportunity to encounter different traditions of psalm singing, from plainsong to contemporary praise song arrangements, including the metrical traditions which are so important to Scottish worship. Sessions will be led by staff from the university's MLitt in Sacred Music and will take place in the recital room of the university's Laidlaw Music Centre. Adult singers of all levels of experience are welcome; the emphasis will be on experiencing psalms together, through singing and discussion. At the end of the day, we will sing and pray together using this material in the adjacent St Andrew's Episcopal Church. Cost, including a resource pack, is £12 to members (£15 non-members). Enquiries to Dr Jane Pettegree, [jkp1@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:jkp1@st-andrews.ac.uk), and booking through the RSCM Scotland Area page: [www.rscm.org.uk/areas/scotland-area-team/](http://www.rscm.org.uk/areas/scotland-area-team/)

## DUNBLANE SUMMER SCHOOL 2023

The 2023 RSCM Scotland Dunblane Summer School will run from Monday 17 to Thursday 20 July. We will be delighted to welcome old friends as well as new participants. The course has been running since 1998 and is a chance to sing an enjoyable and eclectic range of church music in the magnificent setting of Dunblane Cathedral in central Scotland. The course is for adults and is un-auditioned. We are delighted that, alongside our regular staff, Sal McDougall (deputy director of the RSCM) will join us this year.

The days are spent preparing for evening services in the cathedral with additional voice coaching sessions and, in the afternoons, a range of workshops using material from the RSCM education plan. Tuesday evening's service will have a Celtic theme and incorporate music from ancient Scottish traditions, more contemporary material from the Iona Community and also a brand new anthem by Lisa McMaster. Wednesday's choral evensong will include

canticles Dyson in D and the motet *Insanae et vanae curae* by Haydn.

A regular participant writes of the course: 'It's excellent value ... We come to sing, of course, but small group tutorials on various subjects are valuable optional extras. It's smart casual rather than formal, and no one is excluded. It's friendly and there's lots of humour, but standards are high.' Another participant writes: 'I can sum up my Dunblane experience over the years as having been a mixture of superb music, fellowship, friendship and worship. The course provides a focused environment, a sense of getting away from it all – of concentrating on being part of the choir, of learning, singing, eating and worshipping together.'

Further information is available on the RSCM website. Bookings can be made through course administrator, Brian Baker at [bbaker55@sky.com](mailto:bbaker55@sky.com) or on 01786 821294. *Matthew Beetschen*



Musicians from across the area gathered for a Come and Sing event at Bradford Cathedral. Photo © Bradford Cathedral.

## COME AND SING EVENSONG

On Sunday, 15 January, Bradford Cathedral welcomed members of the RSCM, the Cathedral Music Trust and Bradford Organists' Association for a collaborative Come and Sing evensong event. It was originally scheduled for last September (and postponed during the period of national mourning), and we welcomed singers from the cathedral choir alongside participants and friends from across the area. The rehearsal (directed by assistant director of music, Graham Thorpe) was followed by a period of socializing before an excellent service featuring music by Reading, Sumsion and Howells. We were treated to a prosecco reception before hearing from Alexander Berry (Bradford's director of music, and Area team leader for Leeds), Rosemary Downey (Cathedral Music Trust) and Anthony Gray (president of the Bradford Organists' Association) on the work of each organization. Participants were encouraged to consider supporting all these groups, and new links between musicians from across our area were created. Participants were also encouraged to join the Bradford Cathedral Consort, and to attend the programme of RSCM events the Leeds Area team have planned for 2023, including a festival at St Wilfrid, Harrogate and workshops and courses with world-class musicians.

*Anthony Gray*

## MUSIC SUNDAY 2022

Music Sunday 2022 was marked at St Machar's Ranfurly Church with a morning service that included readings, hymns and a sermon, which celebrated music and church musicians. *We are the light* (one of the RSCM's *Hymnpact!*<sup>®</sup> hymns) was our hymn of the month and was sung by the congregation with great gusto during the service. The choir was put to work with Nardone's *O sing to the Lord a new song*, Rutter's *I will sing with the spirit* (composed for the RSCM and setting its motto) and Mack Wilberg's arrangement of *When in our music God is glorified*. In addition, the Revd Hanneke Marshall allowed me the opportunity to speak to the congregation about the work and mission of the RSCM.

Music Sunday happened to coincide with Bridge of Weir Gala, and St Machar hosted a Gala concert. The Angel Voices choir from nearby Kilmacolm sang a selection of songs they had been working on over the past year, and the St Machar's junior choir performed some of the highlights from their most recent programme. The junior choir were presented with their *Voice for Life* White level certificates and badges, and watched a special video message for them from Sal McDougall, deputy director of the RSCM. The concert concluded with the St Machar's Ranfurly choir singing six of their favourite pieces from the past year, before the two St Machar choirs joined to sing Mack Wilberg's *He's got the whole world in his hands*. The day also included hymns for all to sing and an organ solo.

Music Sunday is a great way to celebrate all the music making that goes on in churches. It is an opportunity for the dedication and loyal service of those who lead and make music in churches to be recognized. Music Sunday was, for this organist and choirmaster, a tiring and exhausting day. However, it was also an inspiring day in which I saw many people share in the joy of making music to the glory of God. I'm already excited about Music Sunday 2023!

*Ian Munro*



# CONGRATULATIONS



Above: Faith, pictured with her trio of awards.

## JOURNEY OF FAITH

Faith Wilson began singing at St Mary, Barton at just 3 years old. She was aiming for the Bronze award when Covid hit. Then, shortly after, exams moved online. She prepared carefully and received the medal and certificate in 2020. Being enthused by her achievements, and without any significant choral singing going on, Faith embarked on the Silver award syllabus. She was successful in the Silver award (spring 2021), having never even worn her bronze medal to any services! She was then able to join Beverley Minster girls' choir, and during the summer 2021 sang as part of two choirs. With several other girls, a Gold award class was set up at Beverley Minster, and with dedication and commitment, Faith (11) has become the Minster's youngest candidate to study for the award, as well as being the first ever Gold award holder at St Mary, Barton. Faith has thoroughly immersed herself in the musical life of both these churches, and enjoys learning the organ, piano and harp.

*Rachel Dent*

Right: Ted Roberts, celebrating 45 years singing in the choir.

## LONG SERVICE AWARDS IN OTFORD

As organist and choirmaster at the church of St Bartholomew, Otford for 42 years, I recently caught up with awarding certificates of long service to our choir members. The aggregate length of service of the choir at the beginning of 2022 (19 members, though two have sadly died since then) was almost exactly 500 years.

Those presented with a certificate were: Betty Bishop (30 years), Chris Bishop (30 years), Jane Donaldson (45 years), Sylvia Grafton (38 years), Brian Osgood (40 years), Susan Reid (50 years), Maureen Reynolds (40 years), David Runting (63 years), Gillian Shilling (20 years), Clive Southgate (45 years), Anne Stevens (20 years) and Peter Venables (25 years).

Their contributions and devotion to the music in our church have been enormous.

*Kevin Grafton*

## 45 YEARS IN THE CHOIR

Ted Roberts celebrated 45 years of singing in the choir of All Saints, Stamford, Lincolnshire, on Sunday, 30 October, the church's Patronal Feast. Ted was presented with an RSCM loyal service award and medal along with a bottle of prosecco and a signed card by Neil Shaw (rector) and Jeremy Jepson (director of music).

Ted, who is 96, has given loyal, able and consistent service as a tenor in the choir and it was lovely to mark 45 years of service.

*Jeremy Jepson*



## RSCM VALIDATED SINGING AWARDS

### VOICE FOR LIFE SINGING AWARDS

These results are listed alphabetically under RSCM Regions, Areas and Countries.

(F) = RSCM Friend

(IM) = Individual Member

(S) = Student member, if candidate's choir not affiliated.

★★ Highly commended 86% (130/150)+

★ Commended 75% (120/150)+

#### GOLD AWARD

**Guildford:** Natalia Higgins\*, Heidi Jopson\*, Annie Karas\*\*, Femi Okuboyejo\*, Katerina Vidouris\*\* (Guildford Cathedral).

**Lichfield:** Myles Wilkinson\*\*, Alice Williams\*\* (Oswestry, St Oswald).

**London:** Sara García-Kelleher\*\*, Genevieve Hoffman (Harrow on the Hill, St Mary).

**Southwark & E Surrey:** Matthew Bisson\*, Ellie Roberts\* (Merton, St Mary Virgin).

**Suffolk:** Chloe Beeston, Finlay Bloore\*, Felicity Moore, Katherine Anne Williams\*\* (Ipswich, St Mary-le-Tower).

**Sussex:** Jenny Watts (Horsham, St Mary Virgin).

**York:** Ceci Chester, Lucy Duckworth, Jess Kneeshaw\*\*, Abi Moulton\*, Lily Myers, Faith Wilson (Beverley Minster), Emma Duffus\*\* (Welton, St Helen).

#### SILVER STANDARD

**Essex & E London:** Alissa Youngson\* (Chingford PC).

**Guildford:** Phoebe Bird\*, Freddie Marren\*, Bethany Sellers\* (Farnham, St Thomas-on-the-Bourne).

**Lincoln:** Imogen Keightley, Lily Liu-Child\*\*, Cerys Sparshott, Nathanael Stiff\* (Grantham, St Wulfram).

**Wessex:** Karen Murrell\* (Royal Wootton Bassett, All Saints & St Bartholomew).

**York:** Meredith Chester, James Palmer (Beverley Minster).

#### BRONZE STANDARD

**Durham:** Anoushka Paul\* (Stockton-on-Tees, St Peter).

**Essex & E London:** Talia Youngson\*\* (Chingford PC).

**Guildford:** George Spencer\*\* (Farnham, St Thomas-on-the-Bourne), Cicely Walsh\* (Guildford Cathedral), Jonathan Turtle (Hall Grove School)

**Leicestershire:** Abigail Anand\*, Isaiah Bentley-Gouldstone\*, Isabelle Bugh\* (Leicester Cathedral).

**Lichfield:** Ethan Cheetham, Zach Jones\*, Ella Wilkinson (Oswestry, St Oswald).

**Lincoln:** Tom Liu-Child\*\* (Grantham, St Wulfram).

**London:** Angelina Conceição Palumbo\*, Leon di Landro\*, Ann Kitchen\* (Finchley, St Mary-at-Finchley), Harriet Kelly\*, Eric Zoica (Harrow on the Hill, St Mary).

**Norfolk:** Maisie Baillie\* (Sheringham, St Peter).

**Peterborough & Northants:** Josephine Alford\*\*, Aaron Antony\*\*, Evie Carton\*, Noah Collister, Jessica Dickinson, Alexandra Green\*\*, Cillian Heppell\*\*, Alex Kirwin\*\*, Michaela Moore\*, Ifem Nwafor\*\*, Krishiv Pandya\*, Emily Qin\*, Maddy Robinson\*, Megan Wills\* (Peterborough Cathedral).

**Southwark & E Surrey:** Rebecca Ellam\*, Ava Renton, Sebastian Roberts (Merton, St Mary Virgin).

**St Albans:** Olivia Olleson\*\* (Leighton Buzzard, All Saints).

**Suffolk:** Jady Badoe (Ipswich, St Mary-le-Tower).

**Wessex:** Adele Channing (Royal Wootton Bassett, All Saints & St Bartholomew).

## INSTRUMENTAL AWARDS

Eva Moreda Rodriguez, Scotland (Organ II, *Merit*).





# A LETTER FROM CANADA

DANIEL WEBB

In 1913 a London church musician named Healey Willan (1880–1968) received an offer of employment from what was then known as the Toronto Conservatory of Music. Auspiciously, for one fascinated by numerology, it arrived on the third day of the third month in his 33rd year. He accepted the position, crossing the Atlantic Ocean to begin a new life in Canada. A few years later, he began his long association with the church of St Mary Magdalene in Toronto, serving as director of music from 1921 until his death in 1968. I knew little of Willan’s life and work before I made the same move at a similar age, but I have been struck how revered he is here. Consider this: whereas Alexander the Great is remembered in my neighbourhood of Greektown in a ‘parkette’ (a delightful Canadian term for a public outdoor recreational space of less than half a hectare),

Willan is honoured with a full park!

The towering figure of 20th-century Canadian church music, Willan mischievously described himself as ‘English by birth; Canadian by adoption; Irish by extraction; Scotch by absorption’. In the great cultural melting pot that is Toronto, such mixed heritage is the norm rather than the exception, and the openness and diversity of this exciting city is a major draw. At St Clement, Toronto, I serve alongside clergy from California, Northern Ontario and Pittsburgh. Willan himself was among 400,000 immigrants to Canada in 1913 alone, while a 2011 census reported that 20 percent of the country’s population was foreign born. Immigration trends have shifted since Willan’s day, when newcomers were overwhelmingly European (and mostly British); since the 1960s, Asia has become the leading continent of origin.

I found the transition from Church of England to Anglican Church of Canada remarkably easy. The structure of the services and the form of words is virtually identical (with tiny divergences, such as the absence of ‘both’ from the second collect at evensong, thus avoiding the implication that one has two hearts). Broadly speaking, I work here in the same way I always have, dealing in the same currency as the British church musician. Relocating to Canada was no doubt more daunting for the Leung family, who moved here from Hong Kong in 1973, knowing very little English, with barely any money and no idea what they would do for work. It is thanks to their brave decision that I come to work with Kai, the assistant conductor and composer in residence at St Clement. Kai Leung’s compositions have tremendous humanity and depth of expression, and it has been a joy to see the fresh vision he has for choral music. He is among many wonderful young musicians emerging from Toronto and I hope you have an opportunity to encounter his work.

### THE LITTLE DIFFERENCES

There are, of course, contrasts between serving a British parish church and my current role. Observing community worship in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic was like watching a live feed from a parallel universe. Long after European choirs were permitted to sing together again, the Diocese of Toronto restricted vocal music to a single singer, masked, at four-metre distance – rules that were only relaxed in October 2021. Choirs were only permitted to sing without masks from Easter Day last year. Over here, we became pretty good at singing through PPE, though I have the sense it was a practice regarded as unusual in some places across the Atlantic.

There has been a fair amount of new vocabulary to adopt, as well – you can forget about semibreves and minims; it’s a postlude not a voluntary – and different pronunciations to accept with good grace. I am at work on this article during what is now irritatingly referred to as Boxing Week, and the recent Christmas season has provided my annual reminder that a large part of the English-speaking world does not sing ‘O little town of Bethlehem’ to the tune *Forest Green* and that such associations between hymn texts and melodies were not divinely set down with the publication of *The English Hymnal*. Against that, it seems appropriate to sing ‘In the bleak midwinter’ amid genuinely bleak weather: my first Christmas

in Toronto saw the great ice storm of 2013, an ‘I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore’ moment if ever there was one.

Hymnody is a particularly interesting area for comparison, as revealed by a quick perusal of *Common Praise* (the 1998 Canadian publication rather than the 2000 UK publication with the same name). Texts have been extensively edited to reflect, as the preface puts it, ‘shifts in sensitivity to the ways in which language can exclude or include’. Hence, ‘Dear Lord and Father of mankind’ appears in *Common Praise* as ‘Dear God, compassionate and kind’. If you turn to *Amazing Grace*, meanwhile, you will find that its text appears in English and four First Nation languages – Plains Cree, Inuktitut, Mohawk and Ojibwe.

As a European settler in Canada, one has a lot of catching up to do with the painful history of oppression towards the Indigenous peoples who inhabited this land long before colonization. Shamefully, Christian denominations were heavily implicated in the residential school system and its monstrous abuses. Sincere religious observance here entails humble engagement with the process of reconciliation, one striking feature of which is the Land Acknowledgement with which we begin our services. Part of it reads: ‘this land is the subject of the ‘Dish With One Spoon’ wampum belt covenant, a treaty between the Anishnaabe Confederacy, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and allied nations to peaceably care for the life of the Great Lakes.’ Acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol and an important step in understanding the ‘history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history’.<sup>1</sup> It is indeed sobering to contemplate the immense tangle of events and injustices that set the context for my arrival on a plane and my easy assimilation into an English-speaking Anglican community.

### A PARADISE FOR CHORAL MUSIC

In terms of the practice of Anglican church music in Toronto, I am pleased to report its relatively strong health, even as we continue to emerge from the havoc of the pandemic. Music is superbly resourced in most churches here, which allows the art to be practised to an impressively high standard. Organists are generally employed for 12–20 hours a week – meaning they can earn at least half of a living wage – while many churches employ professional ‘section leads’ to support their volunteer singers. In general, the city’s pipe organs – most built by the very capable Quebec firm of Casavant Frères – are large, versatile and well maintained.

**Opposite:** Healey Willan (1880–1968), who described himself as ‘English by birth; Canadian by adoption; Irish by extraction; Scotch by absorption’.





Left: St Clement, Toronto.

There are no doubt many reasons why such favourable conditions exist here – among them, that our buildings are seldom more than 150 years old and were constructed as complexes with many rentable spaces, meaning they are supported by a steady stream of income – and the economic advantages of plying one's trade in North America have attracted a number of overseas organists since Healey Willan's time. Willan himself derived great professional fulfilment from his work at St Mary Magdalene, where he was encouraged to develop a rich Anglo-Catholic musical tradition, remarking: 'You have a sense of home, absolute completion ... doing the work you want to do and the work you feel you can do.'<sup>2</sup>

I do not mean to suggest that it is all plain sailing. As everywhere, declining attendance, stretched household budgets and a changing culture of giving are inevitably beginning to put pressure on music in church, a ministry I once heard described as the last inessential part of the liturgy still allocated money. Nor by 'strong health' do I only mean that several of the city's church choirs could easily be transplanted to a British cathedral to sing a week of services, though it is certainly true that the traditional practice of Anglican music is well understood and venerated here. Part of paying one's director of music a fair wage is that it allows a church's team of clergy and musicians to work together, meeting frequently to plan new liturgies and offer contrasting styles of worship. In this advantageous context, I am rightly expected to offer leadership across the entire stylistic range of music written for the church. Hence, at St Clement, an equal part of our weekly musical offering is

contemporary in style, celebrating the vast repertoire of worship songs at a separate and stylistically distinct Sunday service. This has put me to a giant, in-flight exercise in professional development to become competent in various activities for which a Cambridge organ scholarship did not train me: discerning musical worth in popular styles; assessing the theology the songs explore against our outlook and values; accompanying at the piano from lead sheets; writing chord symbols for guitarists. Hence, though I echo Healey Willan's satisfaction with my professional life in Toronto, I do not have the free hand that he did.

What advice would I offer a church musician considering relocating to Canada from the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the Anglican Communion? While no city, country or church is perfect, I have never regretted my own move for a second. Toronto is a paradise for choral music and a place where church music on the whole flourishes, in the hands of talented leaders and highly dedicated volunteers. One must be prepared to adapt – to new ways of working, to unbelievably cold weather, to matters of social justice one never even considered – and to learn and unlearn continually. I've had to reinvent myself more than Healey Willan did. But do I feel a 'sense of home' and 'absolute completion'? Without doubt.

<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal Education Program ([www.aboriginaleducationsd23.weebly.com/acknowledging-territory.html](http://www.aboriginaleducationsd23.weebly.com/acknowledging-territory.html))

<sup>2</sup> Giles Bryant and Thomas C. Brown, 'Healey Willan' in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* ([www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/healey-willan-emc](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/healey-willan-emc))

# Rscm Church Music Conference 2023

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The online conference will include sessions to inspire everyone actively engaged with church music, including clergy, choristers, choir trainers, instrumentalists and members of congregations. There will be opportunities to engage with RSCM staff and other RSCM members, and a lunchtime concert.



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Join us on this stimulating day and be inspired to enrich the music making at your church.

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## COMPOSING A CORONATION ANTHEM

# *An interview with* JOANNA FORBES L'ESTRANGE

The coronation of King Charles III will take place on Saturday, 6 May. To mark the occasion, the RSCM commissioned best-selling composer Joanna Forbes L'Estrange to write a coronation anthem.

**CMQ** ▶ **Joanna, writing a coronation anthem sounds like a daunting task. Where did you begin?**

**JFL** ▶ The first stage was to familiarize myself with the specific parameters of the commission brief, such as scoring, difficulty level, duration, accessibility and the central aim of the piece. Once I had all this clear in my head, I began looking for a text to set. Professor Eric Nye, my patron and to whom I've dedicated the piece, suggested to me some wonderful texts. I read them all through and two of them stood out immediately.

**CMQ** ▶ **What words have you chosen to set and why?**

**JFL** ▶ I was keen to find words that reflected not only King Charles's faith, but also something of his passion for nature and for music. When I think of our former Prince of Wales, I picture him walking in the Welsh hills or in the Scottish Highlands (I'm Welsh born and Scottish on my father's side so it's familiar territory for me). I'm also all too aware that this coronation is taking place during a turbulent time for our country and our planet, and so I was searching for words that would in some way give us all hope for the future. I settled on the opening three verses each of Psalms 72 and 149 because they encapsulate all of this and more. It's generally believed that Psalm 72 was the coronation hymn for the King of Judah; best of all is the third verse: 'The mountains shall bring peace to the people', which gave me my title. The piece ends with a musical reference, 'Let them be thankful unto him with the timbrel and harp' – perhaps I'll add optional parts for trumpet, timbrel and harp at some stage!

**CMQ** ▶ **Tell us a bit about the musical nature of the piece.**

**JFL** ▶ Central to the commission brief was a big, singable tune – the kind of memorable melody that

anyone and everyone can enjoy singing at the top of their voices. So, instead of writing the piece from start to end, I began with the melody, honing it over time until I was satisfied with it. When I was setting the words 'the mountains shall bring peace unto the people', I created a melodic shape comprising rising and falling fourths, which, together with the melodic sequence, depicts the mountains.

After that, it was a matter of fitting the rest of the piece around the main tune. I wanted the piece to have a majestic and commanding opening that straight away said 'royal coronation'. Melodies based around rising fourths and fifths are always a good way to achieve this effect: they have a fanfare quality, especially when played on a trumpet or the Trumpet stop of an organ. So, I returned to the idea of the rising fourths so that it became a motif for the whole piece, returning again at the very end for the Amen.

I also had an idea that it would be fun if the three times the word 'King' appeared in the text, it was always sung on a C (for Charles). Yet, I didn't want the whole piece to be in the key of C. Instead, I chose B flat so that in the opening phrase the emphasis is not on the word 'King', but on 'Thy'. The point is that we are asking for God's judgement to be given to our new King. Later in the piece, the word 'King' becomes a pivotal moment when we return to the home key of B flat via F major.

**CMQ** ▶ **What has been the hardest part of the process?**

**JFL** ▶ The hardest part was perfecting the central melody. It was a challenge to find the right balance between creating an uplifting tune and one that didn't have too wide a vocal range. This piece is as much



about inclusivity and accessibility as anything else. We want everyone to sing it! This is where it helps that I'm a singer myself and that I direct choirs. I know, for example, which syllables are easiest to sing on higher pitches and which aren't. At every stage of the writing process, I imagined that I was the person coaching a choir to sing this piece.

**CMQ** Are there any particular musical inspirations upon which you have drawn?

**JFL** I suppose hymn tunes have been a big inspiration. Having sung church music all my life, I'm fascinated by what makes a really good hymn tune and why people still love to sing them. Most of my personal favourites seem to be in 3/4 rather than 4/4, which is probably why I opted for that metre for my

'Sing unto the Lord' tune in this piece. Having said that, my favourite hymn tune of all time is *Repton* ('Dear Lord and Father of mankind'), which is most definitely in 4/4!

**CMQ** Many composers have written coronation anthems over the centuries, but if you were being crowned, what pieces of music would you choose for the service?

**JFL** Golly, there's a question! Well, there would have to be some Hubert Parry in there, I think, at least the tune he wrote for 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind'. I love the music of Taizé for a more meditative moment. I'm also a huge fan of gospel music, so I think I'd like there to be a gospel choir and for everyone to be on their feet with their hands in the air.



*My coronation anthem is as much about accessibility as anything else – we want everyone to sing it!*



*The mountains shall bring peace* is available to buy now from [www.rsemshop.com](http://www.rsemshop.com).







# CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ADVICE FROM A CHURCH MUSICIAN

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SIMON DIXON

Simon Dixon is director of worship at The Falls Church Anglican, outside Washington DC. In the second part of a two-part article, he shares some advice on balancing traditional with contemporary worship and reminds us to keep a sense of humour.

remember as an organ student being told to avoid churches that had drums or guitars. They were ‘the enemy’ of the organ and would, when introduced at a church, lead to the organ being broken up for firewood!

Well, I ended up joining ‘the enemy’ when I married a guitarist, and over the 20 years since, I am yet to hear any mention of breaking up one of the organs. On the contrary, I have been encouraged to build a classical choir, play and develop a concert series designed to give music students experience of performing, oversee an extensive pipe organ renovation, perform Handel’s *Messiah* with professional soloists and orchestra, lead a formal service of lessons and carols and, finally, to explore how the organ and contemporary worship might work together.

The challenge was that I’d never played contemporary worship music before. With contemporary worship, you tend to play from a chord sheet rather than notes and I found that rather unnerving. Being classically trained, I could barely play the national anthem without the music. Today, with all the technology at our disposal, it’s much easier to build a bridge between playing from music and chord sheets. I learnt the hard way. It took time listening and practising slowly, and, with the patience and encouragement of the talented musicians I was working alongside, I learnt how to play and lead contemporary worship. I found not being constrained by the written notes freeing and, to this day, I prefer not to play from music if possible.

My contemporary worship colleague has even encouraged me to play from a tablet on Sundays instead of paper. This is good for the environment, it’s flexible and it means we can change songs or keys more easily. Just make sure the battery is fully charged!

### IT’S NOT HOW MANY NOTES YOU PLAY, BUT WHICH ONES YOU OMIT

There is a place for the organ and classical instruments in more contemporary settings. I have found the organ to be effective undergirding, bringing support to other instruments. I’ve learnt that it’s not how many notes you play, but which ones you miss out, listening more to the other instruments, as well as the congregation, as you would if you were playing in an orchestra.

As a musician with experience leading both traditional and contemporary worship, I am grateful to have a wide perspective when it comes to worship styles. Indeed, it has been a privilege to help several churches at which the musicians, clergy and congregation have become stuck. I was once invited to speak at a church in Sweden where the ageing choir

had stopped talking to the younger worship band, who felt criticized and discouraged. As I saw what was going on, and as my translator began to interpret my words, I began to weep because I could see a church of godly folk being torn apart. It turns out that the choir felt threatened by the worship team and thought that they were going to be replaced, which was not the plan. As I began to speak to the situation, I reminded them that the body of Christ is made of many parts, all equally important. I asked both sides to consider the other’s musical gifts, and to encourage rather than criticize. I can’t quite remember who reached out first, but, after some silence and prayer, one by one they extended a hand of forgiveness to one another and soon everyone was hugging, smiling and crying! It was truly wonderful to witness, and we ended the day worshipping together as the family of God.

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*There have been times when I have thought, ‘that hymn should have an extra Alleluia’. But once again, I realize that it’s not about my preferences, but about God and his glory*

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### CHANGE CAN BE UNSETTLING

For many of us, change, whether personal or corporate, can be unsettling. We may prefer things to remain familiar and may feel the need to resist the introduction of something with which we are unfamiliar. Here are some quotes attributed to a member of clergy in the 18th century opposing a new worship trend. I wonder if you can guess what worship trend the author opposed?

- ▶ It is too new, like an unknown language.
- ▶ It is not as melodious as the more established style.
- ▶ There is so much new music that it is impossible to learn it all.
- ▶ This new music creates disturbances and causes people to act in an indecent and disorderly manner.
- ▶ The words and texts are often worldly, even blasphemous.
- ▶ It is not needed since preceding generations have gone to heaven without it.

It may surprise you to know that these complaints were directed against the introduction of hymns into churches!





## MUSIC FOR THE MOMENT

My love for both traditional and contemporary worship continues to this day. I've learnt the importance of adapting some of the great hymns for those who have recently come to faith through a friend or relative or an Alpha course, or who are unchurched and not familiar with singing hymns and spiritual songs. There have been times when I have caught myself thinking 'that hymn should have an extra Alleluia', or 'it just doesn't go like that'. But once again, I realize that it's not about me and my preferences, but about God and his glory.

Many of our favourite hymns will hopefully be sung for years to come, whereas I think this is not always the case for contemporary songs, nor is it meant to be. Many classical church musicians were employed to compose music that reflected the times in which they lived, and I believe contemporary worship does something similar where a scripture or theme can be relatively quickly set to song and help express what an individual or church or nation is feeling at that time. They are meant 'for the moment' and not necessarily meant to stand up to the test of time.

As a student, I remember being concerned that I was playing to dwindling congregations where it was not exceptional for the choir to outnumber the ageing congregation. All those empty pews seemed like they belonged to a bygone era. I used to play for a Sunday service where it was not uncommon for there to be between one and three people (and a dog). We would sing two or three hymns and I would be

concerned about losing count of the number of verses because I couldn't hear the singing from up in the organ loft. I realize numbers are not everything, but it was refreshing to play for a packed church of more than 900 worshippers and having to pull out all the stops so I could hear the organ above the voices every Sunday.

At our Anglican church just outside Washington DC, we lead worship in a beautifully and recently built sanctuary with all the acoustic bells and whistles that allow an organ, grand piano, choirs, soloists, band and congregation to worship alongside one another. We are fortunate to have a thriving multigenerational adult choir that sings every Sunday, three children's choirs and a worship team with gifted instrumentalists.

One highlight is our annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* (Part 1, plus Hallelujah Chorus) with orchestra and soloists during Advent. We sing it on a Sunday morning as part of our main service. The day before we offer a 'singalong *Messiah*', to which people come and join a choir of more than 700 singers. Most of them are just visitors who love to sing this God-inspired piece of music. It's a glorious sound, but a challenge to a conductor: I soon realized that I couldn't expect friends and families to separate from each other to form soprano, alto, tenor and bass sections. I informed them beforehand that when I point up to the right, that means sopranos, when I point up to the left, it means altos, and so forth. It makes for some great aerobics, especially when multiple entrances occur in quick succession!



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*It's in the moments when I think, 'I wish the ground could swallow me up' that I heard the positive impact a piece of music has had on someone, and I realize that God is control and that, thankfully, I am not*

---

#### **A SENSE OF HUMOUR**

There is one other characteristic that is hard to teach, and which I would like to suggest is a helpful ingredient when facing the ups and downs of being a church musician, and that is to maintain a sense of humour and not take yourself too seriously. Sometimes, however much we have prepared for and anticipated a service or concert, there are circumstances that are out of our control (see the examples listed in the first of these two articles). That's not to say we don't still expect to give of our best, but if I allow myself to get too stressed because members of the choir are consistently late for a rehearsal, or are *still* singing an E natural instead of an E flat, or are coming in too early or too late (or not at all), then my English sarcasm can kick in and unhelpful comments follow: 'well at least I recognized the piece as the one we're meant to be singing!'

Thankfully the choirs I have worked with have been forgiving of my eccentricities and, at the end of day, we have built trusting and lasting friendships as we lead worship together for the glory of God.

I do so appreciate the great tradition of weekly church notices (or 'announcements' as we call them in the USA), which are usually informative of upcoming events and can be amusing when not written quite as originally intended. May I share a few with you by way of not taking ourselves too seriously:

- ▶ The Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.
- ▶ Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands!
- ▶ Eight new robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- ▶ At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice!
- ▶ Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get!

So, when the organ is cyphering, or the choir are not singing the way you would like, when you've lost 'that vital piece of music', or your soloist is nowhere to be found, I encourage you to do the best you can in the moment and not to take yourself or the situation too seriously. Yes, we care and pay attention to the details. Next Sunday is coming, so you get to do it all over again, and maybe next time everything will go as you planned (although I don't think it ever has for me). It's often in those moments when I've thought 'I wish the ground could swallow me up' that I've heard the positive impact a piece of music or song or hymn has had on someone, and I realize once again that God is in control and that, thankfully, I am not.



## THINE BE THE GLORY

GORDON GILES

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;  
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;  
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;  
let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,  
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting:

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;  
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife,  
make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love;  
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above:

**Words:** À toi la gloire, ô Ressuscité, Edmond Budry (1854-1932), translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875-1939)  
**Tune:** *Maccabaeus* George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)



Above: Edmond Budry, author of 'À toi la gloire, ô Ressuscité'.

The words of this rousing Easter hymn, although originally in French, were written by a Swiss man. Edmond Budry (1854-1932) was from Lausanne, but after being ordained in the Free Evangelical Church in Vaud, spent 35 years as the pastor of Vevey, on Lake Geneva. Budry wrote the hymn after his first wife died in 1884, and it was published a year later in *Chants Evangéliques* (Lausanne, 1885). It soon found its way into English, translated by Richard Hoyle, a Baptist minister from Kingston upon Thames. The original French words are:

À toi la gloire, ô Ressuscité!  
À toi la victoire pour l'éternité!  
Brillant de lumière, l'ange est descendu,  
il roule la pierre du tombeau vaincu.

*À toi la gloire, ô Ressuscité!  
À toi la victoire pour l'éternité!*

Vois-le paraître: C'est lui, c'est Jésus,  
ton Sauveur, ton Maître, oh! ne doute plus;  
sois dans l'allégresse, peuple du Seigneur,  
et redis sans cesse: Le Christ est vainqueur!

Craindrais-je encore? Il vit à jamais,  
celui que j'adore, le Prince de paix;  
Il est ma victoire, mon puissant soutien,  
Ma vie et ma gloire: non, je ne crains rien!

The English translation is faithful to the French, and in both we find a description of the events of that first Easter Day, sung firstly back to Jesus and then to ourselves. Thus, we praise Jesus for the victory over



Above: 'The Battle of Culloden, 16 April 1746', coloured line-engraving by Luke Sullivan. Image Courtesy of the National Army Museum, London.

death that the raising of 'thy body' has won, but then in the middle verse we sing not *to* Jesus, but *about* him, and to each other as we describe Christ's rising from the grave. In the second verse, we are the church greeted by our Lord Jesus Christ, who has defeated death by resurrection. Death has now lost its sting (1 Corinthians 15:55–56), releasing us to sing God's praises. In the third verse we address Christ directly again, as we dismiss doubt and ask for his continual blessing on our lives here and hereafter.

The river Jordan is mentioned as the crossing place to the promised land, just as it is in 'Guide me, O thou great Redeemer': 'When I tread the

verge of Jordan ... land me safe on Canaan's side'. For the Israelites, the Jordan was a boundary, and although Moses himself never crossed it, his successors, led by Joshua, eventually did and settled in Canaan. In Christian hymnody, the Old Testament account is used as an allegory of the modern journey towards heaven, so the idea of being brought 'safe through Jordan' is a reference to death and judgement. The message of this hymn is all about Jesus having broken down the barriers of sin that separate us from God, thereby enabling us to pass over the spiritual 'Jordan' into the promised land of heaven. We should not forget that crossing the Jordan

for the Israelites was neither safe nor easy and without divine intervention would not have been sensible. We need God's miraculous action to get us across safely. Thus, the crossing of the Jordan and the resurrection of Jesus point to each other.

The hymn exists in many languages now, invariably set to Handel's magnificent tune, which is undoubtedly one of the causes for its continuing popularity. Yet for some, this produces a sort of 'tub-thumping' bravado, and even changes to the text have hardly changed its triumphalist mood. In some hymn books 'liveth' and 'hath' and 'hast' have been altered. Fred Pratt Green produced 'Yours be the





Above: John Dryden, by Jonathan Richardson, c. 1730s. Image FPM14, used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

*The evidently martial and triumphant music and words rouse us to the glorification of Easter as the great Christian triumph over sin, fear and death*

glory, yours O risen friend' and Alan Gaunt wrote 'Yours is the glory, resurrected one'. Neither have had much of an impact on the use of the traditional version.

Whether we change the words or not, Handel's tune gives the hymn an appropriate confidence, even though it was hardly written with these sentiments in mind. It was originally written in 1747 for his oratorio *Joshua* with the words 'See the conquering hero comes'. That Hoyle used the phrase 'risen, conquering Son' in the refrain and 'make us more than conquerors' in the third verse may be coincidental or a deliberate

resonance with the origin of the tune in Handel's oratorios. Handel himself used it twice, also including it in an earlier work, *Judas Maccabaeus*, which he had already written in celebration of the defeat by the Duke of Cumberland's army over the Pretender 'Bonnie' Prince Charles's army at the battle of Culloden in 1746. The biblical story which served as an allegory is found in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Apparently, Handel did not much care for the work himself, partly because it does not contain a love interest. Words and music were adapted from the poet John Dryden (1631–1700) and it was popular, particularly among the Jewish community of London, who were delighted at Handel's glorious portrayal of the Maccabees' rebellion – even though his original spur to writing had been the defeat of a Scottish revolt.

Nevertheless, it was not long before *Maccabaeus* began to be used as a hymn tune, and its battle-like tones began to be deployed less for the battles of the past to whose glorification the music was intended than for the battle over sin won by Christ in crucifixion and resurrection. The idea of a hymn extolling the virtues of a conquering hero becoming an Easter hymn helps us think of Christ who as the conquering hero is victorious over sin and death at Easter. As Paul put it: 'in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8.37–39).

The evidently martial and triumphant music and words rouse

us to the glorification of Easter as the great Christian triumph over sin, fear and death. Yet Handel might have been bemused at the thought that this is now one of the world's most popular and well-known Easter hymns. He was a devout Christian, an ardent supporter of the poor, composing and working for the poor foundlings of Thomas Coram's Hospital, and it is reported that he prayed twice a day. He was a regular attender of worship at Sir Christopher Wren's newly completed St Paul's Cathedral, where he also played the organ (sometimes without his shirt on!). There are few hymn tunes by Handel ('Rejoice the Lord is King' to *Gopsal* is another well-known one), but there is something very appropriate in the idea that this devout and prolific musical genius should inadvertently be the composer of such an inspiring, lasting hymn. Yet, like his fellow countryman and contemporary J.S. Bach, who dedicated so much of his music AMDG ('*ad majorem Dei gloriam*'), Handel might also have been inclined to inscribe on at least some of his music, 'To God be the glory'!

To you be the glory, Jesus, for by your saving death and resurrection you have opened the gates of heaven to all believers and reconciled the world to God the Father. By your infinite Spirit of love, help us conquer doubts and despair, that we may be daily renewed with your Easter joy and so may live in the hope and promise of eternal life that only you can bring. For you reign with the Father and the same Spirit, one God, now and for ever, Amen.



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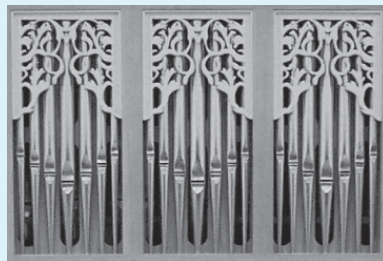
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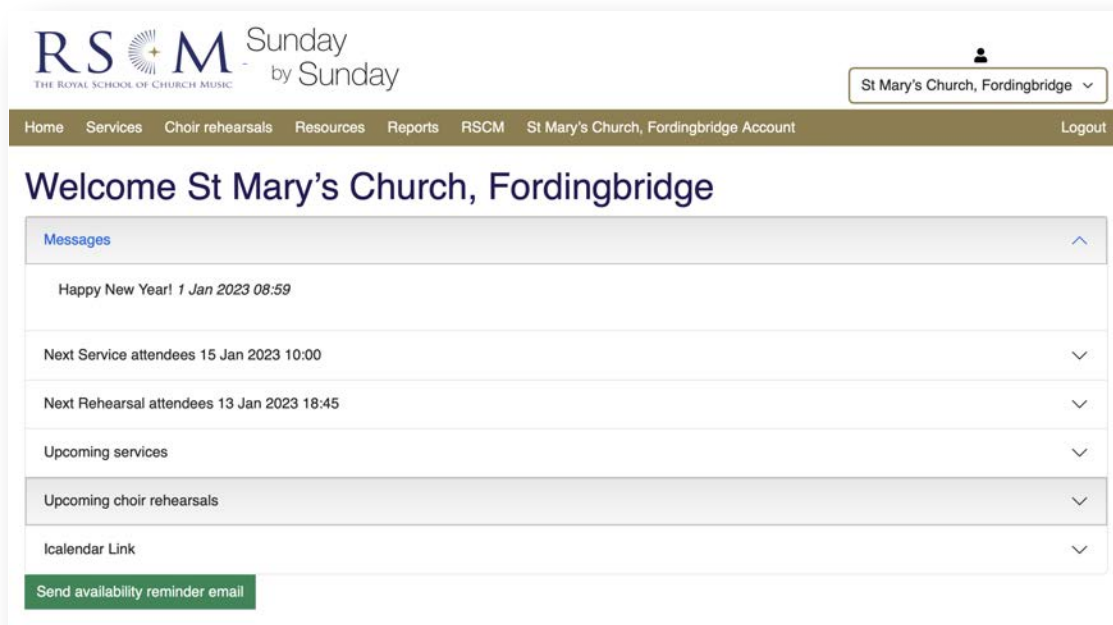
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# SUNDAY BY SUNDAY PLUS

## An introduction

*Sunday by Sunday Plus* (SbyS+) is the RSCM's new online companion to the printed magazine *Sunday by Sunday*. It is designed to help you plan music for services and rehearsals and to manage your resources (both music and musicians).



It does this by storing details for your musicians, worship leaders and administrators, as well as the hymns, anthems and other music featured in the *Sunday by Sunday* magazine that are used by your

church. This then allows you to set up services and rehearsals. Example schedules for services and choir rehearsals are shown below.

The screenshot shows the "Service" management page. It features a table with columns for Edit, Delete, Description, Date, Rehearsal time, Start time, End time, Comments, Details confirmed, and Resources for Service. The table lists several services with their respective dates and times.

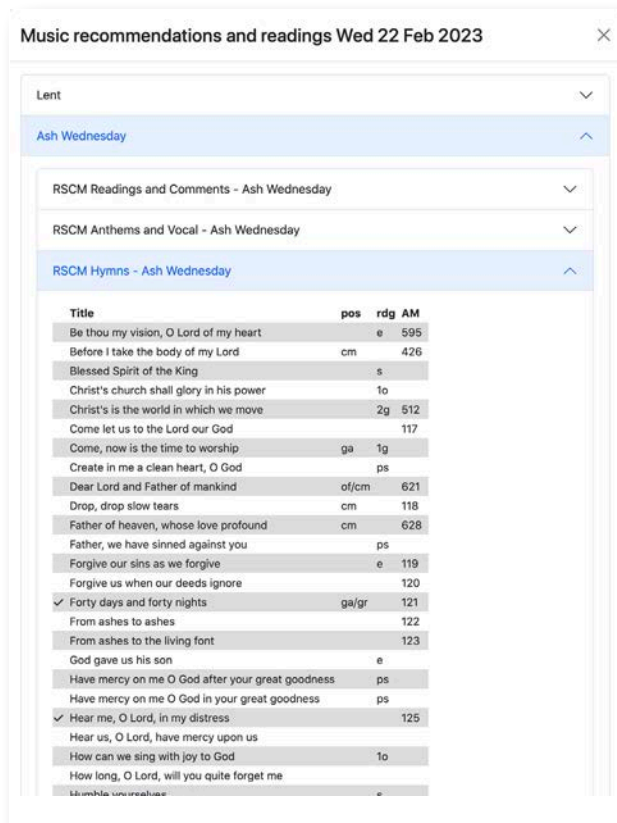
Edit	Delete	Description	Date	Rehearsal time	Start time	End time	Comments	Details confirmed	Resources for Service
		Epiphany 2 - Morning Service	2023-01-15	09:30	10:00	11:00			Set
		Epiphany 3 - Christmas Unity S...	2023-01-22	09:30	10:30	12:00			Set
		Epiphany 3 - Evening	2023-01-22	17:30	18:00	19:00			Set
		Presentation of Christ in the	2023-01-29	09:30	10:00	11:30			Set
		3 Lent - Abstracts	2023-02-05	09:30	10:00	11:30			Set
		2 Lent - Sung Exhorts	2023-02-12	09:30	10:00	11:30			Set
		2 Lent - Evening	2023-02-12	17:30	18:00	19:00			Set
		1 Lent - Morning Service	2023-02-19	09:30	10:00	11:30			Set
		Ash Wednesday	2023-02-22	18:30	19:00	20:00			Set

The screenshot shows the "Choir rehearsal" management page. It features a table with columns for Edit, Delete, Description, Date, Start time, End time, and comments. The table lists several choir rehearsals with their respective dates and times.

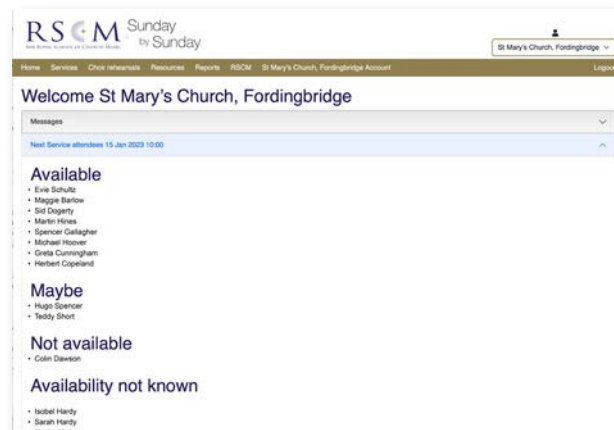
Edit	Delete	Description	Date	Start time	End time	comments
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-01-05	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-01-07	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-02-03	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-02-10	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-02-16	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-02-17	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-02-24	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-03-03	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-03-10	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-03-17	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-03-24	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-03-31	18:45	20:00	
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-04-07	18:45	20:00	Good Friday - No rehearsal
		Friday Choir Practice	2023-04-14	18:45	20:00	

## SUNDAY BY SUNDAY PLUS

Using the selections featured in *Sunday by Sunday* magazine, you can then choose music for those services, including hymns, worship songs and chants, anthems, and organ music.



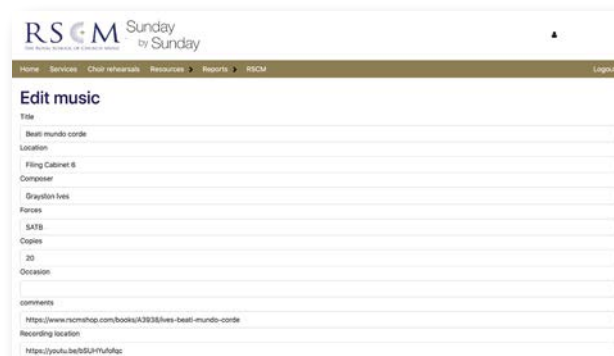
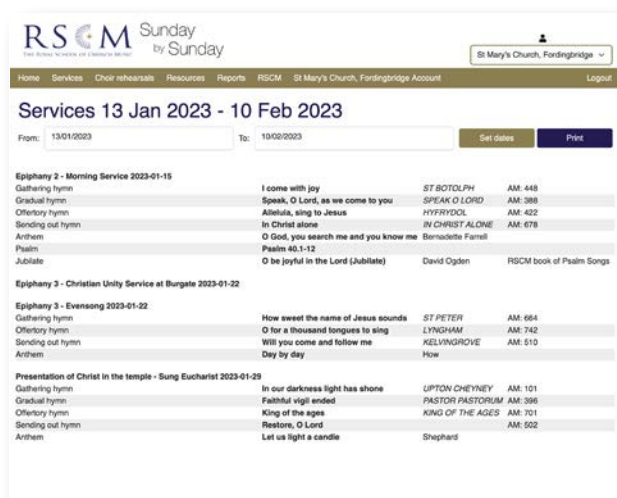
To make music planning easier, *Sunday by Sunday Plus* lets you log when your musicians are able and unable to attend services and rehearsals.



You can invite people in your church to join *Sunday by Sunday Plus*. Once they have accepted your invitation, they'll be able to log in and see (but not change) details of services, rehearsals, music and hymns, as well as who else will be attending services and rehearsals. Most importantly, you can send reminders to those who have not yet confirmed. To share the workload, you can make other people administrators, allowing them to add, edit and read information.

You can also add music that isn't featured in *Sunday by Sunday*.

*Sunday by Sunday Plus* will let your musicians, clergy and others know what you have planned. An example of a planned service is shown below.



If you are responsible for organizing music in your church, then *Sunday by Sunday Plus* provides all the tools you need to keep church musicians and clergy informed. Regular updates will follow, including provision for different types of music groups, lesson readers and clergy rotas, and further tools to aid producing weekly service sheets.

*Sunday by Sunday Plus* is a benefit of an RSCM Group Membership only. If your church isn't yet a Group Member of the RSCM, head to [www.rscm.org.uk/membership](http://www.rscm.org.uk/membership) and see the full list of benefits (or turn to page 17 of this issue of CMQ).



# BRIDGING CULTURAL DIVIDES

## A CHORAL MUSIC GROUP IN SOUTH AFRICA

SIMON AIKEN

The A Cappella Singers is a group of singers with no common shared church membership. Each singer takes a 'leave of absence' from their home church for occasional Sunday morning choral services. Now in its eighth year, the group was originally Anglican, but now embraces members of the Anglican, Methodist, Nazarene and Afrikaans-speaking churches, as well as others from across Johannesburg's East Rand.

The group's current rehearsal space is the fine Anglican parish church of St Michael and All Angels in Boksburg, which was designed by the renowned architect Sir Herbert Baker. Recently, however, the group's multi-denominational make-up has encouraged a broader choice of performance venue. On Palm Sunday, the choir presented an evening of words and music for Passiontide at the Moeder Kerk in Brakpan. Moeder Kerk means Mother Church and indicates that the town of Brakpan was once almost exclusively Afrikaans speaking. For some this was the first time they had visited a Dutch Reformed Church, let alone taken part in a service which, apart from the music, was conducted in Afrikaans. The group's

repertoire is drawn from an unaccompanied, mostly British choral tradition, unfamiliar to the local Afrikaner congregation. The music of Byrd, Farrant, Gibbons and Ouseley, as well as Heinrich Schütz, was a new musical palate and well received. It communicated, beyond the limitations of language, the depths of a shared salvation: the events of Good Friday and Easter are real for those who once would have defined themselves as opposing and conflicted communities.

I direct the group and was collaborating with the minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Boksburg East for a winter feeding project in July for homeless people when it occurred to me that we might be missing liturgical and musical opportunities. Since my days as a CofE vicar, July has always been the time to work on planning the music for the Nine Lessons and Carols service so that, come September, the choir can start work; in the middle of a chilly South African winter it was the right time, for me, to be planning the carols. I thought it would be great if, from all that hard work rehearsing, we could get two liturgical occasions instead of one.

Gys Loubser, the minister at Boksburg East, thought it was a good idea and revealed that he was the child of a 'mixed marriage': his mother was an Anglican and his father a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. 'It would have made my old mother proud to finally hear Anglican choral music sung at a Dutch Reformed Church carol service,' he said.

So, together with Hardus Kuschke, the local director of music, we put together a shared service and presented it on Sunday, 11 December, the first in-person carol service in the church post-Covid. John Wesseloo, the youngest member of the group, aged 11, found himself singing several pieces he (and many other singers) had never heard before, and in several languages, including 16th-century English (Walton's *What Cheer?*), Latin (Hassler's *Dixit Maria*) and a host of Afrikaans Christmas carols! Of course, in true Afrikaner tradition, there were coffee and cookies after the service and a great joy that, across cultural and historic divides, together choir and congregation had made 'a carol for to sing the birth of this our heavenly King'.

Right: John Wesseloo, the youngest member of The A Cappella Singers.

Far right: The A Cappella Singers in St Michael's Parish Church, Boksburg.







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## COURSES & EVENTS

### The Wondrous Story: Preaching from Palm Sunday to Easter

Palm Sunday to Easter is at the heart of our gospel, but how do we preach it in a fresh and engaging way?

Course tutor: Revd Paul Burden

Monday, 13 March, 10am to 4pm

### Taster Evening

An informal information session on postgraduate study.

Course tutors: Dr Eleanor McLaughlin, Dr Jayme Reaves, Dr Michael Hahn

Monday, 20 March, 7 to 8pm

### William Blake and the Renewal of the World

Blake realised that a Christianity reduced to a moral creed will not bring change. Might this much-loved but often misunderstood poet save us?

Course tutor: Mark Vernon

Friday, 24 March, 10am to 4pm

The study day will be followed by a free concert 7-8.30pm.

### Innocence and Experience

An informal evening of Blake's poems in song with an open invitation to the audience to share their own favourites with musician, poet and theologian David Benjamin Blower.

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# INTRODUCING CHORALLY

IAN CLETHERO

The RSCM has launched a partnership with the online community platform CHORALLY to provide RSCM members with additional new benefits.

## How does it work?

Like all social networks, CHORALLY is centred on membership. Our free standard membership enables members to create profiles, message each other, comment on posts, join specific areas of the site ('Spaces') and submit content for publication. There are also member offers, including discounts on products, services and event fees.

With millions of singers globally, the choral world is rich and diverse. Complementing this physical world is a vast and ever-increasing volume of digital information, with news, resources, concerts and courses across every musical genre, region, professional status, group type and demographic.

CHORALLY makes online life easier. By presenting and organizing content and enabling our members to 'connect, engage and be informed', we aim to support everyone who is passionate about singing and choral music and provide a focal point for the global choral community.

## Spaces

CHORALLY Spaces cover different areas, including courses and training, festivals and competitions, funding and awards, and jobs and careers. There are also regional Spaces and topic-related Spaces, (including health and wellbeing, technology, and music publishing). RSCM Members can use CHORALLY in many ways, from keeping informed about the latest choral news, publicizing their choirs and recruiting new members, to discussing repertoire and programming with other CHORALLY users.



Above: CHORALLY, showing courses & training Space

## Events

We publish an international calendar that lists events – including courses, festivals and competitions. CHORALLY members can contribute to this by submitting their own events (no matter how big or small) using our online form. We then check the listing and publish it. Simple!

Later in the year, as CHORALLY develops, we will introduce member-only resources, including feature articles and interviews, podcasts and a series of micro-courses focusing on the practicalities of choir management and marketing.

Like the RSCM, CHORALLY is international in outlook. Online technology is a great leveller and enables us to form partnerships with organizations across the world. These relationships will enable us to promote the RSCM's resources to CHORALLY members internationally. And, of course, RSCM members benefit from a platform that is involved in choral music-making worldwide!

The image displays four featured event cards arranged in a row. Each card has a green header with a red 'FEATURED' ribbon in the top right corner. The first card is for 'RSCM Bath Course 2023' from August 21-27 at Kingswood School, Royal School of Church Music. The second is 'Quo Vadis Choral Music CHORALSPACE Conference' from September 14-17 at Peja. The third is 'INTERKULTUR 3rd Sing'n'Pray Kobe' from January 01 to December 31 in Kobe. The fourth is 'INTERKULTUR 13th World Choir Games' from July 10-20 in Auckland, New Zealand. Each card includes a small photograph of the event and a 'VIEW DETAIL' button at the bottom.

## Working with the RSCM

The RSCM has its own public Space within CHORALLY where it can publish news, events and resources to a global audience. RSCM+, the members-only Space, provides a private, in-house network, bringing members the benefits of the mainstream social platforms, but without the distractions.

As the RSCM and CHORALLY begin working together, we look forward to building and strengthening our partnership and to welcoming you as RSCM members to a truly global choral community.

For more information, visit [chorally.co](http://chorally.co) or scan the QR code below.

### How to get started with CHORALLY – ideas for RSCM members

- ▶ Join the RSCM and RSCM+ Spaces to keep up to date with RSCM posts
- ▶ Find other Spaces that match your interests and join them
- ▶ Send us your news and events
- ▶ Advertise for new choir members
- ▶ Share videos
- ▶ Network with colleagues
- ▶ Suggest ideas for new content and features





# OBITUARIES

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## STEPHEN BOOTH

Dr Stephen Booth, a well-known choirmaster in Leicester, sadly died on 6 March 2022. Stephen was a self-taught musician who, on leaving school with few qualifications, became a qualified carpenter. In his early 20s he discovered he had a talent for teaching and changed career. After studying at night school, he gained a place at Retford Teacher Training College, before pursuing a career in teaching and academic study, gaining a BEd, and then an MEd, BSc, MBA and a PhD: truly remarkable achievements for someone who left school with virtually no formal qualifications.

As a young bass, his long association with St Michael and All Angels, Thurmaston led to him taking over as choirmaster, after which he achieved an enviable reputation for his 20-strong treble line of boys. His teaching methods during his 16-year tenure turned an average parish church choir into something quite remarkable. He recruited boys from predominantly working-class backgrounds through hard work and charisma and gave them an experience that stayed with many of them throughout their lives. The choir sang services at Southwell Minster and Lichfield, Peterborough, Worcester and Leicester cathedrals.

As a founding member, he went on to direct the Leicester Church Music Consort for 24 years. He transformed a quartet into a chamber choir of 25, which sang with distinction at nearly all of England's abbey churches and great cathedrals, including Westminster Abbey, York Minster and St Paul's and Salisbury cathedrals. Much of his inspiration for his choral training came after visiting Salisbury and Exeter cathedrals and spending weeks shadowing Richard Seal and Lionel Dakers and adapting the RSCM's chorister training scheme to great effect. He served briefly on the RSCM Leicestershire Area committee, and submitted many boys for their RSCM Bishop's (Silver), and Dean's/Provost's (Bronze) awards. In later years Stephen experimented extensively with composition and, as a devout Christian and mentor, wrote many essays. His inspiration, faith, friendship and guidance will be sadly missed. His compositions and essays are all being collated by his executors as part of his estate and continuing legacy. Anyone interested in further details can e-mail his executor at [paulmorley636@gmail.com](mailto:paulmorley636@gmail.com)

*Paul Morley*



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## PETER FOX

On Tuesday, 10 January, a large group of people met in St Botolph, Boston to pay tribute to a wonderful gentleman and the end of an era in the life of the parish. Peter Fox joined the choir of St Botolph in 1936 as a probationer, before becoming a full chorister in 1937. By the time Peter died, he had remained a member of the choir of St Botolph for a staggering 87 years! His association represented a lifetime of singing and service.

Peter joined the back row as a bass/baritone when his voice changed and took the opportunity to receive tuition in voice and musicianship from successive organists, including Philip Marshall and David Wright. Peter was well known in the area for his vocal skill and won several competitions at music festivals in Leicester, Nottingham and more locally in Boston. Peter was also a founding member of the Boston Choral Society and the Boston Operatic Society, with both of which he was able to show the versatility of his vocal talent.

St Botolph is unique in having four historic positions of choral bedesman, established in the 16th century and bestowed on four singers who demonstrate loyalty of service and dedication to our choral tradition. It is no surprise that Peter was made a choral bedesman during his time in the choir, a position he retained until his death. But Peter was much more than a singer in the choir. He prepared young choristers for admission, pressing their surplices and proudly presenting these marks of progress when they were admitted to services.

During his funeral, the parish choir sang some of Peter's favourite music, including Stanford's *And I saw another angel* and the setting of the Nunc Dimittis in E flat by Gordon Slater, a work written for the choir of St Botolph and featuring a bass solo that was frequently sung by Peter himself.

Peter was delighted to receive an honorary award from the RSCM in recognition of his long service in the choir. His 87 years as a member of one choir in one church is a rare achievement and representative



of a wonderful life of service and dedication. We will miss his cheerful, warm disposition, his keen wit and friendship and his beautiful voice, which possessed a warmth of colour and tone both in speaking and singing that matched the warmth of character of the man himself.

*John Lyon*

## LIONEL WOODS

CMQ notes the death of Lionel Woods, a long-standing supporter of the RSCM. He was involved with all sorts of RSCM-related activities in his role as a working church musician. He contributed to festivals by sourcing the music and organizing the booklet printing, and much more besides.

Despite his recent health issues, Lionel was able to take advantage of live streaming of concerts and services from the cathedral and wrote in September saying how much he'd enjoyed hearing one of his favourite hymns at evensong and that hearing the Psalms had lifted his spirits. Sadly, his wish to 'get to the cathedral one day' is unfulfilled.

*James Davy*

We in Essex and East London Area were sorry to hear of the death of Lionel Woods. He was organist at St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead for 35 years, and until recently an active church musician in many spheres.

Lionel joined the RSCM Chelmsford Area committee in the early 1970s and was originally the district secretary for Southend archdeaconry. As the Essex



and East London Area was formed and became ecumenical, Lionel became the secretary for the Southend district. He organized many events across the whole Area and was an active member of the committee in many other ways. He had been a printing teacher and used this skill to put together our annual festival book, planning with the printers and chasing up copyrights, often an onerous task. We celebrate Lionel's work for the RSCM and give thanks for his life.

*Duncan Paterson*

# CLASSIFIED AD

The price for Affiliates and Individual Members is 50p (excluding VAT) per word (or abbreviated word) and number, in both announcement and address. This includes a listing on the RSCM website for up to three months. The price for Friends and non-members is double the above. There is an additional optional charge of £15 for a highlighted advert and a premium position (including a photograph) on the RSCM website. Closing date **two months before publication**. Send to [cmq@rscm.com](mailto:cmq@rscm.com)

## WANTED

**Church Organist in Bredon, Worcs.** Applications are invited for the part-time post of organist to the parish of St Giles Church, Bredon with Bredon's Norton. Approximate hours are a regular commitment of around 12 hours/month along with special services at various times. The stipend will be £2,600 p.a. Applications in writing should be accompanied by a CV and the names and contact details of two referees and should be made to The Reverend Allison Davies, The Vicarage, Drakes Bridge Road, Eckington, Pershore, WR10 3BN. For further information on this post please contact churchwardens Dr Andrew Chapman ([ajc@andrew272.plus.com](mailto:ajc@andrew272.plus.com)) or Mrs Angie Godsell ([angie.godsell@btinternet.com](mailto:angie.godsell@btinternet.com)).

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## CDs

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## ORGAN CDs

★★★

### THE ORGAN WORKS OF ROBIN MILFORD

**Imogen Morgan plays the organ of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh** ♦ **Priory PRCD1246**

This exceptional disc of music by Robin Milford (1903–59) begs the question of why we don't hear more of his music today. The *Seven Seasonal Sketches* are arrangements of some well-known carol tunes. Each sketch is a brief, spirited take on a carol melody, with spritely rhythms and colourful harmonizations. The recently restored Willis organ of St Mary's Cathedral shows its might in the second of *Two Autumn Meditations* – 'Come all you worthy Christian men'. Milford's *Chorale Prelude on 'St Columba'* is given a magnificent reading. Closing with the astounding and shattering *Six Easter Meditations*, this substantial retrospective is full of delights and discoveries, with impressive performances by Imogen Morgan.

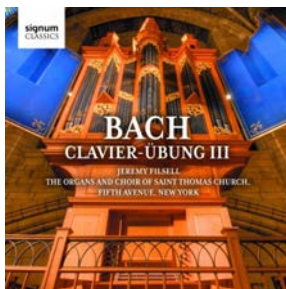
Milford took his own life at the age of 56, after suffering from depression after the deaths of his parents and five-year-old son, the deletion of many of his works from his publishers' catalogues, and then the deaths of his two great friends and supporters, Gerald Finzi and Ralph Vaughan Williams. One wonders what he'd have achieved if he had lived longer.

★★★

### CLAVIER-ÜBUNG III

**Jeremy Filsell plays the five organs of St Thomas, Fifth Avenue, New York / Choir of St Thomas, Fifth Avenue** ♦ **Signum Classics SIGCD744 (2-CD set)**

Of the four volumes of *Clavier-Übung* by J.S. Bach, the third is the only one conceived for organ. Jeremy Filsell



treats us to a tour of the five(!) organs of St Thomas, Fifth Avenue, New York. Each pair of chorale preludes is preceded by the Lutheran chorale sung by the choir, an effective concept. The accompanying booklet, complete with photographs, specifications and a brief history of each organ, also includes the chorale texts. This double-disc set is an impressive record of the St Thomas instruments, and impressively describes Jeremy Filsell's performances of this gargantuan collection too.

The power and might of the Miller-Scott Dobson chancel organ in the opening and closing 'St Anne' *Praeludium* and *Fuga* contrasts with the classically voiced, mechanical action Loening-Hancock gallery organ (built by Taylor and Boody) used for the majority of the chorale settings for two manuals and pedals. Of the other three organs, I particularly enjoyed the intimate sounds of the Aeolian-Skinner choir room organ in the manuals-only setting of *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland*. Regardless of the organ, Filsell's playing is flawless throughout with crisp, clean ornamentation and clear textures.

Ian Munro

## CHORAL CDs

★★★

### ALL ANGELS: CHORAL WORKS BY GEORGE ARTHUR

**Choir of Royal Holloway / Cecily Beer (harp) / Rupert Gough** ♦ **Convivium CR078 (2-CD set)**

This double-disc set includes a generous selection of George Arthur's choral music, ranging from his settings of the liturgy in *Missa Brevis* and *Friday Service* (a Magnificat and Nunc dimittis) to *Three Christmas Carols*



and the multi-movement *Speciosa*. Rupert Gough and the choir of Royal Holloway give excellent performances; the dynamic range and vocal blend of this ensemble is impressive and the diction clear. The Gloria from *Missa Brevis* bounces along with great energy, while *Ave Maris Stella* and *One in Christ* are hauntingly beautiful. *Ave Maria* is sung with a good sense of pacing. Gough clearly relishing the fine acoustics of St Alban the Martyr, Birmingham. *Speciosa* was composed for upper voices and harp as a companion piece to Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. Cecily Beer's sensitive harp accompaniments give this piece an ethereal quality; the solo harp movement adds its own sparkle to a delightful recording.

★

### VOCES SEPARATAE - CHORAL WORKS BY GRAHAM KEITCH

**Alexandra Burch, Carrie Kinnison, Matthew Curtis, Charlie Kinnison** ♦ **Willowhayne Records WHR077**

Undeterred by the Covid lockdowns, Graham Keitch approached four American singers to record from their home studios the individual vocal parts for this CD. Lavender Audio's Hauptwerk Hereford Cathedral sample set was used for the organ accompaniments. Despite the versatility of the singers and the more intimate feel resulting from using so





# REVIEWS OF CDs, DVDs & BOOKS

few voices, the voice parts sound to me more enhanced than need be and the organ accompaniment is very prominent. It feels at times as if we are listening to a choir aid rather than a musical performance. *Our Lord, our Lord* and *O glorious Prince St Michael* are tracks that suffer due to balancing issues – the organ is just too powerful. The a cappella tracks fare slightly better: *Absalon fili mi* and *O nata lux* are two beautiful pieces, but deserving of a more satisfactory recording!

Ian Munro

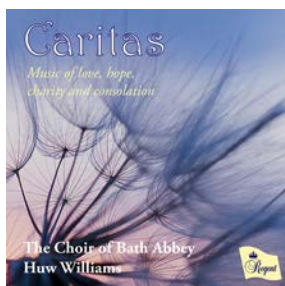
## PASSIONTIDE AND EASTER CDs

★★★

### CARITAS: MUSIC OF LOVE, HOPE, CHARITY AND CONSOLATION

**Choir of Bath Abbey / Olly Chubb (trumpet) / Shean Bowers (organ and piano) / Huw Williams**  
◆ Regent REGCD569

This recital from Bath Abbey is a record of a choir at the peak of its powers. The interestingly designed programme includes some pieces suitable for Holy Week and some for Remembrance (and some for both). Gjeilo's *Ubi caritas* and Taverner's *Song for Athene* receive well-paced accounts that celebrate not just the choir's excellence but also the glorious acoustic of Bath Abbey. Schubert's *Litanei* features just the choristers, with sensitive piano accompaniment from Shean Bowers: the top notes are no problem for the young people, hit cleanly and with ease. Works by Rutter, Ireland, Harris and Walford Davies lead into Finzi's *Lo, the full final sacrifice*, which receives a superb



performance. Owen Chubb's trumpet playing resounds gloriously round Bath Abbey in Burgon's *Nunc Dimittis* and Mark Blatchly's *For the fallen*. The Klais organ, played by Shean Bowers, is displayed effectively in Elgar's 'Nimrod'. It is a rewarding and moving CD.

Ian Munro

★★★

### EASTERTIDE EVENSONG

**Choir of St John's College, Cambridge / James Anderson-Besant and Glen Dempsey (organ) / Andrew Nethsingha** ◆  
Signum Classics SIGCD707

It is difficult to review this disc without a surfeit of superlatives. Howells's 'Gloucester' Service provides the canticles, with well-judged tempi allowing the harmonies and long vocal lines to make their mark but never losing a sense of direction, culminating in exciting final Glorias. From introit – Julian Anderson's *My beloved spake* – through to anthem – John Taverner's *Dum transisset Sabbatum (I)* – the balance and the blend of voices is admirable. The Howells and the psalms demonstrate colourful and subtle playing of the organ, which comes into its own at the end, when James Anderson-Besant gives an exuberant performance of the Widor *Symphonie VI Finale*, making the most of its tumultuous coda.

Judith Markwith

## ORGAN DVDs

★★★

### BACH AND EXPRESSION

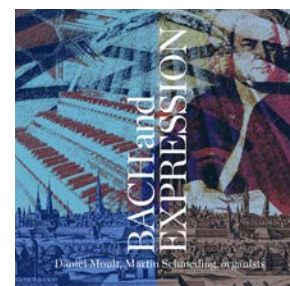
**Daniel Moulton and Martin Schmeding play the two Silbermann organs in Rötha, the Trost in Waltershausen and the Hildebrandt in Sangerhausen**  
◆ Films by Will Fraser ◆  
Fugate State Films FSFDVD015  
(4-disc set: 2 CDs plus 2 DVDs)

Here's a boxed set of pure Bach heaven: CDs and DVDs adding up to over six hours devoted to the organ music of the great master. Daniel Moulton – who many will remember used to accompany

the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir – and Martin Schmeding have recorded a wide range of well-known and less familiar organ works, spread over two CDs. One of the two DVDs contains filmed performances of all music recorded on the CDs. Apart from the stylish and indeed virtuosic playing here, the fairly crucial co-stars are four historic organs in Germany dating back to J.S. Bach's time: two Silbermann instruments built in the 1720s, a Hildebrandt instrument dated 1728 and a large three-manual instrument built by Trost in 1730 – claimed to be one of the best preserved surviving baroque organs in the world. These period pieces are worth seeing on film – ornate baroque casework and carvings, wooden stops, well-worn keys and straight pedalboards. As for the listening, these instruments – whether small or large – sound truly magnificent; here is both grandeur and intimacy, but above all clarity. The point is made that their builders would have known Bach. Only one is at modern concert pitch; two have been tuned to equal temperament. One slight distraction in the otherwise excellent audio quality is some limiting in louder passages.

Apart from all the organ playing, the four instruments are demonstrated by both players in separate films; here there's plenty of detail about their historic background and their builders. It seems, for instance, there was some controversy regarding the building of the Trost instrument.

The other DVD is a documentary by film-maker Will Fraser that aims to answer the question – how should you play Bach's music? It takes 204 minutes to answer the question in seven chapters, but clearly these period instruments inform part of the answer. Both players bring the



# REVIEWS OF CDs, DVDs & BOOKS

fruits of considerable research and consider contentious questions such as manual changes and stop changes during a piece. From Martin Schmeding there are fascinating insights into Lutheran theology and liturgy. Some will notice that both players (well-worn organ shoes notwithstanding) play the pedals with toes only – reflecting modern thinking about pedal technique in Bach's time.

This has been a mammoth project, filmed during 2021. If a trip to Bach's Leipzig is on your bucket list, this is the next best thing in the meantime.  
*Stuart Robinson*

## BOOKS

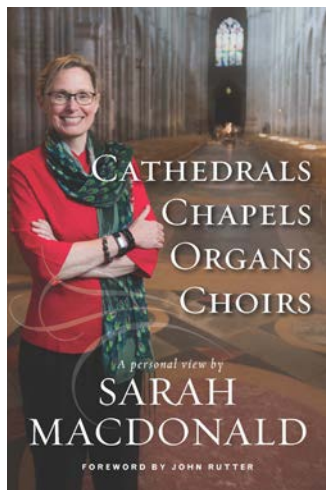
### **CATHEDRALS, CHAPELS, ORGANS, CHOIRS: A PERSONAL VIEW**

**MacDonald, Sarah E.**

**August Press 428pp.**

**PB 979-8-218-04214-1 £26.99**

Well known in the UK cathedral music world as director of music at Selwyn College in Cambridge, and director of the girls choir at Ely Cathedral, Sarah MacDonald has been penning a monthly column in *The American Organist* magazine since 2009. Her Canadian background, plus 17 years of experience in Cambridge, gave her a unique perspective of cathedral and collegiate music on this side of the Atlantic. Her regular column was



intended to enlighten American readers' understanding of the highly regarded, but often mysterious and little understood, traditions within UK cathedral music. Her 13 years of regular short essays are collected here into a substantial volume.

As a regular reader of *The American Organist* for over 25 years, I have read all of her essays before, but it is good to have so much common sense and her many down-to-earth personal views all in one place. One slight downside is the inevitable repetition of certain everyday matters over so many years, such as the selection and training of choristers and organ scholars.

The timeline of these articles covers the Covid pandemic and future historians may well look back to this book to reveal strategies of how choirs of excellence coped with training their singers through that bleak time.

The broad title of this book gives no clear indication of the target audience, but anyone interested in the Anglican choral tradition, whether professional or amateur, will gain considerable insight into this niche world.

*John Henderson*

### **VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

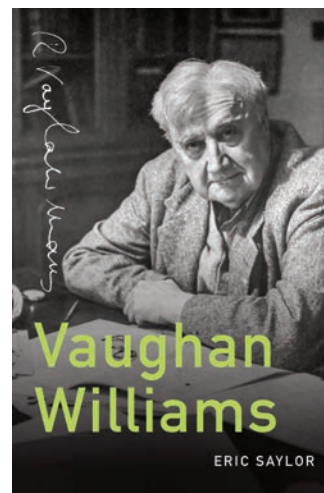
**Eric Saylor**

**Oxford University Press 344pp.**

**HB 978-0-19-091856-9 £26.99**

Published towards the end of last year, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958), this new biography has much to say about the background to RVW's compositions, including his church music. He was always concerned to improve the standards and quality of British musical life, including in the music provided for the liturgy and of course in *The English Hymnal* of 1906. When discussing his church music, one is often made aware of how it was one special facet of his concern for the quality of all amateur music-making.

The new material presented here that concerns the early works has little direct relevance to his church compositions, the earliest of which appears to be the motet *O clap your hands* of 1920. However, there followed a series of compositions for church use, concluding, shortly



before his death, with the motet *A vision of aeroplanes*, which sets words from Ezekiel and is dedicated to Harold Darke. It is described here as 'one of [RVW's] strangest and most difficult choral works' – what a contrast is his previous church composition, the 1956 *Te Deum* and *Benedictus* for unison voices or mixed voices with accompaniment of organ or harmonium or piano!

The chapters are arranged in pairs and by decade, so that a chapter with biographical description of a particular 10 years is followed by a chapter discussing the music of that same period. Recent access to some 5000 letters written by RVW has contributed to a fuller understanding of his personal life and of his creative personality. The book is a 'must' for all Vaughan Williams enthusiasts.

*Julian Ellaway*

You will find reviews of recent printed music publications in *Sunday by Sunday* (no. 104). All the latest reviews are available online at [www.rscm.com/reviews](http://www.rscm.com/reviews)

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*David Pipe*  
Director of the Organists' Training Programme  
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