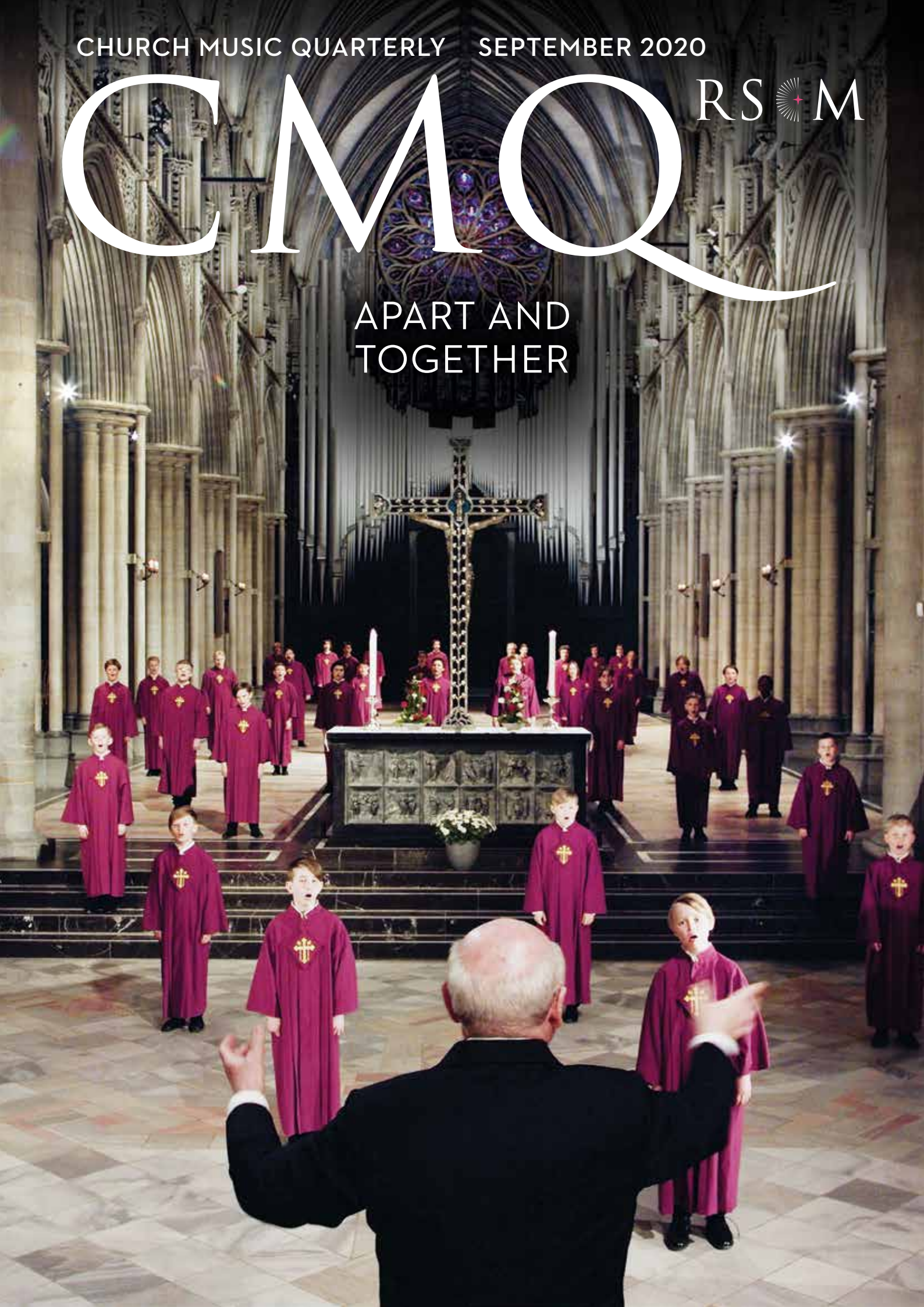


CHURCH MUSIC QUARTERLY SEPTEMBER 2020

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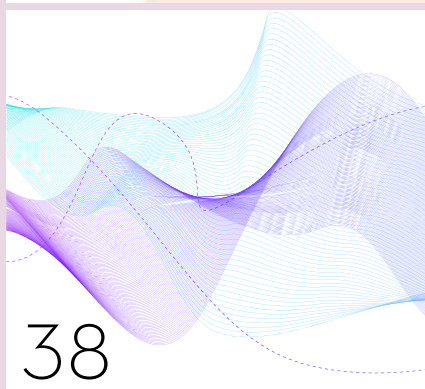


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Accessible Choral Music for Parish Choirs

by Ian Hubbard

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Anyone wishing to apply for a grant from the scheme is invited to contact the Prayer Book Society on **0118 984 2582** or **pbs.admin@pbs.org.uk**

For information about The Prayer Book Society or to join please ring the above number or go to **www.pbs.org.uk**

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WELCOME

According to the Big Choral Census, there are more than 40,000 choirs in the UK comprising more than two million people who sing regularly. All of those choirs, both secular and sacred, have been silenced.

Virtual services have allowed church musicians to keep in touch with friends and to retain some sense of togetherness, but for many there remains a profound sense of isolation and of lost companionship. People who have sung together for decades now find themselves singing alone to a computer screen. Jonathan Robinson describes this phenomenon as 'solitary karaoke', and on pp.33-34 he asks what lessons we can learn from our singing in isolation. As he points out, the present situation reminds us how much our worship is enhanced by gathering together in song.

The official advice regarding who can and cannot sing in church and under what circumstances has drawn much criticism. Under current guidance, no group singing should take place when worshippers are present; small groups of professional singers may sing outdoors, for example in a churchyard; while inside churches, where essential to an act of worship, one individual can sing or chant, ideally standing behind a plexiglass screen. In addition, groups of professional singers may rehearse and record in churches for broadcast. But what justifies such rules and distinctions? When it comes to the science behind the ban, the landscape appears foggy. In 'Unreliable friends' (pp.27-31), Professor Martin Ashley lays out the evidence used to rationalize the rulings and explains some of the gaps in our understanding. Does singing pose a greater health risk than speaking loudly? Are amateur singers more effective spreaders of the virus than professionals? And do sopranos pose more of a threat than tenors? These are just some of the questions still unanswered and, as Ashley explains, more research is needed before the government will revise its advice.

In the meantime, singers, much like athletes, need to keep in shape. On pages 38-41, Hilary Llystyn Jones suggests some exercises to keep your voice healthy. She also signposts some of the pitfalls to avoid when singing in cyberspace. For more exercises, readers can visit the RSCM's webshop (rscmshop.com) where a series of six vocal-coaching sessions are available to purchase.

We begin, however, with 'In Action', which this quarter focuses on the RSCM's popular and well-received virtual services and webinars that have been running since March.



STEFAN PUTIGNY

CONTRIBUTORS



MARTIN ASHLEY worked in a variety of school and university settings before retiring in 2013. He has specialized in the adolescent male voice and prior to Covid-19 was working on the consequences of earlier voice change for boys' musical maturity in mixed gender choral settings. As editor-in-chief of the Association of British Choral Directors' journal he assembled a team of virologists and public health professionals to produce a rapid response review of choral singing and Covid-19.



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



HILARY LLYSTYN JONES is well known for training many cathedral choristers in England, Europe and America, and is the only person to do such work on such a vast scale. She was awarded an ARSCM in 2002 and HonGCM in 2006 for her contribution to music and worship in the church.



JONATHAN ROBINSON is a former resident musician of Iona Abbey and spent 11 years as full-time director of music at All Saints, Lindfield. A graduate of the Theology, Music and Worship degree course at London School of Theology, he is presently working in the Education Department at the RSCM. He enjoys planning creative and alternative worship with music from different traditions.

J. R. WATSON is Emeritus Professor of English, University of Durham. He is a Fellow of the RSCM. In retirement he is working at what has been described as 'the impossible task': co-editing *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, intended as a replacement for John Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1892, 1907).



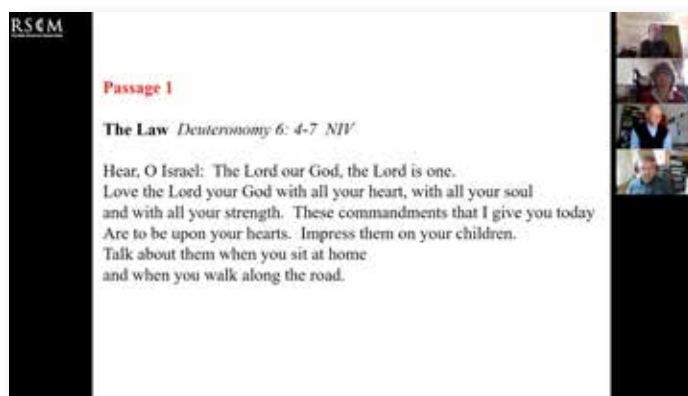
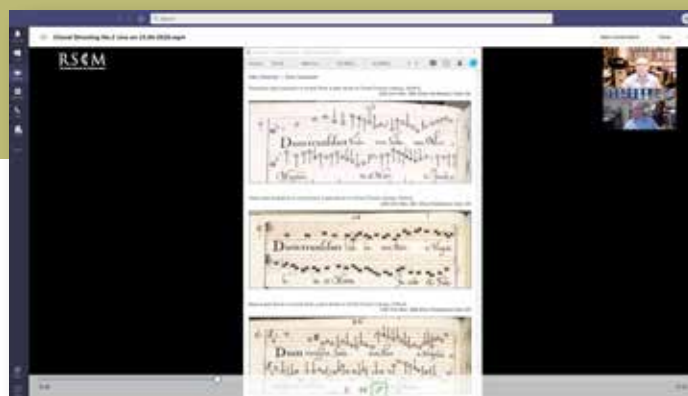
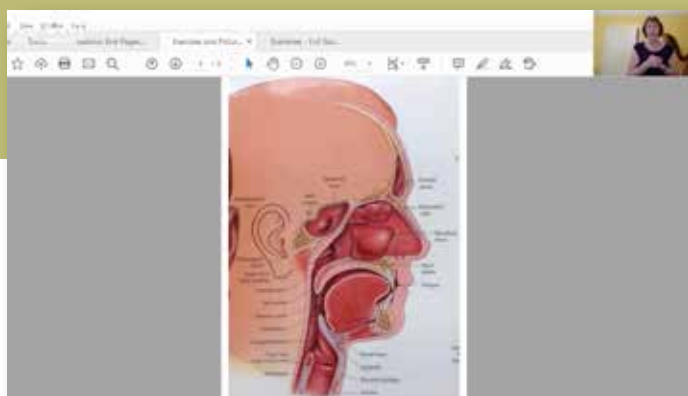
GEOFF WEAVER has taught music in Hong Kong (as a mission partner with the Church Mission Society), directed music at Bradford Cathedral, lectured at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, oversaw the RSCM's educational work as Director of Studies, directed music for two Lambeth conferences, and taught and conducted in many countries. He continues to direct three choirs in the Midlands, and to be in demand as a composer and arranger.

RSCM STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

Andy Brockway, Membership Officer
Angela Hamilton, Marketing Officer
Sal McDougall, Deputy Director of Education and Mission Delivery
Hugh Morris, Director

IN ACTION WEBINARS AND SERVICES

The RSCM has responded to the closure of churches in a variety of ways, including online services, help sheets, and hymns of the day. Thanks to our online webinars we have also been able to continue functioning as a school and to offer world-class group and one-to-one tuition on subjects such as choral and choir directing, sight reading, aural training, keeping your voice in shape during lockdown, and organ tuition at a variety of levels.



WHAT OUR ATTENDEES HAVE BEEN SAYING...

“The webinars been very helpful in terms of hearing other people’s opinions and feeling part of a community of musicians while in lockdown ”

“All interesting, intelligent and well presented ”

“They make you think how you approach certain aspects of repertoire and introduce new repertoire ”

“The depth of information presented in an informative and engaging environment ”

ONLINE SERVICES



On 14 June, the RSCM held its annual Music Sunday event. We were delighted that 2,000 people were able to join us live to celebrate the role of music and musicians in church life, and that over 8,000 have since viewed the service on our YouTube channel.



“Thank you so much to everyone at the RSCM for organizing this. Beautiful music. God bless all.”

“Thanks for inviting us to join all these choirs. It was wonderful to sing and pray twice”

“A truly inspirational experience! Thank you!”



We were also able to bring musicians together for an Easter service, led by the Very Revd Dr John Hall. Around 1,800 people joined us live from all over the world to sing a wide selection of hymns and anthems, and almost 10,000 have since watched the recording on our YouTube channel.



“Joining you from South Africa. Blessings to you all!”

“Happy Easter from Christchurch, New Zealand”

“Happy Easter everyone from Holy Trinity Church Choir, Sierra Leone, West Africa”

“Happy Easter. The choir of Philipp-Nicolai Church are here!”

“Hello from the Houston, TX area!”

“Happy Easter from Saskatchewan, Canada”



For more highlights of events being held across the period September 2020 to January 2021 and for full details of the events listed below, visit our website: www.rscm.org.uk/search-events/ or contact the named person. Some of the events below may be subject to cancellation due to the ongoing Covid pandemic. Please contact the named person if you are unsure whether an event is going ahead.



AREA FESTIVALS

📍 WINCHESTER AREA

Area festival workshops

Tuesday, 8 September »

19:30 to 21:00 POSTPONED

St Thomas, Lymington SO41 9ND

Martin Penrose will lead a rehearsal using RSCM service book *God's Church for God's World*. Contact Ian Rees on 07824 686147 or at ianrees212@gmail.com. No charge.

Wednesday, 9 September »

19:30 to 21:00

St Boniface, Chandlers Ford

SO53 2FT POSTPONED

Gary Philbrick will lead a rehearsal using RSCM service book *God's Church for God's World*. Contact Ian Rees as above, or Hugh Benham at H.Benham@Soton.ac.uk. No charge.

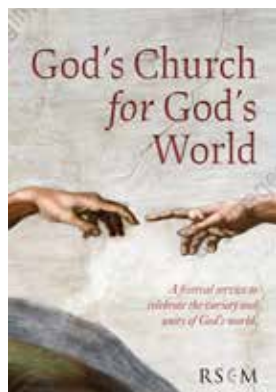
Tuesday, 15 September »

19:30 to 21:00

St Michael, Basingstoke

RG21 7QW POSTPONED

Ian Rees will lead a rehearsal using RSCM service book *God's Church for God's World*. Contact Ian Rees on 07824 686147 or at ianrees212@gmail.com. No charge.



Area festival service

Saturday, 26 September »

14:00 to 18:30 POSTPONED

Winchester Cathedral SO23 9LS

Hugh Morris will be directing this year's festival, based on the new RSCM service book *God's Church for God's World*. Rehearsal 14:00–17:00, service 17:30–18:30. No charge. Contact Ian Rees on 07824 686147 or at ianrees212@gmail.com



📍 GUILDFORD AREA

Regional rehearsals

Friday, 11 September »

19:30 to 21:00 POSTPONED

St Mary, Chiddingfold GU8 4QA

Area choirs festival regional rehearsal. Contact David Crick on 07850 709461 or at rscm.guilford.area.chair@gmail.com

Saturday, 19 September »

16:30 to 18:00 POSTPONED

St John, West Byfleet KT14 6EH

Area choirs festival regional rehearsal. Contact details as above.

Thursday, 24 September »

19:30 to 21:00 POSTPONED

St Peter, Frimley GU16 7AQ

Area choirs festival regional rehearsal. Contact details as above.

📍 GUILDFORD AREA

Area choirs' festival and presentation of awards

Sunday, 11 October »

15:00 POSTPONED

Guildford Cathedral GU2 7UP

Annual Area choirs' choral evensong. A wonderful experience for parish choirs to sing together in the beautiful cathedral. Area awards will be presented during the service. Keep up to date by visiting www.facebook.com/RSCMGuildfordArea/ or on Twitter at [@rscmguildford](https://twitter.com/rscmguildford). £10 to include music, £5 under 18s (award winners free). Contact David Crick on 07850 709461 or at rscm.guilford.area.chair@gmail.com

📍 OXFORDSHIRE AREA

Annual diocesan choirs' festival

Saturday, 26 September »

14:00 to 19:00 POSTPONED

Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford OX1 1DP

Choral evensong for choirs from Oxford diocese and beyond, plus individual RSCM members. £10 adults, £8 juniors. Contact Janet Low on 01865 777257 / 07549 886561 or at janetcllow@gmail.com

AREA FESTIVALS CONTINUED

BIRMINGHAM AREA

Annual festival and awards service

Saturday, 3 October »

10:00 to 17:00 POSTPONED

**Birmingham Cathedral,
Colmore Row B3 2QB**

For all choirs and individual singers. Using the 2020 festival service book *God's Church for God's World*, the service celebrates the variety and unity of God's world. Event includes the presentation of awards to candidates successful in the RSCM Bronze, Silver and Gold examinations. Under 18s must be accompanied by a parent or choir/church leader. £6 participants, £4.50 award winners, to include book. Contact Alison Vining on 07971 265702 or at alison@vining.eu



LICHFIELD AREA

Annual massed choirs' festival

Saturday, 3 October »

13:45 to 18:30

Lichfield Cathedral WS13 7LD

Utilizing the brilliant new annual festival book *God's Church for God's World*, which is extraordinarily good value for money. Donations asked for help with tea costs. Books will be purchased through the online shop. Contact Cathy Lamb on 07747 444 047 or at c.lamb@lichfieldcathedralschool.com

ROCHESTER AREA

Area choirs' festival

Saturday, 10 October »

14:15 to 18:30 POSTPONED

Rochester Cathedral ME1 1SX

RSCM Rochester invites choirs from across the diocese and beyond to join together to sing choral evensong, including works by Stanford, Howells and Bruckner. Conducted by Francesca Massey. Details of local rehearsals will be circulated in due course. Cost tbc (music booklet will be available to buy). Contact Sue Moore on 020 8859 6997 or at rscmrochester@outlook.com

SOUTHWELL AND NOTTS AREA

Virtual festival service

Saturday, 10 October » 15:00

Online ONLINE EVENT

In place of our usual Diocesan festival service, members of choirs in the area are invited to submit up to three recordings in advance. These will be edited together to create a wonderful diocesan choir. Please email for details. No charge. Contact Stephen Bullamore on 01636 678897 or at choir@stmnewark.org

DURHAM AREA

North East England festival

Saturday, 10 October »

11:00 to 18:00 POSTPONED

**Middlesbrough Cathedral
TS8 0TW**

The 2020 festival will be a service of choral vespers celebrating the life of St John Henry Newman. All choirs and individual singers from all local RSCM areas are invited to attend. £6 for festival book. Contact Craig Cartwright on 07508 805621 or at rscmneyorkshire@outlook.com

ST ALBANS HERTFORD AND BEDFORD AREA

Live area choirs' festival via Zoom with virtual choir

Saturday 17 October » 17:00

Online ONLINE EVENT

Singers are invited to take part in a virtual choir, recording music for our area choirs festival, live via Zoom. A variety of music will be recorded and mixed as audio and video in advance, using items in the public domain. Congregations are invited to join the service via Zoom or watch live on Facebook or afterwards on YouTube.

DEVON AREA

Festival service

Saturday, 24 October » 11:00 to 17:15

Exeter Cathedral EX1 1HS

Our annual celebration of church music in Devon with the presentation of RSCM chorister and organ awards. Rehearsal from 11:00, service from 16:00 to 17:15. £7 for singers. Collection for congregation. Contact Nicholas Brown on 01297 560493 or at nickpiano64@gmail.com

REGION ONE

Chester diocesan festival

Saturday, 31 October » 13:00 to 18:00

Chester Cathedral CH1 2HU

Annual Chester diocesan festival. A chance to use the book *God's Church for God's World* under the direction of Daniel Cook, master of the choristers and organist of Durham Cathedral. £2. Contact Karen Salisbury on 07854 171308 or at karen.salisbury@virginmedia.com

ISLE OF WIGHT AREA

Area festival

Saturday, 21 November »

13:00 to 18:00

**All Saints, Ryde, Isle of Wight
PO33 3AF**

A practice from 13:00 to 16:00 followed by a choral celebration service at 17:00. £9. Contact Hilary Spurgeon on 01983 615551 or at homs12@tiscali.co.uk

COME AND SING AND SOCIAL

DERBYSHIRE AREA

Sing evensong

Sunday, 13 September »

16:30 to 19:30 **POSTPONED**

St Oswald, 5 School Lane,
Ashbourne DE6 1AN

The annual favourite Come and Sing evensong in Ashbourne includes music by Harwood, Reading, Brahms and Rutter under the direction of Michael Halls. 16:30 rehearsal, 18:30 service. No charge, donations welcome. Contact Michael Halls at mvaehalls@gmail.com



SWANSEA AND BRECON AREA

Come and Sing Fauré's Requiem

Saturday, 26 September »

14:15 to 18:00 **POSTPONED**

Brecon Cathedral,
Powys LD3 9DP

Come and Sing Fauré's Requiem with Stephen Power, director of music at Brecon Cathedral. Registration from 13:30 with a rehearsal from 14:15 to 16:15 and followed by a performance at 17:00. Bring your own copies of the Requiem, but copies will also be available on loan if needed. £5, free to those in full time education. Contact Stephen Power on 01874 624837 or at directorofmusic@breconcathedral.org.uk

SOUTH EAST WALES AREA

Songs of praise

Saturday, 10 October

St David, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 0BA

A service celebrating hymnody.

Times are tbc. Cost tbc. Contact

Emma Gibbins on 07952 514117 or at emmagibbins1978@gmail.com

SOMERSET AREA

Come and Sing Advent/Christmas

Sunday, 11 October » 14:30

St Andrew, Wellington Square,
Minehead TA24 5LJ

Miles Quick, the RSCM's Head of Congregational and Instrumental Music, and a member of the Somerset area committee, will lead us in an afternoon exploring simple new music for Advent and Christmas. £8 plus collection to church.

Contact Jerry King on 01278 734777 or at jerry@king14.co.uk

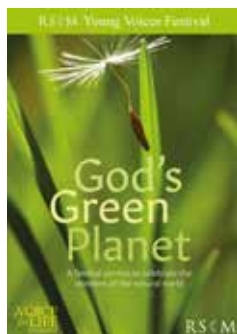
BIRMINGHAM AREA

Schools' festival

Monday, 19 October » 10:30 to 15:00

St Chad's Cathedral,
Birmingham B4 6EU

An inspiring service for upper or equal voices, devised to encourage worship in school, church and community. We will be using the RSCM Young Voices publication, *God's Green Planet*. Cost of resource book: £26 per school. Contact Mick Perrier on 07967 595881 or at michael.perrier49@gmail.com



NORTH AND EAST YORKSHIRE AREA

Requiem Aeternam – A performance of Fauré's Requiem

Sunday, 15 November » 14:00

Bridlington Priory YO16 7JX

This is a chance to come and sing Fauré's Requiem in a liturgical context under the skilled direction of Paul Dewhurst. Tea and coffee will be provided, but please bring along your own scores of music and a packed tea. Rehearsal at 14:00, performance at 17:00. £5 (to cover costs). Contact Craig Cartwright on 07508 805621 or at rscmneyorkshire@outlook.com

REGION ONE

Rehearsal for Come and Sing Chilcott's Christmas Oratorio

Monday, 23 November »

19:00 to 21:15

St Mary, Church Lane,
Nantwich CW5 5RG

Rehearse Bob Chilcott's Christmas Oratorio prior to the performance on 5 December. Free. Contact Simon Russell on 07909 886997 or at srussell@rscm.com





WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

REGION ONE

Music for Mission and Ministry

Tuesday, 29 September

– Thursday, 1 October

Online ONLINE EVENT

This course will now be held online and will include group discussions, study sessions and individual time with the course leader. Together, we will explore the opportunities and challenges in your church, and look at the historical, liturgical and practical aspects of music in worship. Price tbc. Contact RSCM Education on 01722 424843 or at education@rscm.com



SWANSEA AND BRECON AREA

Autumn singing workshop

Thursday, 15 October »

18:45 to 21:30

Clyne Chapel, Mayals, Swansea SA3 5BT

A singing workshop directed by Dr William Reynolds who has recently been appointed RSCM regional co-ordinator for Wales. The workshop will end with a short act of worship followed by light refreshments and an opportunity to socialize. £5. Contact Prof Tony Davies on 01792 429543 or at adavies55@ntlworld.com



ROCHESTER AREA

Three-day evensong course for adults

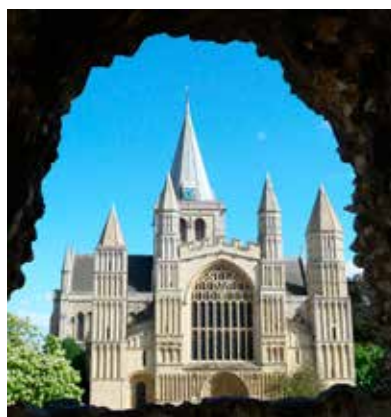
Monday, 26 October –

Wednesday, 28 October »

14:15 to 18:15 POSTPONED

Rochester Cathedral ME1 1SX

An opportunity for adults of reasonable musical standard to rehearse and sing cathedral evensong on three consecutive days. A full music list for each day will be circulated to registered participants in advance. Choristers aged 15–18 with RSCM Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards are particularly encouraged to join the group. £45 adults, £30 for 15–18s with RSCM Bronze/Silver/Gold Awards. Contact Sue Moore on 020 8859 6997 or at rscmrochester@outlook.com



DERBYSHIRE AREA

Lift up your voice

Saturday, 14 November »

14:00 to 17:00

St Modwen, Market Place, Burton-on-Trent DE14 1HA

Join Miles Quick, Head of Congregational and Instrumental Music at the RSCM, for an exploration of new vocal material from refreshing traditional hymns to Taizé, Iona and worship songs, and ways of introducing instruments into worship. There will be material for churches small and large, rural and urban, with music resources or none, choirs/singing groups, worship bands – or none of the above. £10. Contact John Gratton at johngrattonjwg@gmail.com





HYMNS AND NATURAL DISASTERS

REFLECTIONS ON A PANDEMIC

J.R. WATSON

CHURCH MUSIC QUARTERLY SEPTEMBER 2020



It is estimated that up to a quarter of London's population died during the Great Plague of London (1665–66), which was one of the last outbreaks in England. English woodcut, 1665. Alamy.

It is easy to forget that, in centuries past, the threat of the plague was constant

and by Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* (published in 1722). In modern times, the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic was the deadliest outbreak: it is estimated that some 50 million people died.

As with the Covid-19 epidemic of 2020, the consequences were severe: unemployment, a damaged economy, family breakdown and death. It is easy to forget that the threat of the plague was constant: the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* contained this warning to those who would take Communion 'unworthely': 'We kyndle Gods wrathe over us, we provoke him to plague us with diverse dyseases, and sondery kindes of death.' Those diseases were particularly common in Germany and its neighbouring countries: the lives and deaths of the hymn writers, and their suffering, are an eloquent witness to their courage. Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), the great Swiss Reformer, wrote a 'Pestlied', or plague song, for the outbreak of 1519–20, beginning 'Hilff, Herr Gott, hilff in diser Not' ('Help, O Lord God, help in this time of need'). Valerius Herberger (1562–1627), in contrast, wrote an address to the world, 'Valet will ich dir geben' ('Farewell I gladly bid thee') in 1613, when 'in every hour he saw death before his eyes, but was mercifully and also wonderfully spared from it, like the three men in the fiery furnace at Babylon'. Another survivor was Ludwig Helmbold (1532–98), author of 'Von Gott will ich nicht lassen' ('From God shall nought divide me'), called by Catherine Winkworth, who translated it, 'The True Christian's Vade-Mecum'. He lived through the outbreak of plague in Erfurt of 1563–64, which killed 4,000 of the inhabitants and – like the Covid-19 outbreak of 2020 – closed the university.

Zwingli and Helmbold were two of the pastors who stayed at their post during times of plague, as did Friedrich Spee (1591–1635), author of 'O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf' ('O Saviour, descend from heaven'). Spee nursed the sick at Trier and died of the plague. The loss of loved ones was devastating: Martin Bucer (1491–1551) lost his wife and five of his children at Strasbourg in 1541. Perhaps the most remarkable example is that of Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608), who wrote two great masterpieces

Pandemics have been a part of human life for many years. Justinian's Plague struck Constantinople in 541 and spread throughout the Byzantine Empire, killing some 30 million to 50 million people. The Black Death of 1347–51 is thought to have killed perhaps half of the population of Europe; and successive plagues recurred throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, especially in Germany. The Great Plague of London (1665–66) was one of the last outbreaks in England, made famous by the self-isolation of the village of Eyam in Derbyshire,

409.

Ein Geistlich Braut-

Lied der gläubigen Seelen/ von Je- su Christo/sein himlischen Bräutigam: Gestellet vber den 45. Psalm des Propheten Davids. D. Philippus Nicolai.



Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern / Voll Gnad und Wahrheit
Du Sohn Davids/ auß Jacobs Stam / Mein König vnd mein
von dem HERN / Die süsse Wurzel Jesse / Lieblich/ freundlich/
A- du ti gott / Hast mir mein Herz besessen / Schön vnd herrlich / Groß vnd ehrlich /
Reich von Gaben / Hoch vnd sehr
prächtigt erhaben.

I.

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern/
Voll Gnad vnd Wahrheit von dem HERN
Die süsse Wurzel Jesse?
Du Sohn Davids/ auß Jacobs Stam/
Mein König vnd mein Bräutigam/
Hast mir mein Herz besessen/
Lieblich/ freundlich/
Schön vnd herrlich / Groß vnd ehrlich/
Reich von Gaben/
Hoch vnd sehr prächtig erhaben.

3ff

of German hymnody, 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' ('How brightly shines the morning star') and 'Wachet auf, ruft uns der Stimme' ('Wake, O wake! with tidings thrilling'), during an outbreak of the plague at Unna in 1597. Nicolai, who witnessed the deaths of many of his congregation, is quoted in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* as saying that he wished to leave his writing behind him ('if God should call me from this world) as the token of my peaceful, joyful, Christian departure, or (if God should spare me in health) to comfort other sufferers whom He should also visit with the pestilence'.

Nicolai's response was remarkable. It is matched by the bravery of countless others. An example may be seen in the famous hymn by Martin Rinckart (1586–1649), 'Nun danket alle Gott'. Rinckart was archdeacon of his native town of Eilenburg throughout the Wars of Religion, during which, in 1637, an outbreak of the plague was caused by people fleeing into the town for safety. The consequent overcrowding led to the death of huge numbers of people, including Rinckart's wife Christine. And yet, in spite of the ever-present threat of death, he could write in a 'Tisch-Gebetlein' (a little table prayer, or grace before meat), probably in the early 1630s, 'Nun danket alle Gott'. A prayer accompanies the thankfulness, 'And free us from all ills/ In this world and the next', and its hope for 'blessed peace to cheer us'.

In Britain there were outbreaks of the 'sweating sickness' from 1485 to 1551, and bubonic plague raged at various times in the 16th and 17th centuries. The worst of these was the Great Plague of London in 1665–66, which is believed to have killed 100,000 people, and sent the elderly John Milton into temporary retirement at Chalfont St Giles. It was fresh in the memory when Isaac Watts was born in 1674, the year of Milton's death. He clearly had his great predecessor in mind when writing *Horae Lyricae* in 1696, and in the writing of his hymns. Watts suffered from ill health for much of his life, and he must have considered the dangers of such epidemics. He and Milton were what today would be called 'vulnerable'. Here I am indebted to the distinguished American scholar, Professor

PSALM LXXXIX 47, &c. Sixth Part. Long Metre.

Mortality and Hope.

A FUNERAL PSALM.

I.

REMEMBER, Lord, our mortal State,
How frail our Life! how short the Date!
Where is the Man that draws his Breath
Safe from Disease, secure from Death?

II.

Lord, while we see whole Nations dye,
Our Flesh and Sense repine and cry,
"Must Death for ever rage and reign?
"Or hast thou made Mankind in vain?

III.

Where is thy Promise to the Just?
Are not thy Servants turn'd to Dust?
But Faith forbids these mournfull Sighs,
And sees the sleeping Dust arise.

IV.

Top left: Philipp Nicolai wrote his well-known hymn 'Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern' during an outbreak of the plague at Unna in 1597 'to comfort other sufferers whom He should also visit with the pestilence'. It was first published in 1599.

Left: Psalm 89 from Isaac Watts's *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (1719).

Michael Hawn, who drew my attention to Watts's Psalm 89 in *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (1719), where Watts paraphrased verse 47, 'wherefore hast thou made all men in vain':

Lord, while we see whole nations die
Our flesh and sense repine and cry,
'Must death for ever rage and reign?
Or hast thou made mankind in vain?

Where is thy promise to the just?
Are not thy servants turned to dust?

Watts was asking a profound question: what is the point of living? His response is in accord with the second part of his title in the 1719 book. After *the Language of the New Testament* it continued *and apply'd to the Christian State and Worship*:

But faith forbids these mournful sighs,
And sees the sleeping dust arise.

This is Watts the orthodox dissenter, who places the comforts of the resurrection here to counter despair; but he was frequently aware of the insecurity of the human state. In 'O God, our help in ages past', there is a stanza that is normally omitted, but that might have been written for a pandemic:

Like flow'ry fields the nations stand,
Pleas'd with the morning light:
The flow'rs beneath the mower's hand
Lie with'ring ere 'tis night.

His title for this paraphrase of Psalm 90 was 'Man Frail, and God Eternal'. That word 'frail' conveys exactly the place of humanity in the ordering of existence. Like the rest of that great hymn, it is a corrective against pride and assurance, against what the Greeks called hubris.

Two years after Watts's death, there were several earthquakes in London in 1750, which raised the same existential questions as the plague. The worst was that of 8 March. Widespread concern was expressed: Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, published *A Letter to the Clergy and Inhabitants of London and Westminster*, in which he blamed the corruption and loose living of the time. The Wesley brothers published *Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750*, in which they described the tremor as a just punishment for national sin. Part I had five hymns and a paraphrase of Psalm 46,



Isaac Watts was born in 1674 when the Great Plague of London was still in living memory. He suffered from ill health for much of his life and would today be called 'vulnerable'. Alamy.

in which 'God is our refuge and strength ... though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.' These hymns asked the obvious question: 'Why do these earthquakes rock the ground/ And threaten our destruction near?' The answer was unequivocal:

The pillars of the earth are thine,
And thou hast set the world thereon;
They at thy sovereign word incline,
The center trembles at thy frown,
The everlasting mountains bow,
And GOD is in the earthquake *now*!

This was God's punishment for a people who had ignored both the judgement and the goodness of God, 'Whom neither plagues nor mercies move/ To fear thy wrath or court thy love.' The consequences were dire. Quoting from Psalm 107.27, Charles Wesley sees that it is the earth that staggers:

Therefore the earth beneath us reels,
And staggers like our drunken men, ...

A second edition of *Hymns occasioned* was published in 1750. Evidently it had helped to explain these



disasters. But worse was to come. The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 destroyed the city and probably killed between 10,000 and 30,000 people. In 1756 another edition of *Hymns occasioned* was printed, with the same title but with an addition to the title page: *To which are added/ An Hymn ... occasioned by the Destruction of Lisbon*. The hymn on this subject described that terrible earthquake:

The huge celestial Bodies roll
Amidst that general Fire,
And shrivel as a Parchment-Scrawl,
And all in Smoke expire.

The old creation had become so corrupt that a new one was needed. 'No created Thing remains/ Throughout the flaming Void', and a new 'Fiat lux' is required:

Sublime upon his azure Throne
He speaks th'Almighty Word:
His *Fiat* is obey'd: 'Tis done,
And Paradise restor'd.

This is one interpretation of the events of 1755. It is a reminder of God as all powerful, the sender of both plagues and mercies. Hymn 1 of Part II begins:



*In modern times,
few would subscribe
to the idea that
natural disasters are
sent by an angry deity
to punish humankind.
But they do compel us
to address issues such
as the future of the
planet, climate
change and inequality*

The Great Lisbon earthquake struck on All Saints' Day, 1755. The tremors, combined with the subsequent firestorm and tsunami, almost completely destroyed the city and may have killed up to 30,000 people. Colour wood engraving. Alamy.

And are thy Plagues and Mercies, Lord,
Already out of Mind?
Thy threatening and preserving Word
So quickly cast behind?

The word 'plague' here stands for a general condemnation of sinning humanity. But there are specific occasions in which a particular occurrence of a disease is the subject of a hymn. One example is a hymn (found for me by Professor Hawn) by William Bullock, author of 'We love the place, O God'. Beginning 'In grief and fear to Thee, O Lord', it was

published in 1854, though probably written earlier. Bullock was a missionary in Nova Scotia (and later Dean there), and the hymn may have been referring to an outbreak of typhus in 1847–48. It describes 'The fell disease' that 'on every side/ Walks forth with tainted breath;'

And pestilence, with rapid stride,
Bestrews the land with death.

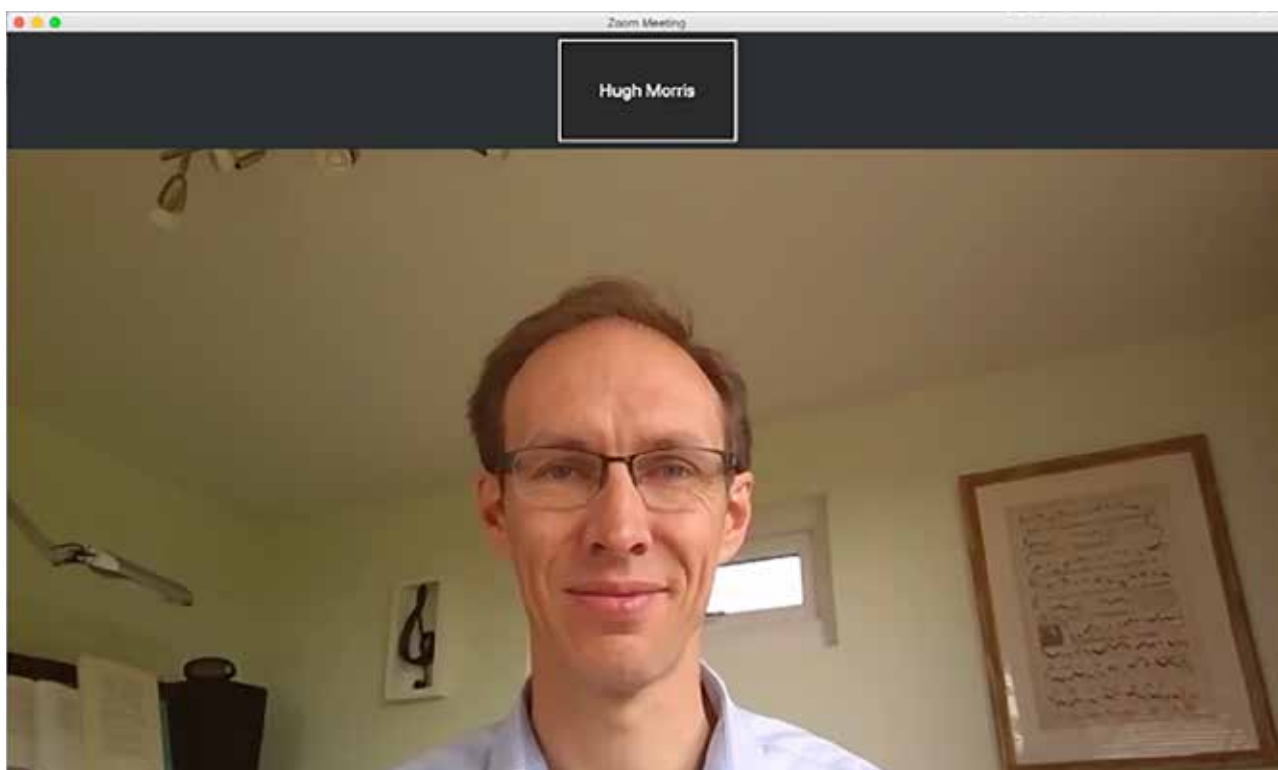
Bullock's conclusion is a prayer for mercy:

With contrite hearts to thee, our King,
We turn, who oft have strayed;
Accept the sacrifice we bring
And let the plague be stayed.

Bullock's last line is the prayer of many generations. It is a plea for forgiveness from a people who know that the world is not as God would wish it to be. It is this that underlies the reaction to Covid-19. We find throughout history that the plague is a dreadful visitation that causes people to reflect on the relationship between human beings and God.

In modern times, few would subscribe to the idea that natural disasters are sent by an angry deity to punish humankind. But they do compel us to address issues such as the future of the planet, climate change and inequality. As Jane Goodall, the world expert on chimpanzees, has suggested, events such as the Covid-19 plague are an inevitable result of our failure to address matters such as animal welfare and poverty (the buying and selling of animals in crowded markets is one example). The result is a catastrophe waiting to happen, as it did in the Middle Ages; and what a pandemic ought to do is focus attention on the failures and shortcomings of our own time. It should sharpen our perception of who we are and where we stand in relation to the world, as failing human beings who 'live' only through the mercy of God.

The greatest of German hymn writers, Paul Gerhardt, was writing during the Wars of Religion, in which blood was being spilt like water: 'wie Wasser, Menschenblut'. In his great hymn 'Zieh ein zu deinen Toren' ('Enter, Lord, thy temple'), still in the German *Evangelisches Gesangbuch*, he described our hearts as 'weltergebnes' ('Given up to the world'), and prayed for a new fear of God and a new virtue ('Gottesfurcht und Tugend'). He knew, and the Psalmist knew, that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Psalm 111.10); earthquakes and a pandemic tell us the same thing. Plagues – and mercies – are two basic elements of human life, with lessons for us all.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Before writing this piece, I completed two perfectly ordinary activities. I went for a run, and I refuelled my car. Surprisingly, both activities brought to mind the recent work of the RSCM.

Amid the disruption and despair of the last few months, there have been a few surprising benefits. For me, one of them is that I am emerging from lockdown somewhat fitter than before, having taken up running along the lanes and across the fields that surround my local village. The RSCM in lockdown has discovered methods of delivering our mission in ways unimagined just a few months ago. Ultimately, we will be stronger and ready to face whatever the future may hold: a future that will include the opportunity to develop fully the plans for the UK areas.

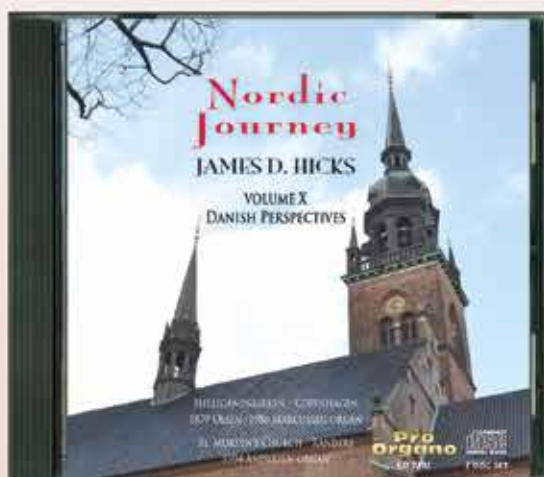
Refuelling my car felt symbolic: it was the first time in four months I completed a previously weekly ritual. It signalled the resumption of a 'normal' activity. Next week, I'm looking forward to having some face-to-face meetings, a welcome break from yet more Zoom calls. Of course, the meetings will be different in that they will take account of different social protocols. This is the other church music parallel. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15, and quoted in 'The trumpet shall sound' (one of my favourite arias in *Messiah*): 'And we shall be changed.'

Covid-19 has been a catalyst, pushing church music in new directions. While change can be challenging and unsettling, we must adapt and imagine what we

want church music to be like in the future. The RSCM will be a formative voice in this process. I have plans that will enable us to deliver our mission in new and exciting ways. These new ways will complement rather than supplant the old. One obvious thread is digital innovation, and I will share more information about my ideas in future editions of CMQ. The RSCM has rediscovered an ability to draw people together from across the world, and we will not retreat from the advances we have made. Our membership structure of affiliated churches is of course vitally important, but we have been able to develop stronger relationships with individual members by direct connection.

To return to the running metaphor: the more I have worked at it the more my pace has picked up and the better I am able to sustain myself. It will be the same with our work at the RSCM: the wind is behind us and our forward momentum will not falter. Furthermore, I would not have started running if my family had not encouraged me to join them. If one considers the RSCM as an extended family, we all have the power to reach out to others and draw them in. If each person reading this approaches two or three individuals and signs them up as individual members, they will benefit themselves and we will also benefit from the extra financial support and social connectivity. So please, share our story. Encourage others to join. Together we can plant the seeds for the church music and musicians of the future. There is much to do.

The Nordic Journey continues. Volume X: Copenhagen & Randers, Denmark.



James D. Hicks:

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- Inviting the creation of new organ works from imaginative Nordic minds.

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James is pictured with Mr. Karlsen at right, at the February 2020 recording session.

Visit **ProOrgano.com** and search for keywords: **NORDIC JOURNEY**. From there, one may access product pages, audio samples and related videos.



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SHOULDER TO THE WHEEL

THE RSCM'S NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND MISSION DELIVERY

SAL MCDUGALL

I was delighted to be appointed as Deputy Director of the RSCM in February, but I could little imagine I would be beginning my role in the middle of a global pandemic and a national lockdown! However, there's that old chestnut that every challenge is an opportunity, and that's the perspective I'm bringing to my new role amid current circumstances. It is undoubtedly a challenging time in the life of the RSCM, but one that also holds lots of promise.

I moved to the RSCM from being Precentor of Lincoln, and I share both the RSCM's belief that music is a missionary tool, and its passion to see the church drawn closer to God through music.

The RSCM has been one of my life's formative influences and I'm thrilled to have an opportunity to put my shoulder to the wheel and be part of its work.

My life in the church began, as I suspect it will have done for many of our members, as a chorister in my local parish church choir when I was 11 years old. I benefited from a great musical training and was given an excellent choral foundation. I attended RSCM residential courses and progressed through the ranks of the RSCM's voice training and awards.

From there, it was a natural progression to study music at university, so in many ways the RSCM set the course of my life. I owe a great deal to this charity, and I'm passionate about ensuring that the same kind of opportunities continue to be available to as many people as possible.

I've been privileged to work in a wide variety of contexts. That experience has given me an excellent picture of the range of the musical life across all

churches and denominations: from the smallest parish church with no musicians to large urban churches; from the Highlands of Scotland to the Dorset Coast; from an HTB city centre plant to the quire of one of England's greatest cathedrals. My career to date has given me direct practical experience of music and worship in two different countries, two different denominations (Anglican and Presbyterian), two provinces of the Anglican Communion, and several different traditions of the church. At various times, I've been a singer in a suburban parish church choir; a cathedral chorister; an organist; a pastoral musician; a keyboard player in a band; a community musician; I've worked with the Iona Community's music and worship renewal project; I'm an Anglican priest, and until recently was precentor at one of our ancient cathedrals. It's time to put all those experiences to work.

I began my RSCM journey in Scotland. I, and countless others like me, are living proof of the effectiveness of the RSCM at local level. If it weren't for the amazing work of so many volunteers in so many places, I doubt my life would have taken the course it has. Without the incredible network of people who devote their time and their talents to the improvement of the music of the church, the RSCM could not do its work. I am immensely grateful for that, and as a deputy director, I'm really looking forward to working with colleagues across the RSCM to support you to further our mission and allow the church's music and worship to continue to be an agent by which God touches and transforms lives.



Bach and Chopin Decoded

an ebook by Meng Chan

Johann Sebastian Bach coded Bible verses and stories into his compositions—a technique later adopted by Frédéric François Chopin. In *Bach and Chopin Decoded*, pianist Meng Chan explores the ability of one brilliant composer to read another's thoughts through music, and the philosophical insights which can be gleaned from classical music masterpieces. In this book, Meng Chan is able to offer a convincing prove of who really composed the sometimes disputed 'Toccata and Fugue in D Minor-BWV 565'; using the codes that he had discovered.

Some may wonder why these methods of writing

codes into music were hidden for so long. We can only speculate, but must be sensible to the fact that these musicians became giants long after their passing. In their own time, they were just musicians jostling with the others, attempting to make a living. They have grown in stature only because their music stood the test of time.

Exploring stories such as the second coming of Christ and how these composers managed to weave the tale into their music, *Bach and Chopin Decoded* reveals the startling innovation behind men commonly accepted as genius—but who were far more brilliant than we could have ever imagined.

**More information from [Goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com) and [Facebook/Bach and Chopin decoded](https://www.facebook.com/BachandChopinDecoded).
For all participating vendors, please google the book title 'Bach and Chopin decoded'
Meng Chan's contact: mengchan48@gmail.com.**

eISBN 978-967-17219-0-2

RSCM NEWS

THE BIG MUSIC SUNDAY SERVICE – 14 JUNE 2020

I'm sure for you, like me, the disappointment at not being able to celebrate Music Sunday in our own church this year due to the coronavirus was tempered by being able to share and take part 'virtually' in The Big Music Sunday Service live on YouTube.

A free, downloadable service booklet and, for a small fee, the full music booklet gave a true sense of involvement in the service, whether as singer or congregant. As a recent comment posted on YouTube beneath the recording says: 'What a glorious thing the gathered body of Christ is – even online. Thank you for allowing us to participate.'

As I sat and watched with my family, the YouTube screen told us there were almost 2,000 simultaneous viewers. I imagine that with families watching together it was a truly massive body of people worldwide coming together to pray and praise God through music. Even now the number of views on YouTube continues to grow (over 8,000 as I write). It's not too late to visit and watch (<https://youtu.be/aRQivlwYTqw>).

Musical contributions from the UK, USA, Germany, Australia and Africa made for a very special service and I want to thank those contributing on screen. A big thank you also to RSCM staff, who are not seen, but who made this online event possible using their technical skills and musical knowledge to 'praise God in his holiness'.

MUSIC SUNDAY IN NEW ZEALAND

The Canterbury branch chose Sunday 21 June for its event. Paul Ellis, president of RSCMNZ and also chairman of the Canterbury branch, welcomed the attendees. Then Aldersgate minister the Revd Philomeno Kinera shared an enlightening story about the meanings of the Aldersgate flags, which embrace many of the world's religions in a unifying manner.

Highlights included organ accompaniments by Wallace Woodley, Dr John Linker and Denis Guyan, while Barry Brinson encouraged the singers. Murray Lennox's leadership generated confidence and New Zealand hymn writers including Marnie Barrell, William Wallace – who was present – and Colin Gibson featured in the music selections.

The singing of the six Medbury choristers, led by Chrissie Badger with April Chapman accompanying on the piano, was a treasured experience, as was Barry Brinson's performance of a Rondo movement by J.C. Bach with accompaniment by the Apollo String Quartet. Entertaining and informative gems and closing prayers were offered by the Revd David Winfield, Canterbury branch chaplain.

The Wellington branch celebrated Music Sunday on 23 June. The service took place at the chapel of St Barnabas, Huntley School, Marton (21 June having been the choir's first Sunday service since lockdown began). Huntley School is New Zealand's oldest and largest preparatory school and was among the earliest of New Zealand schools to become an RSCM affiliate. The school received their parchment on 24 March 1935.

The school's musical and RSCM tradition continues under today's headmaster, Sam Edwards, and director of music the Revd Alison Stewart. The choir uses the *Voice for Life* scheme and is proud of its record of choristers. Music this year included the S.S. Wesley anthem *Lead me, Lord* and hymns 'Be still for the presence of the Lord' and 'Walk in the light'. The sermon and the prayers during the celebration focused on the work of the RSCM both in NZ and internationally, all of which combined to make the service a memorable occasion.

Robert Tait and the Revd Alison Stewart

RSCM Music Sunday
THE 50:50 CAMPAIGN

Below: The Huntley School choir.





Above: Rosemary Field teaching from home, pictured with the organ kindly loaned by Viscount Organs Wales.

Above right: One of the two organs kindly loaned by Church Organ World for the RSCM's Membership Conference 2020.

ORGAN SUPPLIERS SUPPORTING THE RSCM

One major constraint upon RSCM gatherings is the need for an organ on location. That constraint has been lifted through the generosity of Church Organ World. Just before lockdown, we were fortunate to have at our well-attended Derby Membership Conference two three-manual instruments, one by Makin and one by Johannus, which allowed us to accompany worship with a full sound, despite the fact that we were not in a church or cathedral. They also allowed us to offer workshop tuition. It was heartening to hear RSCM Pipeline Scholar Anna Hallett play at the start of the day, and for the massed singing to be supported so well by a properly installed instrument. We are grateful to Dr Keith Harrington and his team for their support and time, both freely given, and look forward to resuming similar activity as soon as possible.

More recently, lockdown has meant that our Head of Organ Studies, Rosemary Field, has had no access

to an organ and has been tutoring online in collaboration with organists who do have a home-instrument. With the likelihood that we are not yet out of the Covid-19 woods, but needing to press on with both one-to-one and group tuition and webinars, we are grateful to Viscount Organs Wales who are kindly loaning the RSCM a teaching organ. This means Rosemary can once again deliver tuition herself.



NEWS FROM ACROSS THE UK

A VIRTUAL EVENSONG

A full virtual choral evensong was produced by the choir and vicar of St James the Greater, Leicester. The service, recorded in the homes of individual choir members, lectors and the vicar, was collated by a member of the choir to produce a complete service. The video has had almost 2,500 views to date, a considerable achievement!

<https://youtu.be/H7B-kITRtLM>

Michael Rule



Above: The Revd Andrew Quigley leading the St James virtual service.



PRAISE AND PROMS IN PORTSMOUTH

One Saturday evening in February, the Portsmouth committee decided to do something a little different. Our John Rutter and Bob Chilcott workshops had been enormously successful, but this time we went back to basics with some hymn singing and a little patriotism. We included some of the old favourites, and also took requests, including a particularly meaningful rendition of 'The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended', which brought the evening to a close.

There are many among clergy, lay ministers and congregations who think that the RSCM isn't relevant to them. This is particularly understandable in parishes where

a small but dedicated congregation sing along to CDs every week because they can't find or afford an organist. And yet, it doesn't have to be like this. In the 21st century it's more important than ever to meet people where they are and by doing so we can be relevant to all churches, regardless of size or musical resources. If we expect them to come to us, we may be disappointed.

Some may complain about the lack of men in their church choirs, but we only have to look at the success of male voice choirs to realize that there are men out there who love to sing. In my benefice choir I am fortunate to have six men, but only one who

can sing in harmony. With a little thought and rearrangement of music this can work just as well as a traditional four-part choir.

Many think we are only interested in highbrow religious music and it's important we prove that this isn't the case. Some may be dismissive of worship songs or children's songs, but I have seen the spiritual power of all styles of church music myself. Regardless of our personal preferences we can reach out to all churches, in all denominations, to encourage them with all styles of church music. We can also have some fun along the way.

Deborah Vears



Above and left: A little patriotism at Portsmouth's Praise and Proms event.

THE CHOIRS OF ST NICHOLAS, HARPENDEN DURING LOCKDOWN

Despite lockdown, we wanted to keep our choirs engaged and our services musical. We have a boys' choir of 12, a girls' choir of 12, five teenage choral scholars and an adult choir with about 30 members. In March, the church purchased a Zoom licence for 100 screens to hold services, and I arranged to meet (via Zoom) the girls and the boys at our usual practice times. We also set up a WhatsApp group for the adults. And after our usual Friday full choir practices, a group of the adults usually meet in the Zoom pub!

Each week our organist, Chris Muhley, records the two hymns on his home organ. These recordings are sent to the choir who then record themselves singing the hymn and upload the files to Dropbox. I'm lucky to have a daughter who can mix the recordings using Logic Pro. These recordings are then played as part of our Zoom service on Sunday, with words on screen for the congregation.

For anthems, a track is recorded, and the choir record themselves, this time by video. We have found that the younger singers needed singing on the guide track, and quite a few people wanted a conductor, so I now provide conducting videos too.

For Good Friday we recorded the plainsong St John Passion, which was live on Zoom, well attended and well received. We have held three live Zoom choral evensongs. For Easter Day we also invited the congregation to record themselves singing the hymns. By the second week, we

had to increase the Zoom licence to 300 screens and at the same time we began to stream live on Facebook, as well as sharing services later on YouTube. We are getting watchers from all over the world, including people who used to live in Harpenden, and people who have been too infirm in recent years to make it to church.

Zoom choir for the juniors has continued on Thursdays. I now have the boys and girls together because it's more fun with a larger group. We spend time with them muted, as I play and sing for them to copy and learn the music for that weekend's recordings. Before that, we do some of our usual warm-ups. During the week the choristers can book me for a 15-minute individual session where we do some vocal exercises and look at their *Voice for Life* training books.

I have found it a great source of comfort to see my fellow choir members on screen. I'm aware we are lucky that our church has had the resources and people with the relevant skill sets to make all this possible.

Marie Price

Search for the Parish of Harpenden on YouTube, or on Facebook (St Nicholas Church, Harpenden). The choir is on Twitter @StNicsChoirHarp and from there you can find our webpage.



Above: A visit to the Zoom pub for the singers of St Nicholas, Harpenden.

THE CHOIRS OF ST NICHOLAS, HARPENDEN DURING LOCKDOWN CONTINUED



Above: The virtual choir of St Nicholas, Harpenden.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Above: Murray & Ngaire Lennox.

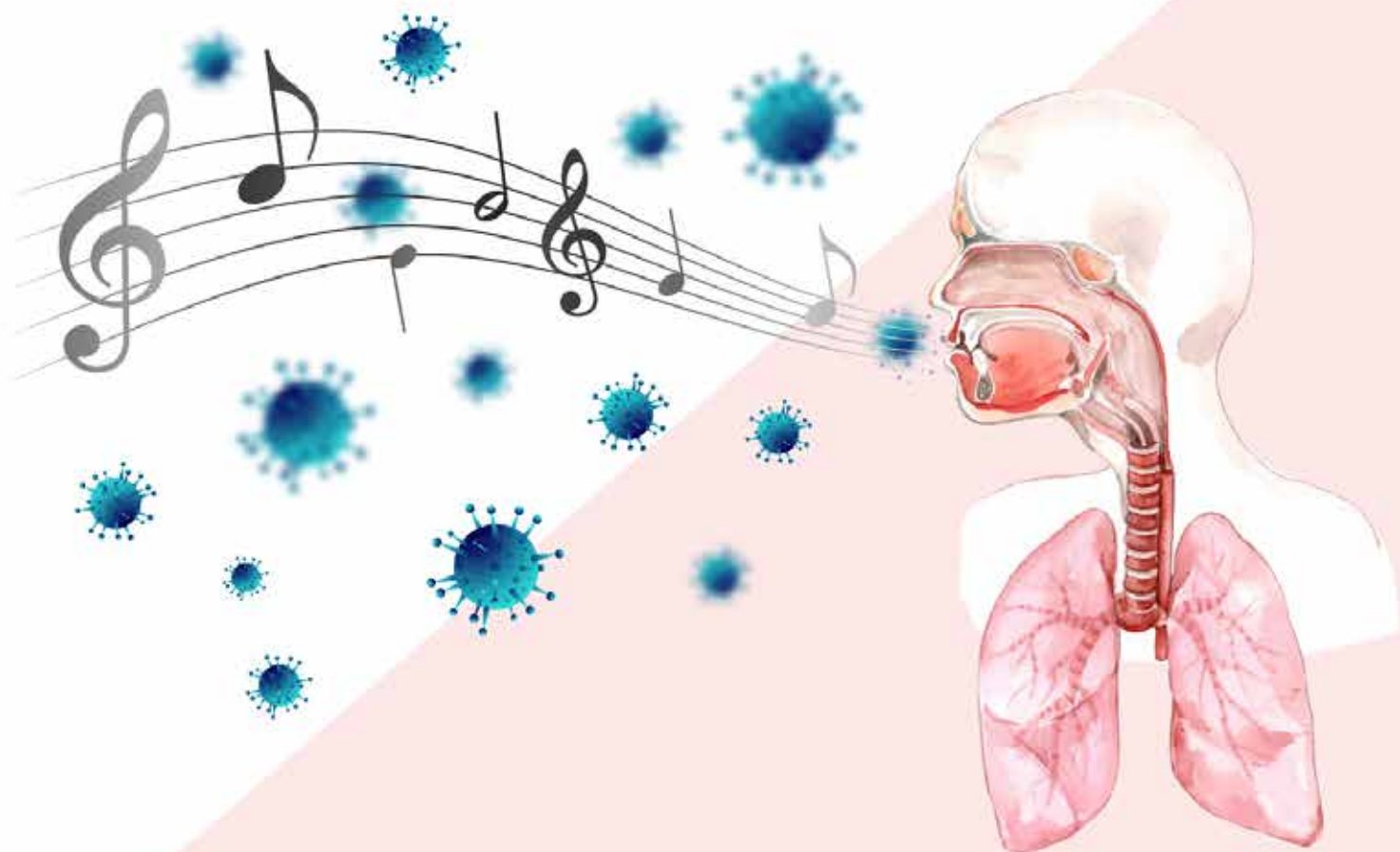
VALEDICTORY CONCERT FOR MURRAY LENNOX

Murray Lennox, solo singer, competition winner, director of music and composer, is a highly regarded New Zealand musician and an inspiration to all with whom he has performed or led. Hailing from Hawkes Bay, he sang his first solo at Hastings Primary Music Festival aged 7 and cemented his standing as a chorister by winning major prizes in several annual events. He has appeared as a leader on New Zealand's TV show *Praise Be* (on eight occasions) and recorded programmes for RNZ Concert (a radio network).

Murray served as music advisor for Hawkes Bay Education Board, and as New Zealand Education Department district music advisor for Canterbury/Westland. His choir directing prowess was soon engaged with his appointment in 1964 as director of music for Youth for Christ. Appointments followed at Capital Teen Convention, the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, the Risingholme Singers, Christchurch Schools' music festival, Christchurch Community Choirs and St Mary/All Souls' Church.

Murray's compositions include over 40 secular and sacred songs, two cantatas, a full choral service setting and a Requiem Mass. A selection of his works were performed at the valedictory concert, including his *Flute Rondo*.

Robert Tait



UNRELIABLE FRIENDS

SCIENCE, RISK AND MUSIC IN WORSHIP

MARTIN ASHLEY

The idea of an ‘unreliable friend’ is a term I coined 20 years ago to refer to the uneasy relationship that existed between science and environmentalism. Science was a ‘friend’ when it said what environmentalists wanted to hear, but because scientific conclusions are always provisional, the attendant uncertainty means that ‘science cannot always be there, unfailingly allied to the environmentalists’ cause’.

The media love to create celebrities and villains. In recent months it has become clear that necessary adjustments to the helm of the World Health Organization have offered unscrupulous or inept

people in the media an opportunity to create a villain. Until the beginning of July, the WHO took the view that transmission of the Covid virus was through close personal contact, touching the face with unwashed hands and coughing or sneezing in the vicinity of others. There were good reasons for taking this view and the consequent advice about social distancing and wiping surfaces has become a part of life.

If it were nothing more than this, we could have issued music to singers in sealed folders for the duration, washed hands assiduously, wiped all surfaces, implemented a one-way system through



Above: Scientists are racing to find out how dangerous singing and the blowing of instruments are. Photograph copyright Christian Sinibaldi/The Guardian newspaper.

the vestry and spaced singers two metres apart. Going to church or choir would have been different from before, but no more so than visiting the supermarket. Unfortunately, these sensible precautions were shown not to work when a choir sang in an enclosed space. A now well-known report by the Skagit County Public Health Authority produced the chilling words ‘the act of singing itself may have spread the virus in the air and onto surfaces’. The WHO did not include singing among their priorities, so concerned scientists went into overdrive.

Who were those concerned scientists? Here, we run into a significant difficulty. They were, by and large, scientists who also happened to be amateur choral singers. In other words, friends of choral singing: people who may wish to do the community a favour and find money to finance the research. But the spending of resources has to be prioritized, which meant that seriously funded research into why ‘the act of singing itself may have spread the virus in the air and onto surfaces’ was slow to get under way. Add to this the problem that properly executed scientific studies take a long time to become peer-reviewed and accepted, and the problem worsens. Early in the crisis, some scientist ‘friends’ of choral music did their best with small scale, largely unfunded, experiments. So, we had the one that showed how little air moved in front of a singer’s mouth, and that droplets produced by singers fell ‘safely’ to the ground in less than two metres.

Findings such as this were eagerly seized by choral conductors and singers who wanted friends in the scientific community to say their activity was safe. Unfortunately, they could not possibly explain why so many singers became ill at around the time the R number (the infection rate) was rising rapidly in places such as Amsterdam or Washington state. Bodies such as Public Health England had no option other than to advise that singing must be classified as one of the highest risk activities. Meanwhile, the scientific process was moving ahead at an unprecedented rate and other scientists, not necessarily friends of choral music, increasingly began to question the WHO’s position.

They had good reasons to propose that there was a significant airborne component to the transmission of the virus. Strategies such as social distancing and hand washing did not cover all the bases. Other viruses, such as the measles virus, were known to be highly contagious through the airborne route, so why not SARS-CoV-2? It was a perfectly valid scientific question, even if there were studies that showed clearly that SARS-CoV-2 was not comparable to measles. Matters came to a head when 239 well-respected experts signed a letter penned by Lidia Morawska of the Queensland University of Technology. Morawska and her colleague Junji Cao had published a paper in the journal *Environment International* entitled ‘Airborne transmission of

SARS-CoV-2: The world should face the reality'. Morawsha summarized her position thus:

Hand washing and maintaining social distance are the main measures recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) to avoid contracting COVID-19. Unfortunately, these measures do not prevent infection by inhalation of small droplets exhaled by an infected person that can travel distances of metres or tens of metres in the air and carry their viral content. Science explains the mechanisms of such transport and there is evidence that this is a significant route of infection in indoor environments. Despite this, no countries or authorities consider airborne spread of COVID-19 in their regulations to prevent infection transmission indoors.

Serious investigation of this contention was at last under way. Nothing was said, however, about singing. Yet there was a body of literature showing a relationship between the intensity of phonation and the extent to which exhaled breath was nebulized: which is to say, the extent to which moisture content was broken down into minute particles (smaller than 5 microns) that, instead of falling to the ground, circulated in an enclosed atmosphere. Over time, these aerosol particles evaporate to become even smaller and more concentrated bearers of the virus. They build up in concentration in indoor spaces where air exchange with the outdoors is slow (or, perhaps worse, in which air is recycled by an air conditioning plant). While saying nothing specifically about singing, this literature, particularly associated with well-regarded work by Sima Asadi and colleagues, made it clear that shouting could produce up to 50 times as many nebulized particles as quiet talking. A particularly hazardous activity might be sustained loud conversation in a busy pub where the voice has to be raised against loud chatter, laughter and background music. Social distancing and hand washing would do little to prevent airborne infection under such circumstances.

The unanswered question, though, was how singing compared with sustained loud talking or shouting. Might it be even worse? Some scientists thought it might be, theorizing on the effects of sustained melismatic passages or performing small experiments on plosive consonants. Might a conductor who demands clear articulation at the ends of phrases be endangering all in the church? There was still no big, funded research, but things were moving in the right direction, perhaps aided by letters to the press by some of the world's most

eminent conductors. At present (12 July), serious research on the production of aerosols by singers is at last under way in Bristol. By the time it is published, we may even have a result. Yet I doubt it will be entirely conclusive.

A paper reporting much more sophisticated work than had been undertaken previously on singing and breath emissions appeared recently in Germany. It will be interesting to see what the Bristol paper will add to our understanding. Using a laser particle counter under very carefully controlled conditions, the German study by Dirk Mürbe and colleagues at Berlin's Charité – Universitätsmedizin was able to capture and count aerosol particles invisible to the photographic methods of earlier studies. It confirmed beyond doubt that there are 'significantly higher emission rates for singing compared to mouth breathing and speaking'. Far from settling the matter conclusively, however, the paper simply introduced new uncertainties and further questions requiring more (expensive) investigation. For example, it found that higher voices produced more aerosols than lower

Science has demonstrated how many questions there are to be answered, how many studies need to be done, and how much uncertainty exists

voices. Female sopranos were the worst offenders, while tenors were more harmful than basses. It did not say why. No one piece of research will give us the answer to the question whether we can sing safely. That is not how science works.

The title of Mürbe's paper was 'Aerosol emission is increased in professional singing'. This does not mean that professional singers were compared with amateurs. It was merely the case that amateur singers were not studied, and that introduces more speculation. Who produces more aerosols, trained professionals with first-rate technique or amateurs with shouty or breathy tone? People understandably ask whether quiet singing or humming might be safer. Again, there is much speculation on social media, but a study published in 2017 by Ramya Konnai and colleagues and cited very recently in the authoritative *Journal of Voice* showed that whispering produces the greatest of all air flows. The authors of the study concluded that, while airflow and subglottic pressure are known to vary between styles of singing, it is still unknown how aerosol production varies according to voice type, vocal register or vocal style. Social media speculation, then, is of little use. We need more



well-designed studies to answer such questions, but securing funding is difficult.

Science has demonstrated how many questions there are to be answered, how many studies need to be done, and how much uncertainty exists. Where there is uncertainty, there is risk, and choir conductors now find themselves being asked to conduct risk assessments as never before. The conventional approach to risk management is based upon the identification of hazards and the devising of control measures to mitigate those hazards. Contagion through air contamination in enclosed spaces would certainly be a hazard. The likelihood and the consequence are then each assessed on scales of 1–5 and risk supposedly calculated by multiplying the two together. A score of 25 would be the highest attainable and would indicate that the activity should stop immediately as the hazard is highly likely to occur and the consequence would likely be catastrophic.

This is good in theory and this system is often used in health and safety management. How, though, do we give a number to consequence? If 1 equals mild inconvenience while 5 equals death, is it true that a death is just five times as bad as a minor

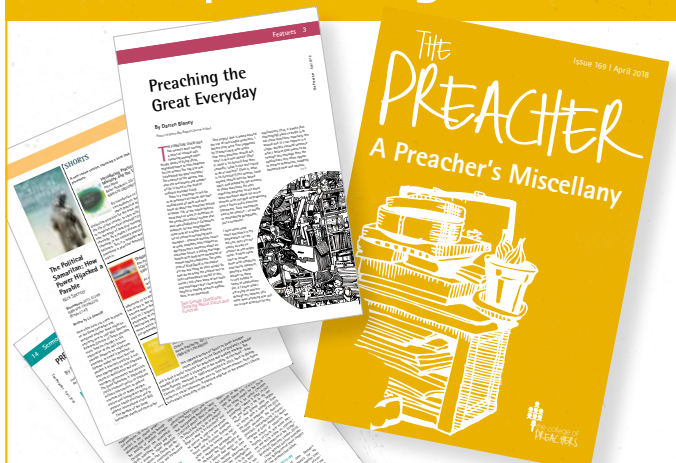
Science may not always be a reliable friend if you want to sing, but it may be the best friend you have if you want to stay healthy

inconvenience? Statisticians will probably wince. Either numbers mean something precisely measurable, such as your height, or arguably they are being misused. Interestingly, I have seen the consequence of airborne infection rated as 4, but this is subjective, not measured. So, how does health and safety legislation advise that we give a number to likelihood? The answer is that a person familiar with health and safety legislation makes an educated decision. But this is a new virus, and the aerosol question is novel, so how are such people to be educated?

Science may not always be a reliable friend if you want to sing, but if you want to stay healthy and avoid catching a disease that can have terrifying effects, it might be the best friend you have.

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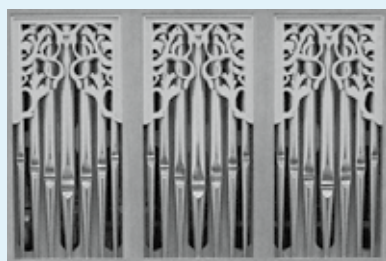
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In this new feature, CMQ asks members of the RSCM team who they are and what they do. It is designed to help readers put a face to a name and give insight into the day-to-day work of the RSCM. This quarter we talk to Andy Brockway and Angela Hamilton.



ANDY BROCKWAY

ANDY BROCKWAY is head of our membership department. In his corner, the phone never stops ringing and the coffee never stops flowing. Andy's background is in financial administration, youth work, and music (in many roles). He came to the RSCM from Rowanmoor Consultancy, a firm of financial advisors. Andy is also a freelance church musician, accompanist, piano and theory tutor, occasional conductor, and a father to three amazing and ever-growing Brockway boys.

CMQ What does the Membership Department do?

AB Put simply, our main responsibilities are to manage and oversee the running of the UK and NI memberships, dealing with renewals, new applications and membership queries. We also take care of overseas members who fall outside of the five international RSCM offices (USA, New Zealand, South Africa, Australia and Canada). We maintain and ensure the security and confidentiality of the central database, which, among other things, contains our members' and affiliates' contact information, communication preferences and gift aid certificates. We also manage the issuing of the quarterly magazines.

CMQ What do you enjoy most about your role?

AB I love talking to different sorts of people and answering their RSCM questions and queries. Above all, I enjoy understanding people's local churches and helping them address the problems they encounter when adapting to changes in musical trends using what they have at their disposal. There are many other things I enjoy about my role, but they are top of the list.

CMQ All jobs come with joys, but also obstacles to overcome. What would you say is the most challenging aspect of your role?

AB People are never shy when voicing their views on what is and is not useful, and while you can rarely please everyone, I do try to construct member resources that people will find helpful and enjoyable. We have,

as a global family, undergone many changes over the last few years. Some have found those changes difficult, but I always try to encourage a 'look to the future' frame of mind, but without letting go of our heritage. I'm excited about what the future will hold for us all.

CMQ Outside of work, you are a freelance church musician. What are some of your favourite pieces of sacred music?

AB I love plainchant. It has held a place in my heart since I was a chorister here in Salisbury. I loved hearing the lay clerks sing *Te lucis ante terminum*. It is a calming way to pray and end the day in song. I'd be here a long time if I had to list all the evening services and anthems that I like, but I have always appreciated *All in the April evening*, which was a parish favourite back when it wasn't uncommon to have a parish church choir of over 30 people (SATB). I love (aside from the fairly straightforward musical contour) the way the dynamic contrast goes hand in hand with the words. I think that is what makes it such a powerful anthem. It's also a welcome reminder of my late father, who was my guide into the world of music.

In the last 20 years, I have introduced many more contemporary styles of worship music in churches and Christian festivals, both abroad and in the UK. In doing that, I have found an equal passion for modern-day worship band and acoustic-led music. It's fair to say that outside of RSCM work, I'm quite a busy guy (but then, does worship ever start or finish?).

CMQ What previous experience did you have with the RSCM?

AB I was introduced into the church choir by my dad, David, at nine months old and wearing a teddy bear's cassock and surplus (they belonged to the church mascot!). I was carried into services by my dad (who was a choirmaster) until I was big enough to walk. I learned to read music and became familiar with the different styles of service. I have since moved into larger sizes of church attire.

My dad was a fond lover and supporter (as was my late uncle Harry) of the RSCM, and both had always used RSCM recourses and our famous *Sunday by Sunday* for their choice of liturgical music. We would attend festivals and services together, and so I was very aware of the RSCM in the early stages of my life. About eight years before I joined the RSCM, we put the RSCM's motto on my father's headstone. A son could not be more proud and thankful to God to have had such an excellent example to follow.

CMQ 2020 saw the first ever RSCM Membership Conference, which you organized and which was a massive success. What other initiatives can we expect from the membership department in 2021?

AB We are going through a lot of changes, and while there will definitely be new membership offerings, I won't commit to anything publicly just yet. But I can say that there will be another Membership Conference in 2022 (most probably in March), where I hope and pray that we'll see even more of our Members face to face. The conference in March was a fantastic occasion, and another would be welcome in two years' time.



ANGELA HAMILTON

ANGELA HAMILTON is the RSCM Marketing Officer. Ange keeps our Members and the wider public informed about the RSCM's many roles, products and projects. She has a background in Strategic and Operational Marketing Management, an MA in Marketing Management and came to the RSCM from a National Fostering Agency as their Marketing Manager.

CMQ Maybe you could start by telling readers what being Marketing Officer is all about?

AH It's a very broad role, but one I love. The RSCM has been working hard to support worshippers and church musicians throughout lockdown with new initiatives and resources. This in itself means that a lot of communication and marketing needs to be undertaken so that we continue to widen our reach in line with our strategic plan.

I also work very closely with our education, membership and publishing departments to ensure that we are communicating in a timely manner to the many different audiences that we serve.

CMQ What do you enjoy most about your role?

AH No day is the same, especially in the current climate. I also work alongside a great team, which makes all the difference!

CMQ What are some of your favourite pieces of sacred music?

AH Anything by Stanford, but a particular favourite of mine is *Ye choirs of new Jerusalem*. I also love *All creatures of our God and King*. There is a lovely version of this accompanied by the cello, which I adore. I'm learning to play the cello (very badly) so it has a special place in my heart.

CMQ What previous experience did you have with the RSCM?

AH I was aware of the RSCM through my local church, but hadn't actually had any active engagement with it before I joined the team.

CMQ What initiatives can we expect from the marketing dept in 2021?

AH It's clear that a lot has changed in the last few months since the Covid-19 pandemic began, so there will undoubtedly be a greater emphasis on digital offerings (while still continuing to serve the more traditional markets).

CONGRATULATIONS

45 YEARS OF SERVICE



Mrs Florence Thomas, who celebrated her 90th birthday in June 2020, is the only surviving founding member of the choir of St Cyprian, Retreat, Cape Town, South Africa, still singing in the choir today. Mrs Thomas, who is an alto, joined the choir in 1975 when the choir was founded by Mr Merlin Julie, then organist and choirmaster of the newly built church.

Mrs Thomas has been dedicated to the choir with unbroken service for the past 45 years. She has seen many choristers, organists, choirmasters and clergy come and go. Mrs Thomas has always taken up her duty with buoyancy and enthusiasm, never being late to rehearsal or services, and demonstrating how the choir was a significant part of her life.

Mrs Thomas has always lived up to the sentiments expressed in the Chorister's Prayer: 'what we sing with our lips, we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts, we may show forth in our lives'. Happy 90th birthday, Mrs Thomas! May you go 'from strength to strength' (Psalm 84.7).

Keenan Priestley

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.

🏆 Honours 90%+ (Gold)

★★ Highly commended 85%+ and

★ Commended 75%+ (Bronze/Silver)

SILVER STANDARD

St Albans: Harry Dumbleton* (Dunstable Priory).

BRONZE STANDARD

St Albans: Cecilia Kilpatrick** (Bedford, St Andrew), Theodore Croot**, Ivo McGrandle**, Elizabeth Maddock**, Hilary Pask**, Rafferty Smith* (Harpenden, St Nicholas).

SOLITARY KARAOKE

WORSHIPPING FROM HOME

JONATHAN ROBINSON

In the late spring of 2020, many learned a new shorthand: ‘wfh’, or ‘working from home’. By early summer, a few businesses had apparently adapted so successfully that they had decided to close their physical offices permanently. For some of us, ‘wfh’ extended to our Sunday activities. Within a few weeks we had also adapted for ‘wfh’, but this was ‘worshipping from home’. I’m interested in what we can learn from this experience.

Doubtless, the YouTube service led by familiar local faces has been a liturgical lifeline for many. If your church provided one, it probably incorporated slides of the usual and well-crafted hymn words set to suspiciously flawless playing (how many retakes, organists?). Well, as a backing track it worked. Thanks to audio editing technology it possibly sounded even more proficient than usual, but for some it was by far the least successful aspect of our move to the virtual world. Writing for *Accord*, the newsletter of the National Network of Pastoral Musicians, composer and church music director Christopher Walker commented: ‘Sitting on my sofa it is difficult to belt out “Guide me, O thou great Redeemer” into my lounge carpet. Hearing pieces that are usually sung with a full congregation now only by a soloist and a keyboard is not very satisfying. I am more ready to join in with songs, psalms and hymns that are personal, gentle in approach and with fewer words.’ This is a natural and sensible adaptation given the short-term circumstances, but some had developed a preference for solitary worship years before. For her pre-Covid book *Singing the Congregation*, Monique Ingalls interviewed some believers who said they ‘felt able to most “authentically” worship when viewing devotional song videos shared on social media’.

This period of ‘wfh’ has thrown things into sharp relief: despite the personal ‘vertical’ aspect of liturgy translating reasonably well to the virtual, the ‘horizontal’ is ruined, because even in a Zoom service with the simultaneous presence of others, we cannot sing together. Is being alone really preferable, or is our own worship in fact enhanced by that ad hoc

Sunday morning mix-up of untrained voices? I believe it is, especially when we begin to understand what is taking place.

IF NECESSARY, USE WORDS

I trace the genesis of my faith and subsequent involvement with church music to the evening services I attended at our Methodist chapel just before my teenage years. With gusto we sang hymns such as ‘With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing’ (to *Datchet*). Dotted around the congregation were members with ‘tune books’, as they were known, singing harmony lines. At the age of 12, I didn’t really grasp the meaning of phrases like ‘The old, thankful story shall scale thine abode’, but was both affected and engaged by the fervour of the singing and appreciated the affection and encouragement I experienced as a child in that Christian community.

I have since reflected that most of the adult congregation would have been stumped if asked to provide on the spot a clear explanation of a line like that. For me, and perhaps occasionally for some of them too, this was a heart-level experience that was given meaning more through its context than its content. I have long been fascinated by the non-verbal dimension of our participation in congregational song, no more so than during pandemic lockdown when the congregation has been replaced by a solitary living-room karaoke. This is not a plea for retaining lyrics that are past their use-by date. The formative content of what we sing is of indispensable importance, but perhaps this period can help to remind us that when physically regathered and permitted to sing again we must value and encourage the subliminal functions of group song.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EAR

In her book *Imperfect Harmony*, Stacy Horn, ‘not particularly religious’ and feeling alone and rejected, describes her first faltering success at singing a second soprano line in the Choral Society of Grace Church in New York: ‘A couple of notes. A D against



For many Christians, worshipping from home has meant replacing our congregational singing with a solitary living-room karaoke

a B flat. That's it. Two notes and I went from a state of complete misery and lonesomeness to such an astonishing sense of communion.'

In an essay entitled *The Significance of Liturgical Singing*, philosopher Terence Cuneo draws upon his research to explain that 'a comprehensive vision animates the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, one according to which the ideal for which we are to strive is *shalom* or *Eirene* – translated in English as "peace"'. This, he relates, is a state, not of individual inner tranquillity, but one that arises when individuals stand in a state of unity and harmony between them-selves, the natural world and God. He demonstrates that the unique features of participation in liturgical singing – collective action, attention and response to each other – actually bring this about. He concludes:

We can know in the abstract that standing in right relations with ourselves, others, the natural world, and God are interrelated in various ways. But actually experiencing a state in which one simultaneously enjoys such states can help us be acquainted with what it's like for these states to mesh, helping us to appreciate that often there is no sharp division between being in unity with one another, the natural world, and God.

For a brief time, the participants are enabled to enjoy an instance of the state for which they strive: an instance

that can empower and inspire their endeavours to bring about this state beyond the gathering.

We can advance this through Pete Ward's discussion of the distinctive musical worship of the Taizé Community in *Participation and Mediation*. Using the simple request 'Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom' (Luke 23.42) which is sung repeatedly, or 'circulated' for some time, he observes that implicit in this request, though absent from the lyric, is Jesus' response: 'Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise' (Luke 23.43). Suggesting that this is a conversation completed in performance, he observes: 'The lyrics of the song are enacted as they are sung. ... Animated texts in performance mediate embodied encounter with the divine. ... The lyrics are shaped by vocalization, but they also act on the body as a sonic environment.'

'WE NEED EACH OTHER'S VOICE TO SING'

Thus begins the hymn by Thomas H. Troeger. The first verse ends: 'We blend our voices to complete | the melody that starts | with God who sets and keeps the beat | that stirs our loving hearts.' Let's remember that during the pandemic we couldn't hear each other's voices, and when we sing together once more, try to do all we can to invest in congregational song. Let's train both bands and organists to support and inspire without ever drowning. Let's help congregations to sing in harmony and unaccompanied more often. Let's never take singing together for granted.

FRIENDS OF THE RSCM

SUPPORT ON OUR JOURNEY

*'O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock
of our salvation.'* PSALM 95.1

For fast approaching a century, the Royal School of Church Music has supported church music making by training, advising and providing resources for clergy, choirs, musicians and congregations. Teaching has always been at our core: we train trainers to deliver our work, equipping them with the skills and techniques to share church music, to provide knowledge and to inspire excellence, but we know there is more to do. We listen to what you tell us, and we can see new opportunities to engage further and wider, sharing church music with new communities, igniting the joy and exaltation of faith through music.

Our work is more relevant and vital than ever before. Covid-19 and church closures highlighted this: we knew that we had to support church communities by providing church music and platforms for congregations to come together in song. Our rapid virtual response to the lockdown saw greater numbers of participants than before: church music, song, collective participation are instrumental to how people worship, and the feedback we have received has been tremendous. This is what RSCM member Susan said following The Big Easter Evensong:

May I say a big thank you for the hymns and the two Sunday services, all of which I have listened to and sung. It has been a great help during this time of self-isolation and to know that I am joining in with others instead of worshipping in my church.

Lent, Passiontide and Easter are very special times in the Church's calendar and your words and music will help me to follow Christ to the cross and celebrate with Mary at Easter in saying 'I have seen the Lord.'

Church music, and especially choral music, does so much: it brings communities together in person or virtually, combating isolation and uplifting the spirit at times of darkness and of great joy. It marks significant moments – weddings, baptisms, funerals, great occasions – in our own lives and that of the nation and world as a whole.

This must continue.

Motivated by members such as yourself, energized by the call to do more, the RSCM in the 21st century wants to build on our strong foundations. We want to reach new audiences, we want to engage the next generation, we want to provide greater opportunities for learning, for spiritual enrichment and for social cohesion. Let us fill our churches with music, with communities young and old, of all backgrounds and ethnicities.

With your support, we can make it happen. When we celebrate our centenary in 2027, we intend to showcase and celebrate all that we have achieved between now and then, and to shine as a beacon, a guiding light for church music.

There is much to be done: we need your support and your evangelism. Please help us advance our mission in two ways: by becoming a friend of the RSCM yourself and, vitally, by inviting others to become friends. There are four levels at which you and your network can support us; see details opposite.

Together we can rebuild, reshape and revitalize the landscape of church music.

Thank you.

FRIENDS OF THE RSCM SUPPORT ON OUR JOURNEY



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A credit on our website (optional)		●	●	●	●
Invitations to selected RSCM events with opportunities to meet with the Director		●	●	●	●
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Invitation to our annual Celebration Day, and other events, including opportunities to meet with senior staff and representatives				●	●
Invitation to an annual lecture				●	●
A credit on our Celebration Day order of service					●
Annual lunch with RSCM Chair, the Very Reverend Dr John Hall					●

*AFTER ST JOHN THE BAPTIST



KEEPING YOUR VOICE IN SHAPE DURING LOCKDOWN

HILARY LLYSTYN JONES

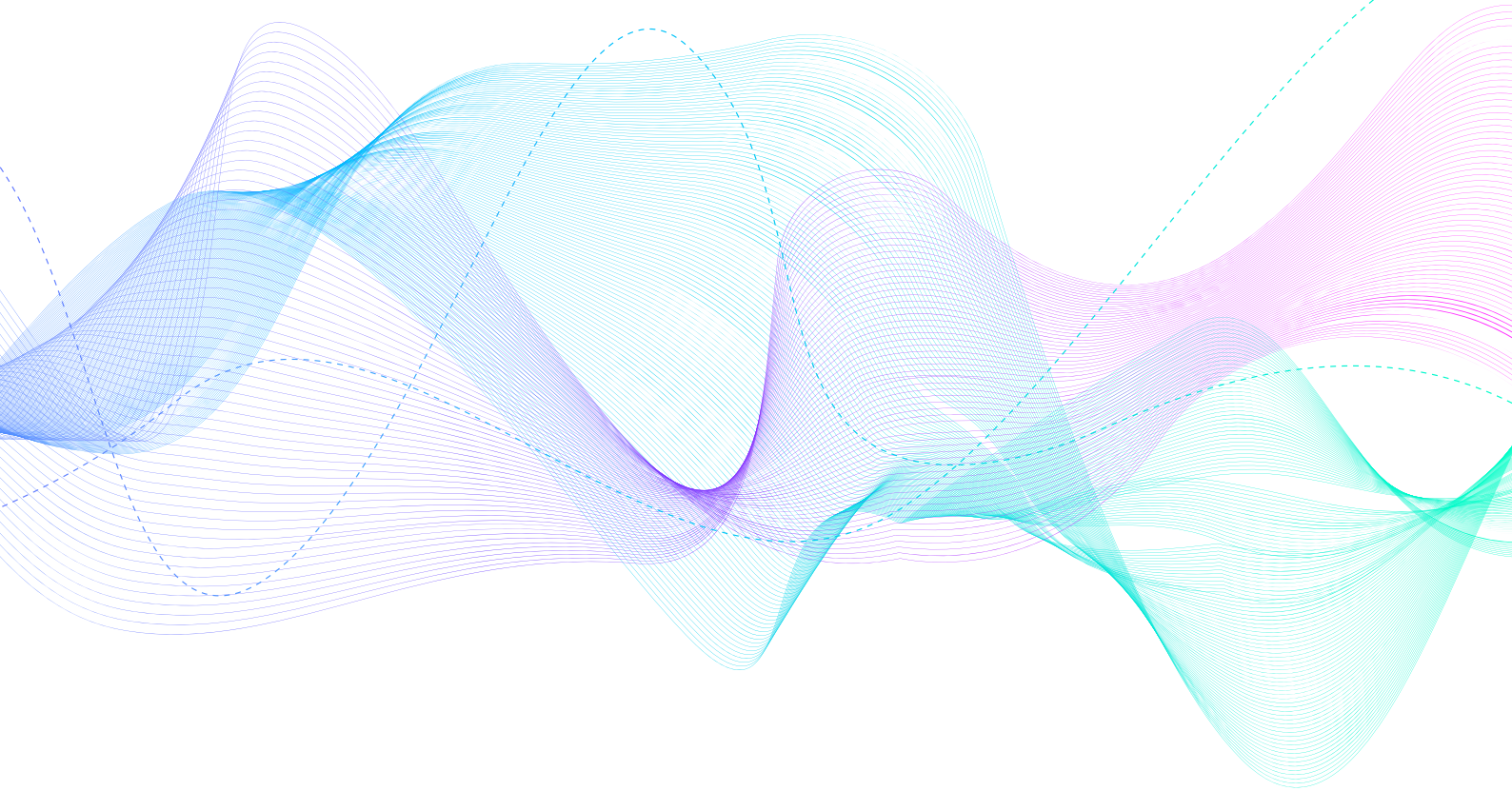
The Covid-19 pandemic has changed our lives beyond imagining. Zoom, Google Meet, Apple FaceTime and Microsoft Teams are now an accepted part of life; no more hours of travelling by train or car, no close contact with our families. Many questions and many fears have arisen, not least whether choirs will ever sing together again. There has been much conjecture around the notion that singers, standing so close to one another and expelling the virus, may be super-spreaders. Until scientists can give us more accurate information as to how far these droplets travel and at what risk to others, we need to stay safe and keep our voices inside our homes.

This must not mean, however, that we stop singing. Singing is good for us: among other benefits, it exercises the brain, encourages us to breathe well, keeps the tongue agile and is relaxing. Moreover, we can't expect to go straight back to singing well if we haven't done it for some time. You are a singing athlete and your voice requires practice to stay in

shape. After the summer holidays, choirs often take two to three weeks to return to pre-holiday standards. So, what can we do to keep our voices in shape during this time and keep up our enthusiasm for singing when we are on our own?

POSTURE IN THE AGE OF THE DEVICE

Before you start singing in online choir rehearsals or singing lessons, make sure that your electronic device is at the correct height so your head and shoulders are in line with the screen. You may need to put your device on a music stand balanced on some books to achieve this, but it's important not to be looking down at the screen because you will squash your larynx. Posture needs addressing all the time, so have a mirror nearby to check your head, neck, shoulders and upper body, and make sure that your knees are not locked. If you are having to record your singing to a click track, be aware that trying to hit the exact beat may make you feel anxious and allow tension to creep into your body.



VOCALIZING

Sirening regularly to an 'ng' sound keeps the vocal folds flexible and will avoid breaks creeping into your sound. Start low in your range and slide up; then try the other way around. Be gentle with your voice. Remember that carpets and curtains absorb sound, and that it's easy to drive the voice too hard if the room in which you are singing lacks resonance. Be conscious that we all like to hear a little bit of feedback and will push to get it. After all, don't we love to sing in a church that has a wonderful acoustic?

Singing down the scale to 'ning ning' helps to maintain the resonance in the sound as well as humming a song, a hymn or an anthem to an 'n' sound, feeling where the resonance is placed in the voice. Open out into an audible sound like an 'oo' and eventually sing the words.

Ask yourself whether you are singing in tune and driving your voice. When working with children I often get them to do 'elephant ears' so that they can hear themselves. In fact, it is a good exercise for all ages. To do this, place the palms of your hands upright and in front of your ears but facing backwards towards the wall behind you. This dampens the sound travelling through the jawbone up to the ears and helps you to hear what someone else listening in the room would hear.

LOCKDOWN PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS

Be aware of tongue root tension. Pulling the tongue back into the throat can fool our ear into thinking that we are making a rich and mature sound when actually we are restricting the free movement of the larynx. Have a look at some online videos of the larynx to

The RSCM has a series of six webinars on vocal technique, offering tips and exercises to all singers, school music teachers and choir leaders. They are available to purchase on the RSCM's shop at www.rscmshop.com/features/rscm-webinars.

see how much and how freely it moves during healthy singing.

Place your thumb underneath your chin and say 'yah yah yah yah yah'. Feel the movement of your tongue and experiment with trying to speak and move your tongue, but without it becoming hard, tense or pressing down on top of your larynx. Repeat this exercise, now *singing* 'yah yah yah yah yah', continuing to register and release any tongue root tension as you sing. Roll your tongue around your mouth (over your teeth and right to the corners, top and bottom) and moving your tongue up and down and from side to side to keep it flexible. This is a great exercise to do while washing up.

Does your sound seem flat or dull at times? Your soft palate, the bit of tissue at the top and back of your mouth, may be dropped, which can interfere with your tone. Try singing a hymn or a section of an anthem to the vowels only and with your nose pinched. If your sound is a bit nasal and lacks ring, then your soft palate may have dropped. Sniff firmly three times and, smiling, pant like a dog, feeling a lifting sensation at the back and top of your mouth behind your nose. Repeat your singing with your nose pinched, paying particular attention to that lifted sensation at the back of your mouth behind your nose. Experiment with your sound. Try imagining singing to your teeth and then to the back of your head and see how this changes your sound. Maybe record yourself so that you can hear the difference in your sound more objectively.

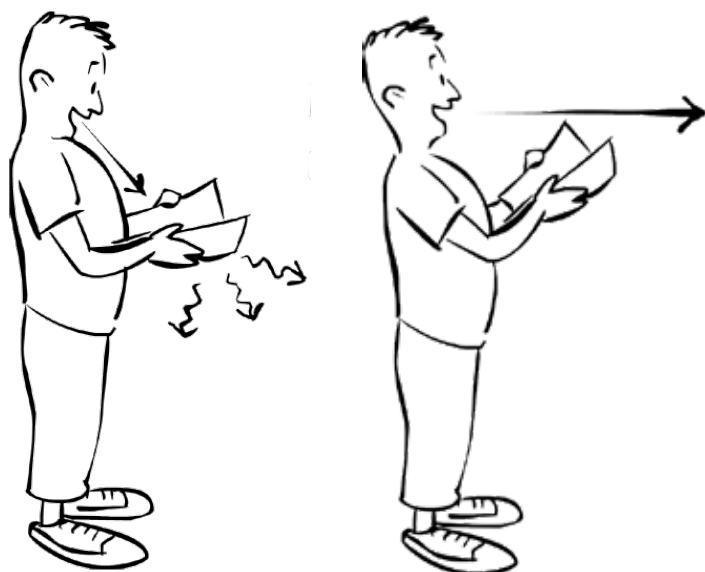
It can be easy to forget to be expressive when you are singing to a device and not to an audience. Remember to summon the feeling and emotion

behind what you are trying to convey and tell the story of your song. Use facial expression to enhance the communication of your voice and imagine your audience in front of you as you sing.

Be aware that you may accidentally force your voice when you are recording against a click track or singing along to an accompaniment because the recording may be too loud in your ears. Young children in particular may need some help and guidance from parents with this, so if you are helping a child who is singing, check the level of the recording that they are listening to before they make their own recording.

Finally, choir leaders may wish to consider how they can tell if their singers are falling into bad habits when rehearsing online but with sound muted. The answer is that you can't get a clear idea of how your singers are developing unless you have a recording of their work, so perhaps ask them to record themselves singing a tricky section and offer them some (positive) feedback to keep them motivated and improving.

Crucially, we must not forget those who have sung in their local church choirs for many years but who do not have access to Wi-Fi and online rehearsals. These times may have dealt them a devastating blow in preventing them from having contact with others through singing, so perhaps consider popping round some CDs of popular hymns that they could sing along with. Help them feel remembered and involved. I have known many singers in their late 80s and early 90s who still enjoy singing in their church choir and they must not be put out to grass and forgotten about, not least because singing is so good for us in older age.



How you hold your music or electronic device affects your posture and can cause problems when you sing. It is important not to be looking down at the screen because you will squash your larynx. Make sure that your electronic device is at the correct height so your head and shoulders are in line with the screen

KEEPING YOUR VOICE IN SHAPE DURING LOCKDOWN

IMPROVEMENT DURING LOCKDOWN

'I don't want to sing again,' said my 75-year-old pupil who has sung in choirs for over 30 years. 'I'm getting no pleasure singing in virtual choirs. I want to hear the other voices around me, feel the buzz, the harmonies, be with my friends. Is this the end for we oldies?' Many of us may sympathize with these sentiments; however, this pupil was able to turn around her experience of lockdown by having some online individual singing lessons with great results. She has particularly enjoyed the feedback she was given when she sent me a recording, and she is now sharing those recordings with her children and grandchildren who are thrilled to share with her in the experience. This has boosted her confidence so that she is now solo singing, something she never imagined she was capable of doing in her younger years.

Similarly, over the past three months, I have watched several young choristers taking part in Sunday worship, whether it be singing a hymn by themselves, reading from the Bible or reading the prayers with all of their family. The boost in confidence that I have seen in these children is

immeasurable. These young singers are the musicians of the future and it has been fantastic for them to feel that they have achieved something in this lockdown period.

ONLINE RESOURCES

If you would like to have some individual lessons to enhance your lockdown singing experience, the RSCM can help you. The beauty of this strange time is that you don't need to travel miles for a consultation lesson: you can have it online. There are also many great resources online that you may want to explore. Over the past months I have put together a series of six webinars on vocal technique, offering tips and exercises to all singers, school music teachers and choir leaders. These are available to purchase on the RSCM's shop at www.rscmshop.com/features/rscm-webinars.

Finally, in these often difficult times, I am reminded of Psalm 89.1, which has great personal meaning to me as a teacher: 'My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of the Lord : with my mouth will I ever be showing thy truth from one generation to another.'

We'll get through this. Keep singing!



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OBITUARIES

IAN MCKINLEY



Ian McKinley (1929–2020) was a foundation member and later national secretary and treasurer of the Australian Society

for Music Education, an AMEB examiner, member of the Queensland Primary Music Curriculum Committee and, for a term, president of the Queensland Music Teachers' Association.

He conducted several choral groups and was, for seven years, director of music at Christ Church, St Lucia. His many compositions and arrangements for the Canticum Chamber Choir, in which he sang, include a setting of Paul Sherman's *Triptych of Austral Time*. His other choral compositions include *The Secret City: Windows on a Southern Land* – settings of six poems by Australian authors for two choirs and organ; and a Mass setting based on Richard Connolly's hymn tune *Araluen*. In 2002, his choral work

The Spirit's Gift was published by the RSCM, and performed in Westminster Cathedral, London by massed RSCM choirs.

In June 2007, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia 'for service to music as an educator, singer, organist and composer'.
Australian Music Centre

for Service: 100 Years of the English Hymnal 1906–2006 (Canterbury Press, 2005) he displayed erudition and sensitivity. One of his own hymns ('Year by year, from past to future') is matched, appropriately, to a Welsh tune in *Ancient & Modern* (2013).
Anne Harrison

ALAN LUFF

Alan Harold Frank Luff (1928–2020), musician and liturgist, was a champion of hymns old and new. He served as precentor of Manchester Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, spent time as a vicar in Wales (becoming fluent in Welsh and an expert on Welsh hymnody), and ended his full-time ministry at Birmingham Cathedral.

His enormous contribution to the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland included the fostering of links with similar bodies in Wales, America and Europe. He was awarded an ARSCM in 2000. As editor of *Strengthen*

JANE PARKER-SMITH

We report the death on 24 June of the concert organist Jane Parker-Smith, whose lively playing and personality did much to reach out to people beyond the normal 'organ world'. She was 23 when she recorded *Favourite Organ Masterpieces* on the Music for Pleasure label, including Bach's D minor Toccata and Fugue and Widor's Toccata. But her repertoire was wide, with a focus on large-scale romantic repertoire, such as Jongen's *Sonata Eroica*, in which she excelled. She is also the organ soloist on Simon Rattle's recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*.

CLASSIFIED ADS

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

VACANCIES

St Michael's, Malton, North Yorkshire.

We wish to appoint a Director of Music to develop the place of music in the Parish. Key requirements of the post include experience of working with amateur musicians including an SATB choir, high standard of keyboard skills and understanding of the importance of liturgy and how to plan hymns for the full range of Anglican services, in particular Common Worship. We wish to build on our strong choral tradition and to use music as a means of Christian mission in the community and to encourage children and younger people to join our existing choir and to participate in other musical activities in church. Attendance will be required at weekly choir practice, at one Sunday morning service and occasional evening services as well as Festivals.

This post was previously advertised in March, but no appointment made because of the Covid-19 lockdown. For more information please contact our Parish Office (maltonbenefice@yahoo.com or 01653-692089)

Housing for Members of the RSCM

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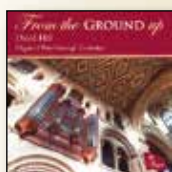
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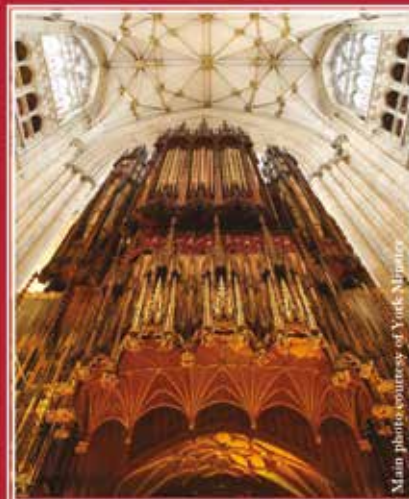
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SWEET SACRAMENT DIVINE

GORDON GILES

Sweet Sacrament divine,
hid in thine earthly home,
lo, round thy lowly shrine,
with suppliant hearts we come;
Jesus, to thee our voice we raise
in songs of love and heartfelt praise:
sweet Sacrament divine.

Sweet Sacrament of Peace,
dear home for every heart,
where restless yearnings cease
and sorrows all depart;
there in thine ear all trustfully
we tell our tale of misery:
sweet Sacrament of Peace.

Sweet Sacrament of Rest,
ark from the ocean's roar,
within thy shelter blest
soon may we reach the shore;
save us, for still the tempest raves,
save, lest we sink beneath the waves:
sweet Sacrament of Rest.

Sweet Sacrament divine,
earth's light and jubilee,
in thy far depths doth shine
thy Godhead's majesty;
sweet light, so shine on us, we pray,
that earthly joys may fade away:
sweet Sacrament divine.

Words: Francis Stanfield (1835–1914)
Music: *Divine Mysteries*
Francis Stanfield

Right: Charles Dickens, photograph
taken c.1867–68. Image courtesy of the
Heritage Auction Gallery.

One of the sad consequences of the coronavirus lockdown was the inability to celebrate or receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. Whether or not one is of the Catholic tradition, as the author of this hymn was, the spiritual and physical sweetness of the consecrated bread and wine of Christ is sorely missed when they are inaccessible. Being missed, we long for the renewing refreshment of sacramental restoration.

Francis Stanfield, who was probably born in Camden in north London, was a convert to Roman Catholicism in the mid-19th century. His father, Clarkson Stanfield, a landscape painter who was a friend of Charles Dickens, collaborated on the illustrations for some of that author's 'Christmas' books, and *Little Dorrit* is dedicated to him. Given that Dickens's views on organized religion, especially Roman Catholicism, were negative (he described the Catholic Church as a 'curse upon the world'), it is interesting to note that his friend and collaborator became a Catholic, and that two of Stanfield's sons, Francis and Raymond, became priests. Francis Stanfield wrote this beloved hymn, publishing it around the time of his ordination in 1860 in *Catholic Hymns* (1858 and 1860), a decade before Dickens's death.

Francis Stanfield was educated at St Edmund's College, near Ware in Hertfordshire, and spent some time

based in Hertford, mostly leading missions and retreats. He was at one time priest in charge at Old Hall Green, also in Hertfordshire. Stanfield's spiritual outlook and perhaps sentimentalized devotion is consistent in many of his hymns, and the style of *Sweet Sacrament divine* can be recognized in others. In *The Catholic Prayer Book and Manual of Meditations* (1883), his

Despite his views on organized religion, particularly Catholicism, Charles Dickens was a friend of the Stanfield family



text 'Respice stellam, voca Mariam' can be found, with its familiar-sounding second verse:

Winds of affliction
raise their rude blast,
ruffling the ocean
whereon we're cast;
waves of temptation
mountain-like roll,
'neath their dark billows
sinking the soul,
fear not, but gaze afar,
on the soft shining star,
Respice stellam,
voca Mariam.

And we may also notice the same sentiment in his *Hymn for Ireland* in the same volume, the last two verses of which also reveal his predilection for repeated opening and final lines:

O Sacred Heart!
When shades of death shall fall,
receive us 'neath thy gentle care,
and save us from the tempter's snare,
O Sacred Heart.

O Sacred Heart!
Lead exiled children home,
where we may ever rest near thee,
in peace and joy eternally,
O Sacred Heart.

The first significant appearance of the rather better *Sweet Sacrament divine* was in the *Westminster Hymnal* (1912), in which Stanfield's luscious tune, which became known as *Divine Mysteries*, was also included. In the 1940 revision of the same book, the hymn was moved from the section 'The Blessed Sacrament' to 'Corpus Christi and the Holy Eucharist' and paired with a different tune, *Sanctissimum* by Dom Gregory Murray. The editors of *English Hymnal* (1906) did not find a place for what at that time

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

78



The first significant appearance of *Sweet Sacrament divine* was in the *Westminster Hymnal* (1912), in which Stanfield's tune was also included.

Stanfield's rousing tune has held its ground, and though it is perhaps the kind of tune Vaughan Williams might have consigned to the infamous 'chamber of horrors' supplement to the English Hymnal, it is much loved

was a little-known hymn, although in 1987 their successors on the *New English Hymnal* did, even though the editors of the *New Catholic Hymnal* (1971) did not include any of Stanfield's music. *Common Praise* (2000) and the succeeding *Ancient and Modern* (2013) included it, and so it has gained a firm foothold in Anglican hymnody.

Stanfield's soaring D major tune has held its ground even in the face of Murray's competition, and though it is perhaps the kind of tune Vaughan Williams might have consigned to the infamous 'chamber of horrors'

supplement to the *English Hymnal*, it is much loved. Its distinctive octave leap midway through gives an emotional uplift – like a wave rising in the swell before subsiding at the end of each verse. The dominant chord suspension at the end of the first line is a little indulgent. Harmonically and structurally it is straightforward. Many people absolutely love this tune; some cannot abide it, probably for the same reasons.

The text has been pertinent this year as the world has faced the unseen threats of the coronavirus.



Noah offering thanks for the safe delivery of his family. Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Copyright Sabena Jane Blackbird / Alamy stock photo.

The biblical seafaring allusions in the hymn are striking and poignant. Psalm 107, which speaks of 'those who go down to the sea in ships', says of them: 'Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out from their distress; he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed' (Psalm 107.28–29).

The third verse resonates with 2020's weeks of rainbows, expressing gratitude for the NHS and hope for release from incarceration in enclosed spaces amid a viral storm



Image courtesy of K. Mitch Hodge.

We might also be reminded of Noah in the ark, whose easing out of maritime lockdown was gradual as the waters receded after 40 days and nights. The flood actually continued for another 150 days (five months). Noah and his shipmates needed not only faith and hope, but patience. Birds were sent out, only to return empty-beaked, until eventually one did not return (Genesis 8.6–12). It was not until the seventh month that the ark 'landed' on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8.4), and the duration of the Noah family's isolation in the ark at sea and then on land was around 11 months (Genesis 8.14–16). Thus, the third verse resonates with 2020's weeks of rainbows, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the NHS and hope for release from incarceration in enclosed spaces amid a viral storm.

The seafaring theme points us to Jesus both calming the storm (Matthew 8.23–27) and saving Peter from the waves (Matthew 14.28–33). The second verse's mention of sorrow and release from misery echoes this, and reminds us of Jesus' famous saying, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,

We might be reminded of Noah in the ark, whose easing out of maritime lockdown was gradual as the waters receded.

and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11.28). The idea of an 'earthly jubilee' (verse 4) looks forward to a time when the ordeal is over and there shall be a sense of life being restored to (new) normal. Yet the vision of the hymn is not of restoration or recreation of the old past life, but of a new divine home where earthly joys have faded to an eternal presence in union with Jesus, who, for now, is only present sacramentally.

Sweet Sacrament divine may seem like a hymn praising the sacrament of communion, but flowing through it is the praise of Jesus Christ, embodied in bread and wine, and remembered among us as we gather around his table. We think of the sacrament as Christ, yet here it is also the other way around, for Christ is the sacrament: the two words are interchangeable. To address or appeal to the sacrament for help, is to appeal for release to Jesus Christ, who reveals the Godhead, even in the depths of sorrow, fear and suffering. There is no more fitting lockdown hymn.

Heavenly Father, who sheltered the ark and whose son Jesus calmed the storm and guided your disciples to safe land, hear our prayers for those who suffer amid the silence of isolation, the waves of grief and the winds of fear. To the needy, grant relief; to the fearful, reassurance; and to the desperate, the hope of release that only you can give. Amen.

READERS' LETTERS

COPYRIGHT LAW AND THE HYPERION RULING

I am sure many of your readers will have been grateful for Stefan Putigny's excellent article on 'Copy-Wrong, Copy-Right' in the June issue of CMQ. I was naturally interested that the High Court case involving Hyperion Records was cited, but I feel that many readers may have wondered why this story made such headlines, and how it came about.

For some 20 years prior to the 2001 Ex Cathedra CD for the Hyperion label, other editions I had prepared from primary sources of works by Lully, Charpentier, Lalande and Rameau had been recorded by various distinguished ensembles, for the BBC, Radio France-Musique and for several labels including Erato, Harmonia Mundi, Teldec, Auvidis and ASV (including a 1995 CD of four Lalande motets by Ex Cathedra). Editorial rights were clearly stated on the sleeves, supported by MCPS (the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society) as copyright, and royalties and fees were paid on all these CDs, following normal practice.

Thus, the judgment of the High Court in 2004, supported by the unanimous ruling of the three High Court judges of the Appeal Court in 2005, did not set a precedent as was widely but misleadingly reported, but followed existing case law, observed by all the labels mentioned but unwisely challenged by Hyperion. The large legal bill Hyperion received was thus self-inflicted, given that three years were spent attempting to get Ex Cathedra and Hyperion to negotiate before court proceedings were instituted, and even then numerous offers to settle the matter out of court were ignored, as had been notices from MCPS to 'cease and desist' from issuing the CD. The controversy that ensued resulted from face-saving propaganda from Hyperion and from some of the musical press carrying full-page colour advertisements from Hyperion.

The High Court judge in the 2004 trial strongly criticized Ex Cathedra for 'playing one side off the other to secure the recording'. The role of Ex Cathedra in this matter appeared



extraordinary, given the many months I had spent (unpaid and without contract) in preparing the editions for a series of concerts preceding the recording (including one in Paris organized for them by me), not to mention the numerous other editions and performance practice know-how of French Baroque sacred music I had supplied to Jeffrey Skidmore of Ex Cathedra over the previous decade. (Ex Cathedra is only one of more than 100 choruses and orchestras worldwide to whom I have supplied editions of French baroque music.) I was very grateful for the support as witnesses in the High Court of the CEO of the Music Publishers' Association, the organist who had played continuo for the recording, a previous administrator of Ex Cathedra and the late Dr Stanley Sadie, editor of the *New Grove Dictionaries*, who appeared as an expert witness.

Dr Lionel Sawkins

ONLINE WEBINARS

I write in response to 'Notes from the Director' in the March issue of CMQ. I think Hugh raises a pertinent point about underlying quality and technique, and the importance of equipping 'musicians of all levels with the technical skills that will allow them to tackle and write anything they might want to'. For those of us out in the provinces and without the luxury of an Oxbridge music degree or conservatoire training, such skills can be hard to come by. Individual tuition is one option, but the cost can be prohibitive.

I would like to suggest that the RSCM could hold a monthly online webinar for those of us with the interest and ability to do some more advanced harmony and composition. I imagine there must be many members who are active composers, specialists, or retired academics who might be willing to lead a session or two, either as a donation to the organization or at a very preferential rate. Some topics could build on others, from basic harmony through to composing a set of responses in the style of Byrd or a short organ prelude in the style of

Buxtehude or Howells. At the end there could be a live event at which some of the group's pieces are performed in a spirit of friendly exchange.

Dr Toby Huitson, organist and choirmaster, Ss Mary & Eanswythe, Folkestone

WHO READS YOUR COPY OF CMQ?

Do share your copy among the other musicians in your church? Pass it round the vestry or staff room and encourage others to become Friends or Members of the RSCM and receive their own copy.

SINGING FOR PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND

GEOFF WEAVER

Standing on the rooftop of the Wi'am Centre for Reconciliation in Bethlehem, which lies in the shadow of the Separation Wall and is overlooked by an Israeli military post, I resolved in 2015 to lead a Pilgrimage of Song for Peace and Reconciliation in that troubled land. We had just heard Zoughbi Zoughbi, the director of the Centre, speak about the challenges, the injustice and the pain of the situation, and in the garden below, created to give children a space to play, we saw the casings of spent smoke bombs and rubber bullets. Flowers bloomed in the garden, but some had been trampled on by Israeli soldiers carrying out 'security raids'.

There are many aspects to the pain of Palestinian Christians. The first is that very few people are aware that there are Palestinian Christians, and that they have been there since the time of Christ. Zoughbi jokes that his far distant ancestors babysat for Jesus. And then there is the assumption that all Palestinians and Muslims are possibly terrorists. In fact, Wi'am

is committed to working for peace and justice for all communities and all faiths in the Holy Land. This becomes increasingly problematic as the Israeli government restricts the lives of Palestinians more and more, taking away their land and restricting their ability to travel. In some areas, large numbers of their olive trees (one of their crucial means of financial support and a deeply rooted part of their culture) are being destroyed by extremist Israeli settlers. One phrase that resonated with me was the description of Palestinian Christians as 'the living stones', and the challenge they give us is to support them in their lives in an increasingly difficult situation.

So, in 2016 we undertook our first Pilgrimage of Song to the Holy Land. Some 30 singers, many of them RSCM members, took part in a Liturgy for Peace with Palestinian singers in Nazareth. Later Na'el, the priest in Nazareth, spoke of the challenge of his fourfold identity: as an Arab, a Palestinian, a Christian and an Israeli.

Singing with a Palestinian choir in Nazareth.





Nazareth, courtesy of Osama Damoni, from PikiWiki.



Father Na'el, a priest in Nazareth.

We celebrated a Eucharist on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, renewed baptismal vows at the River Jordan, walked the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem and celebrated a Eucharist in the Shepherds' Fields outside Bethlehem

In Galilee we visited the important biblical sites; we celebrated a Eucharist on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and we sang 'Eternal Father, strong to save' as we crossed the waters – rather unnecessarily, as it happened, because the sea was as calm as a millpond. Then our tour continued: a renewal of baptismal vows at the River Jordan, walking the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem and celebrating a Eucharist in the Shepherds' Fields outside Bethlehem. Alongside these often very moving experiences were liturgies for peace in St George's Cathedral and with Muslim students in Bethlehem University. We sang in one of the refugee camps in Bethlehem, where families have lived since they were driven from their homes in 1948. There the great-grandchildren of the original refugees sang to us, and together we sang, in hope, 'Freedom is coming'.

We heard moving testimonies from Palestinians about the situation and its impact on their lives. Most movingly we heard from two members of the Parents Circle, an Israeli and a Palestinian, both of whom had lost daughters in the inter-communal violence. In their mutual grief they had become friends and now visit schools and universities in both Israel and Palestine advocating reconciliation and healing

as the only way forward. Increasingly they, and others who work for peace, need our prayers.

In 2018 we took even more singers on a second pilgrimage, this time including a visit to Ramallah on the West Bank, where we worshipped with the congregation and sang Palestinian songs. None of us will ever forget two elderly Palestinian women, one a composer and the other a singer, performing laments they had written for the land they had lost and for the homes that they would never see again.

In 2021 we plan another pilgrimage, with a similar programme. However, every pilgrimage is unique, and meeting Palestinian Christians and hearing about their situation first-hand is always intensely moving and challenging. As one previous participant wrote: 'I'm glad that we were there as pilgrims rather than just tourists. The significance of our singing in a troubled land cannot be overestimated.'

Our Pilgrimage in 2021, in conjunction with McCabe Travel, will take place from 10 to 17 May. If you are interested in this unique opportunity to sing and experience the richness and the pain of the Palestinian people and their culture, contact Jane Henson (jane.henson@email.com or 07940 548 832) or Geoff Weaver (WeaverGJ@aol.com) for further details.



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REVIEWS OF CDs, DVD and BOOKS

CDs & DVD

- ★ **Worth hearing**
- ★★ **Recommended**
- ★★★ **Essential listening**

ORGAN CDS

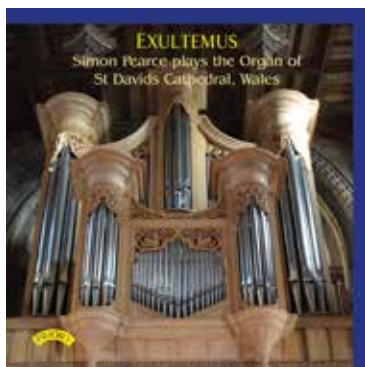


EXULTEMUS

Simon Pearce plays the organ of St Davids Cathedral ♦ Priory PRCD1222

This recital of Welsh music by the assistant organist at St Davids has at its centre a fine performance of William Mathias's *Antiphonies* of 1982, clearer and with more impact than John Scott's St Paul's Cathedral recording for Nimbus. There is also music by Sir Nicholas Jackson (a former St Davids organist), Cyril Jenkins and Meirion Wynn Jones, and two pieces by Geraint Lewis including *The Minster Rings* that features the cathedral bells as well as organ. The tracks not by a Welsh composer are Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Three Preludes founded on Welsh Hymn Tunes*, including the much-played 'Rhosymedre' approached in a fresh and sensitive way.

Duncan Watkins



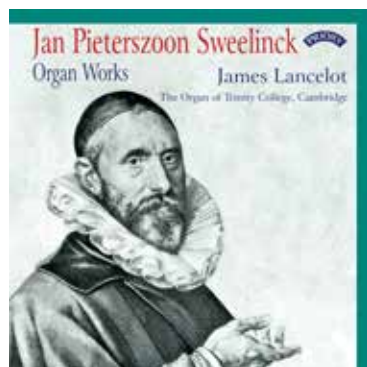
JAN PIETERSZOOM SWEELINCK: ORGAN WORKS
James Lancelot plays the organ of Trinity College, Cambridge ♦ Priory PRCD1228

James Lancelot may not be a name immediately associated with the performance of 16th- and early

17th-century keyboard music, but, as he writes eloquently in his liner notes, this disc is born of a life-long appreciation of Sweelinck (1562–1621), and a desire to remedy the neglect of his organ repertoire.

The performances are thoughtful and well considered. Lancelot is no Koopman, and if at times they lack the freedom and invention of some continental exponents – it is hard to imagine that the 'Orpheus of Amsterdam' would have played his music exactly as it is transmitted to us – they are nevertheless absolutely faithful to the text. The music is at its most attractive in the variations – no *Mein junges Leben*, but a well-chosen selection – and in the Echo Fantasias. All are judiciously registered. In short, this recording is a worthy advocacy of Sweelinck's organ music.

Warwick Cole



LIVE WIRE: ORGAN MUSIC BY IAIN FARRINGTON
played on the organ of St John's College, Cambridge ♦ Priory PRCD1218

If you like your organ music loud, wild and bombastic then this is the CD for you. Iain Farrington is let loose on the St John's organ in a programme of his own compositions and arrangements. There is no denying that he is an exceptionally skilled organist and composer. From the opening *Live Wire* to the closing *Lay my burden down* – a selection of five Negro Spirituals – the listener is treated to a dazzling display of organ wizardry and colours. However, for me it is just too much. The majority of the pieces on this disc are exceptionally loud and played extremely fast, with harmonic

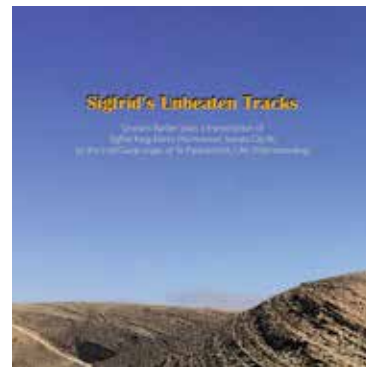
detail, intricate textures and musical expression lost in a sea of notes. There are moments of serenity, such as the *Nocturne* movement from *Fiesta!*, but they are short-lived.

Ian Munro



SIGFRID'S UNBEATEN TRACKS
Graham Barber plays Karg-Elert on the Link/Gaida organ of St Pauluskirche, Ulm ♦ Fugue State Records FSRCD016

Thanks to crowd funding, Graham Barber explores lesser-known output of Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877–1933) with transcriptions of six of the musical *Portraits* Op.101 and a Second Sonata Op.46, both originally written for harmonium, and recorded in the Pauluskirche in Ulm, Germany, on what is described as one of the best instruments for the high Romantic period. Barber uses plenty of instrumental colour for each of the witty and stylistic sketches of composers such as Chopin, Wagner and Verdi. Clearly Karg-Elert was a great musical mimic! Even a nod to B-A-C-H at the opening of the Second Sonata (given its premiere organ recording) is redolent of the opening of Liszt's working of the motif. Karg-Elert fans can enjoy the composer at his virtuosic, chromatic best.



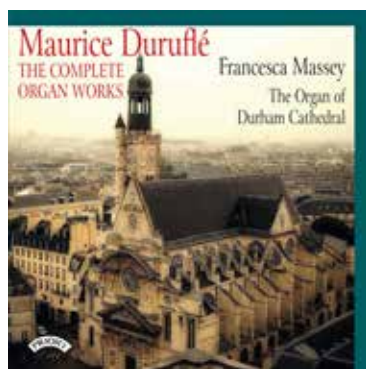
MAURICE DURUFLÉ: THE COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS
Francesca Massey plays the organ of Durham Cathedral ♦ Priory PRCD 1230

Francesca Massey makes Durham Cathedral rock in this outstanding collection, recorded there during her time as sub-organist. Even though

Durufié (1902–86) played a large instrument at St-Étienne-du-Mont in the Parisian Latin Quarter, he would surely have delighted at the comprehensiveness of the Durham monster (and its imposing setting): a four-manual instrument with a bright Positive and a Bombarde section thoughtfully positioned behind the Dean's stall. Yet the instrumental *couleurs* demanded by Durufié are faithfully reproduced.

All those hallmark masterworks are here – the 'Soissons' Fugue, the 'Veni Creator' Suite, the Prelude and Fugue on the Alain motif, *et enfin* the Suite Op.5 with its fiendish Toccata! Durufié's writing is imbued with a modal plainsong wistfulness but there are a lot of notes to get fingers around. Furthermore, a balletic facility is called for, not least in the Scherzo Op.2. Francesca Massey carries all this off with considerable ease: 'Magnifique pet', as they would say in Durham.

Stuart Robinson



★★

THE COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS OF SIR WILLIAM HARRIS Daniel Cook plays the organ of Durham Cathedral ♦ 2CDs Priory PRCD1187

Daniel Cook gives us the complete organ music of William Harris (1883–1973) with nearly 160 minutes over 42 tracks on two CDs. The music ranges from the 1899 *Andante in D* to the 1973 *Prelude in G* and includes 11 unpublished works. The substantial Sonata in A minor of 1938, may show why the composer was wise to concentrate on writing miniatures. However, there are two eight-minute Fantasies, 'on an English folk tune' (Monks Gate) and 'on Campion's tune "Babylon's Streams"' that conclude each CD and show a high level of musical invention, and the popular *Improvisation on the Old 124th*. But it is the small-scale works that take

up most of the tracks – with considerably more variety than I had anticipated, partly enhanced by Daniel Cook's mastery of the resources of the huge instrument.

★★

CANADIAN ORGAN MUSIC Rachel Mahon plays the organ of Coventry Cathedral ♦ Delphian DCD34234

Healey Willan (1880–1968), born in England but resident in Canada, came to Coventry in 1952 with a cheque from the Royal Canadian College of Organists towards the cost of an organ for the planned new cathedral. Rachel Mahon, born in Canada but now organist of Coventry Cathedral, appropriately opens her first organ CD with Willan's *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue* – and shows how her technique (and virtuosity) transcends its difficulties. Other Canadian works on this enjoyable disc are French influenced, with a *Petite Suite* by Gerald Bales, *Chromatic Partita* by Ruth Watson Henderson with subtle colourings in its eight variations and Rachel Laurin's Symphony No.1, an updating of the French organ symphony tradition. The recording captures the wide dynamic range and makes one feel present in the building.

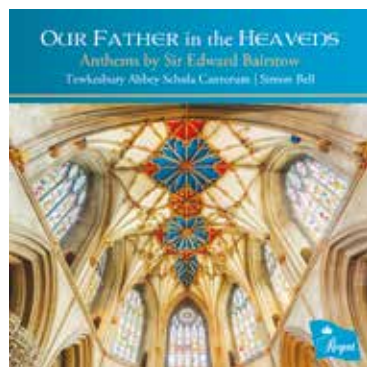
Judith Markwith

CHORAL CDS

★★

OUR FATHER IN THE HEAVENS Anthems by Sir Edward Bairstow ♦ Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum / Carleton Etherington (organ) / Simon Bell ♦ Regent REGCD543

This excellent collection of anthems by Edward Bairstow (1874–1946) comes from the choir of boys and men which,



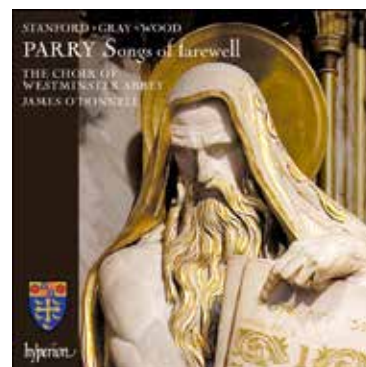
in normal times, sings weekday choral evensongs in Tewkesbury Abbey. There are some old favourites, such as *Blessed city* and *Save us, O Lord*. The CD title comes from what is claimed to be a first recording of *Our Father in the heavens* – an unaccompanied setting of a metrical version of the Lord's Prayer. It's a tricky number, but sung here with accuracy and confidence. Another first recording is claimed for *Of the Father's love begotten*, described as Bairstow's earliest essay in the hymn-anthem genre. Simon Bell has cultivated an admirable ensemble and blend – with thoughtful and colourful accompaniments from Carleton Etherington.

★★★

PARRY: SONGS OF FAREWELL and works by Stanford, Gray and Wood ♦ Choir of Westminster Abbey / James O'Donnell ♦ Hyperion CDA68301

This is a splendid release of unaccompanied choral works from four favourite composers spanning the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Stanford's beautifully crafted *Three Motets* give way to Alan Gray's lush evening canticles in F minor. In fact this CD is a study in Edwardian/Georgian lushness – Stanford's eight-part Magnificat and Charles Wood's lesser known Nunc dimittis in B flat are splendidly performed and cleanly recorded in All Hallows, Gospel Oak in north London. Programme notes by Professor Jeremy Dibble describe the friendly – turned protracted – relationship between Parry and Stanford. Dibble explains the context of the writing of each piece, along with the connections between the four composers, whether as pupil or colleague.

With Parry's *Songs of farewell*, the best is left to last. Under James O'Donnell the sense of these reflective texts and music is heard in the singers' collective



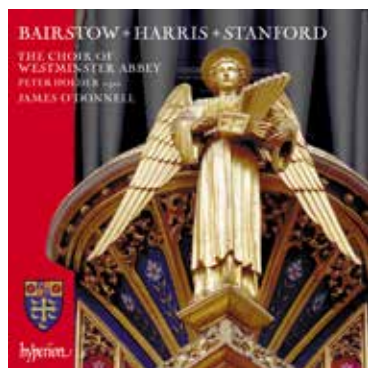
bloodstream, through to the closing words 'that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more seen.'
Stuart Robinson

★★★

BAIRSTOW, HARRIS & STANFORD

Choir of Westminster Abbey / Peter Holder (organ) / James O'Donnell ♦ Hyperion CDA68259

A splendid selection of music from three near contemporaries, Bairstow, Harris and Stanford, performed magnificently by the choir of Westminster Abbey directed by James O'Donnell and accompanied by Peter Holder! Bairstow's *Blessed city, heavenly Salem* sets the listener up for a treat. This is a beautifully recorded disc of introits and anthems by three favourite composers, showing the Abbey choir at the peak of its powers. Diction is crisp, clear and precise: even in the faster middle section of Harris's *Strengthen ye the weak hands*, not a word (or note) is lost. It is lovely to hear the young treble voices featured in Stanford's *A Song of Wisdom*. The balance within the voices and between voices and organ is perfect throughout, tempi are consistently well chosen and the music has space to breathe. This recording is an absolute must have!



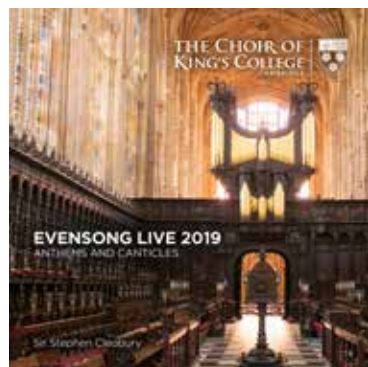
★★★

EVENSONG LIVE 2019

Anthems and Canticles ♦ Choir of King's College Cambridge / Stephen Cleobury ♦ King's College KGS0038

Evensong Live 2019 is not a recording of evensong but a thoughtful selection of anthems and canticles from the final year of Cleobury's tenure as director of music at King's. From the first choral entry of Parry's *I was glad*, the unmistakable King's College sound is there. Close your eyes while listening to any track on this CD and you can

picture the beautiful chapel. The music ranges from Byrd and Weelkes to Parry, Finzi and Judith Weir. Everything is so beautifully sung and the organ accompaniments so sensitive! A couple of the tempi may be slightly slow; however, Cleobury knows his acoustic and allows all the intricate textures to be heard: not a note is missed. A couple of the male soloists sound a little distant, which is a shame. This a wonderful tribute to the late Sir Stephen Cleobury.



★★

FADING

Music for Compline ♦ The Gesualdo Six / Owain Park ♦ Hyperion CDA68285

This is a delightful programme of music from the 12th century to the present day, performed by the Gesualdo Six under Owain Park. The young singers present an album of mature performances, showcasing their versatility in repertoire ranging from the complex renaissance polyphony of Tallis, Gesualdo and Byrd to present-day Joanna Marsh and Owain Park himself. Exploring the music of 'compline' and the 'light into darkness' theme, these performances are close to perfection: clear, crisp diction, an impressive dynamic range and superb vocal blending. Yet, at times I feel the inner parts are slightly lost with overpowering treble and bass. In



some pieces, particularly Byrd's *Lullaby 'My sweet little baby'*, the slow speed helps bring out the intricate textures but the music feels slightly stodgy and the momentum is lost. Nevertheless, this is a masterclass in fine ensemble singing.

Ian Munro

★

HUGH BENHAM: SACRED CHORAL MUSIC

Convivium Singers / Malcolm Archer (organ) / Alexander Norman ♦ Convivium CR050

There is a wide range of music here, some conceived for smaller church choirs and some on a bigger scale. Hugh Benham may be best known to CMQ readers for his work on Tudor church music and in particular John Taverner, but he is also a proficient composer with a gift for setting familiar words in ways that shed new light on the texts. He obviously loves the language of well-known hymns and prayers (such as 'Glorious things of thee are spoken' and 'Teach me, my God and King' in English, or in Latin 'Ubi caritas' and 'Ave Maria'), and envelops them in well-judged choral textures. In addition there are carols, a Mass setting, an evening service, three organ pieces and more – the 19 pieces include something for everyone.

Judith Markwith



BOOKS

ECHOES OF A DISTANT MUSIC: A LIFE OF RONALD LEE MBE

John Crothers

978-1-5272-5176-2 available from

www.thebookwell.co.uk £15.00

Ronald Lee (1929–92) was one of the most significant figures in Irish

choral and church music. He made an annual pilgrimage to King's College, Cambridge and was once fortunate to conduct his school choir there – King's inspired the sound he wished his choirs to produce and his choral repertoire throughout his life. This well-researched, beautifully presented book by John Crothers includes contributions from Barry Douglas, Yan Pascal Tortelier, David Willcocks, Stephen Cleobury and John Rutter. The calibre of these contributors and Crothers's own moving account of the life of this inspiring, well-respected man makes the reader aware of what a significant musician Ronald Lee was. Containing several moving tributes to the most modest of men, and detailing the experiences he gave his choirs and congregations, this is a poignant and inspiring read.

PALESTRINA FOR ALL: UNWRAPPING, SINGING, CELEBRATING

Jonathan Boswell

**978-1-72196895-4 available
from Amazon £6.23**

The enthusiasm Jonathan Boswell has for Palestrina is evident throughout. *Palestrina for All* is a sincere and informed appreciation. As a listening guide or for those looking to become more familiar with Palestrina's output there is plenty of inspiration. The little biographical or historical information we are given is fascinating; it is a shame that there isn't more. Those seeking musical analysis, or a more scholarly appreciation of Palestrina's compositional output, will be disappointed by the lack of musical examples, let alone annotated ones, which would have enforced and more clearly demonstrated Boswell's appreciation. The few that appear are rarely annotated and the edition, publisher and source of the manuscript go uncredited. The quality of the binding is worrying – several pages of my copy came loose.

Ian Munro

BUXTEHUDE STUDIES VOL. 3 ed. Matthias Schneider and Jürgen Heering Butz Verlag: 195pp. P/B 978-3-928412-28-5 €23.00

The third volume of *Buxtehude-Studien* issued by the International Dieterich Buxtehude Gesellschaft presents papers delivered at annual conferences in 2017 and 2018.

For those interested in the latest research into Buxtehude's music this is a thought-provoking collection; but with only one paper in English, readers need to be fluent in German.

In a fascinating account of 'Lübeck's sacred treasures: new light on the 17th-century repertory of St Mary's church', Kerala J. Snyder explores the connections between the Düben collection and the archive of printed and manuscript music built up by Tunder and Buxtehude. Elsewhere, Peter Dirksen addresses the issue of the young Bach's engagement with Buxtehude's keyboard music; Ton Koopman provides a wide-ranging discussion of the instruction 'con discrezione'; and Friedemann Hellwig provides an illuminating account of Buxtehude's instrumentation in connection with surviving Lübeck-made instruments of the period. In short, it is an informative volume for the determined Buxtehude enthusiast.

Warwick Cole

SARUM CHANT: PLAINSONG OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH

Philip Baxter

Sarum Script: 102pp.

P/B 978-0-9523959-2-8 £8.00

This general introduction to plainsong aims to broaden its appeal, because plainsong's 'monophonic simplicity makes it so appropriate for a wide breadth of congregations even with limited musical resources'. The central chapters cover modes, notation, office hymns, psalmody and antiphons, and music for the Eucharist. Inevitably much is summarized, but always with the benefit of the author's clear writing style – you feel that he is taking you on one side as he personally explains the subject.

A useful initial chapter covers the history and development of plainchant, and a final chapter explores translation and modern usage. An appendix includes the tones of the psalm chants and the examples of their accompaniment from Arnold's *Plainsong Accompaniment*, although the author makes clear his disapproval of accompaniment in general, and in particular of those examples that include notes 'outside the mode'. In so far as it is possible to compress so large a subject into so little space (and include a generous number of examples and illustrations), this book should be commended.

THE SOUND OF LIFE'S UNSPEAKABLE BEAUTY

Martin Schleske

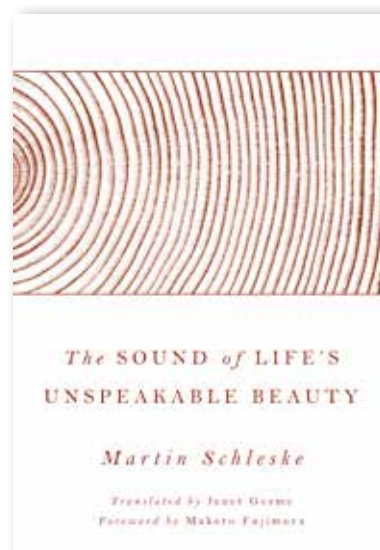
Eerdmans (SPCK): 384pp.

H/B 978-0-8028-7614-0

£19.95

Schleske is a German violin maker and writer for whom the process of handcrafting a violin is paralleled in finding God as he describes choosing the perfect piece of wood, working on it and shaping, varnishing and polishing it. But this exquisitely produced book is much broader. Each chapter is prefaced by a quote from scripture and a photograph by Donata Wenders. Translated by Janet Gesme, the text encourages us to pay attention to the ways in which we experience God in the world – and not least in music, for 'in the final analysis, music is prayer cast into sound.' As Makoto Fujimura writes in a Foreword, 'This beautiful book echoes that song of God that all of us will face and hear one day.' It is a book that can be read in different sections – the author describes it as a collection of little books – but however it is done, it is well worth reading.

Julian Elloway



You will find reviews of recent printed music publications in this issue of *Sunday by Sunday* (no. 94). All the latest reviews are available online at www.rscm.com/reviews

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