

NEWSLETTER

April 2008

IT'S BEEN A WHILE!!

It has indeed been a little while since the last newsletter from the RSCM (ACT) was sent out. Over the past few months, the committee has seriously examined whether there is a need for a local RSCM branch in the ACT. Due to low attendance at events and dropping membership the option of merging the branch with NSW was seriously discussed both within the ACT committee and the National Council. While there were many benefits to merging with NSW there were also several issues that we as a branch would have had to address. But most importantly, once both sides of the argument were presented formally at the committee meeting it became obvious that the overwhelming majority felt strongly about keeping a local branch in the ACT. We were not ready to simply be seen as a subgroup of NSW – we wanted our own identity. So here we are, ready to tackle another year.

HOWEVER – in order to justify the amount of work that goes into the branch, it is vital that our branch grows in numbers. It is also crucial that the workload is spread across more people.

SO – this newsletter is being sent to as many church musicians that we can find in the hope that we may increase our membership numbers. Please consider joining either as an individual or as an organization. There are many benefits to being involved with the RSCM (locally, nationally and internationally). Apart from the fantastic events, there are opportunities to meet other church musicians, access to discounted music and multiple publications throughout the year.

PLEASE – either renew your membership or join as a new member ASAP (see the attached form) so we can get 2008 membership up to date.

ALL STYLES OF CHURCH MUSIC ARE WARMLY ACCEPTED.

See you soon!

Gemma Dashwood
Secretary

Royal School of Church Music (ACT Branch)
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MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CHAIR

I expect everyone will have now completed the bulk of their Easter celebrations, being challenged yet again by God's unfailing grace which costs us so little, yet cost the Lord Jesus everything. Hoping also that members' Easter musical efforts went off well, despite the vagaries of the weather.

The Annual Meeting of the Branch was held on 2 March. Attendance was encouraging, but more helpers will always be most welcome. Highlight of 2007 was the hymn writing composition which attracted a number of entries from around the Canberra District. Both our Secretary, Gemma Dashwood and our Treasurer, Ron Muffet, attended the recent RSCM Summer School at Dunedin, New Zealand which facilitated valuable networking with participants from other RSCM branches.

Dr. Terry Norman indicated to the Committee that he did not wish to continue as chairman in the new administrative period and I was appointed for the ensuing 2 years. I would pay tribute to Terry for his contribution to branch activities over the past 2 years; he introduced us to many new ideas and practices. I would also acknowledge the work of Gemma, our enthusiastic secretary, and as abovementioned, the extensive activity she does "behind the scenes". Ron Muffet's acute handling of our treasury responsibilities keeps us very well organized fiscally.

The Committee has drawn up a schedule of activities for the next 12 months, which is not quite as ambitious as last year, but we now move forward to the detailed planning phase and ultimate implementation. As a start, we need to marshal all our resources prior to offering our services, and then, through our program, provide effective practical assistance to the local ecclesiastical community. Particularly important is the need to establish a local RSCM singing group to periodically render anthems solely or to occasionally assist other choirs. If you would like to help, or can suggest a potential participant, please let one of the Committee know as soon as possible.

We look forward to a very active year ahead.

Bill Fraser
Chair

RSCM(ACT) 2008 COMMITTEE

The 2008 RSCM (ACT) Committee consists of
Royal School of Church Music (ACT Branch)
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- Bill Fraser (Chair)
- Gemma Dashwood (Secretary)
- Ron Muffet (Treasurer)
 - Geoff Wells
 - Nigel Poole

EVENTS FOR 2008

18 May	Hymn singing, organ recitals and a meet and greet St John's Anglican Church 2.30pm
22 June	Dedication of new organ Melba Uniting Church
July	Composition Competition Psalm 150 ~ details coming soon!
September	Rural visit to Harden/Murrumburrah Ross Memorial Chapel
16 November	Hymnfest
13 December	Christmas Dinner

SINGERS WANTED FOR OCCASIONAL CHOIR

The RSCM has been asked to provide a choir for a few events around the ACT region during 2008. We are looking to get an idea of interested people who might be willing to join us for two or three events such as organ dedications and visits to rural churches. No regular commitment would be required. If interested, please contact Gemma Dashwood on ugemmster@hotmail.com.

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE BY END OF APRIL
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Please find accompanying this newsletter, a membership form for 2008. Please complete **ASAP** and return to the treasurer, *Ron Muffet 26 Froggat Street, Turner ACT 2602*. **Membership of the RSCM (ACT) offers benefits nationally and internationally, including discounted music from the UK and a variety of magazines and regular updates.**

MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RENEW BY THE END OF APRIL WILL BE DELETED FROM THE UK DATABASE.

ORGANISTS' REGISTER

There seems to be a chronic shortage of organists in Canberra, and the RSCM (ACT) is compiling a list of people who may be prepared to cover shortages in local churches. If you are an organist, and would like some opportunities to play some of the local organs for services, send your name and contact details to Geoff Wells e-mail ugeodace@yahoo.com.au.



UPCOMING EVENT - COMPOSITION COMPETITION

Following our very successful hymn writing competition last year, we are again running a composition competition in 2008. This year we are looking for any style of composition which uses the text (any version) of Psalm 150.

Details of the competition will follow shortly, but there will be a finalists' concert held with prize money being offered to the winners of various categories.



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