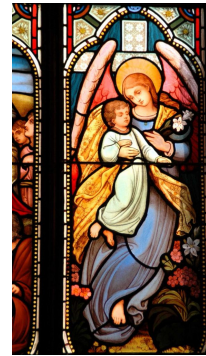




Royal School of Church Music  
(ACT Branch)

NEWSLETTER




WELCOME TO A NEW YEAR

I hope everyone had a peaceful, restful Christmas and New Year and are ready for some fun and exciting experiences for 2009.

Many thanks to those who came to our Christmas Party – it was a really fun night. **Special thanks to Sheila Thompson** for her hospitality and generosity in letting us use her house for the evening.

You will find in this newsletter the drafted programme for 2009, the details of the upcoming AGM and organ ramble along with some summaries of events from the National Summer School, and the last few events of last year.

**On the subject of the AGM**, now is the time to start considering if you could donate some of your time and expertise to our committee.

We meet once a month for meetings (usually over a “liquid refreshment”) to plan and organize events. We are a fun bunch and  would love to see some new faces on our committee. If you want to talk about becoming a committee member contact Gemma on [gemmster@hotmail.com](mailto:gemmster@hotmail.com) or 0413852911.

Hope to see you all at the organ ramble on the 14<sup>th</sup> February (see *Upcoming Events* notice for details).

*Gemma*

Royal School of Church Music (ACT Branch)

ABN 15957330863

[www.rscm-act.org](http://www.rscm-act.org)

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

February 2009

I trust everyone was content with their Christmas musical efforts and have enjoyed at least a small break before embarking on their work for 2009. Some of our members however, have been busy attending the RSCM International Festival of Sacred Music, held in Brisbane, and a separate report appears in this newsletter.

We can expect this year to hear much of the music of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholody, as the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth is celebrated. Many church musicians will be familiar with Mendelssohn's organ music, anthems and cantatas. His life was amazingly short (1809-1847) but intensely busy. Although extensively trained in harmony and counterpoint, Bachian style, Mendelssohn's music bears his own personality with distinctively romantic characteristics.

I have always been fascinated by Mendelssohn's creative process which seemed to involve much reworking of compositions until the desired degree of proficiency was achieved. The *Violin Concerto in E Minor* (Opus 64) with its intensity of feeling took over five years to compose through constant collaboration with virtuoso violinist Ferdinand David, and even after the first performance at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 1845, was further revised before being sent to the publishers. After the initial performance of *Elijah* in Birmingham, England in 1846, despite a rapturous reception, Mendelssohn led the critics through the grimy coal heaps and canals of the city and informed them that revisions were to be made to relieve perceived deficiencies. This took several months. Mendelssohn's manuscripts of his organ works currently in the Krakow Library in Poland, indicate extensive revisions were made to many before being finalised.

We ourselves are often motivated to make changes to our compositions and arrangements before being satisfied they will be of most help to worshippers and it is encouraging when someone in the congregation acknowledges the extent of our perseverance in this regard. It does sometimes happen!

*Bill Fraser*

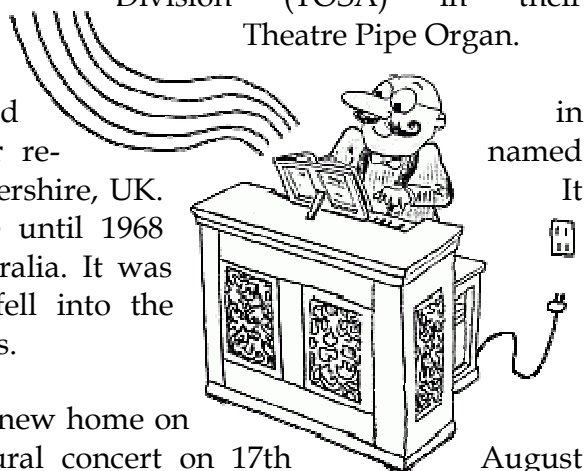


Royal School of Church Music (ACT Branch)  
ABN 15957330863  
[www.rscm-act.org](http://www.rscm-act.org)

**EVENT REPORT**  
**RSCM Visits the Albert Hall**

The Branch's November meeting was a little extraordinary and constituted an impromptu visit to the Albert Hall. This enabled us to review progress being made by the Theatre Organ Society of Australia, ACT Division (TOSA) in their refurbishment of the 3- manual Compton Theatre Pipe Organ.

The Compton Organ was originally installed in March, 1933 in the Gaumont Palace (later re-named the Odeon Theatre) in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, UK. It remained in continuous use in the theatre until 1968 when it was removed for shipping to Australia. It was subsequently offered to TOSA ACT and fell into the enthusiastic hands of the local TOSA members.



The organ was heard for the first time in its new home on Thursday, 7th November 1985. The inaugural concert on 17th August 1986 was performed by Tony Fenelon, a well renowned Melbourne Theatre Organist and TOSA ACT's patron.

For our visit, several organists provided music in theatre organ style and the chambers were subsequently opened for inspection. Afternoon tea was subsequently enjoyed.

Appreciation is expressed to TOSA ACT for this opportunity and best wishes are offered for the future.

*Bill Fraser*

**REPORT FROM 2009 SUMMER SCHOOL**  
**Brisbane, January 3-11<sup>th</sup> 2009**

RSCM Australia's 54th Annual Summer School was held in Brisbane from Jan 3rd to 11th 2009, under the title of the International Festival of Sacred Music. It was attended by 176 attendees, including 44 in the Youth Choir. The venue was Somerville House, South Brisbane, and the accommodation was at St John's College, St. Lucia.

The Course Director, Ralph Morton (Chairman of RSCM Queensland) was ably assisted by - Graeme Morton (Church Music Workshop), Michael Fulcher (International Organ School), Christopher Willcock (Composing for the Australian Church), Nicholas Bannan (Developing a Singing Community), Tony Funk (Vocal Ensemble Academy), Michael Faragher (Playing for God) and Christopher Wrench (Recitalist and Organ

Royal School of Church Music (ACT Branch)  
ABN 15957330863  
[www.rscm-act.org](http://www.rscm-act.org)

Tutor). The Festival Chaplin was Neal Nuskie, a Lutheran Pastor for 25 years. The Festival was also very honoured by the presence Lindsay Gray - Director, RSCM UK, who was with us for the full duration of the Summer School.

The Choices of Electives were excellent, as were the presenters. Two that stand out in my mind were *Understanding Renaissance and Baroque Performance Styles* with Emily Cox, and *Singing the Psalms in Worship* with Michael Deasy, who is about to become NSW Branch Chairman, and will also be Director of the 2011 Summer School in Bathurst.

I was part of the Church Music Workshop which was quite an experience - very different when compared with previous Summer Schools. We sang 14 different pieces which were performed at different concerts at St Stephen's Catholic Cathedral, St John's Anglican Cathedral and St Andrew's Uniting Church. The pace of learning was furious - we only had 18 hours rehearsal time with an hour run through before to the individual concerts! Ultimately we all felt that we performed well, and full marks to Graeme for his ability to drag it out of us in such a short time.

The choice of Music we performed was interesting and pleasing to sing. The first Concert that I attended was on the evening prior to the commencement of the Course, and was in St Stephen's, which included a piece that I found literally heavenly - titled *Angels 2*. Members of the Choir stand all around the floor with all voice parts separated. Each voice part has a different scored chant or drone to sound, in your own time, providing the chant is changed when the sign is given by the conductor. There are five changes during the piece, and all are in strict harmony with the opening chord, When this effect is mixed with the superb resonance of a stone building, the result is almost trance inducing. Little did I know that we would be performing that piece in St John's at the end of the week. It was as much fun to sing as it was to hear.

Highlights of the School included the music, the presenters, the accommodation and the Cathedral Concerts (four in total), It goes without saying that being with the Company of other like minded musicians is something very special.

I am certainly looking forward to Adelaide 2010.

*Ron Muffet*

Addit: If you would like to see some of the footage of the Summer School, visit our local website on [www.rscm-act.org](http://www.rscm-act.org) and see the link on the home page (video taken by our committee member, Nigel Poole).

**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
**Organ Ramble, Melba Uniting Church**  
**10am 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

Our first event for the year will be a visit to Melba Uniting Church to hear their organ. The day will include some performances from various Canberra organists and church musicians, concluding with a morning tea.

Entry by donation. All welcome.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**April 5 2009 2.30pm**  
**City Uniting Church**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the RSCM (ACT Branch) will be held at the City Uniting Church, Northbourne Avenue. The meeting will be preceded by an organ recital by David Franks. Parking is available under the church.

**FOR SALE**

Choir robes suitable for choir boys or choir girls are for sale. There are white surplices (\$10 each), red cassocks (\$10 each), and white ruffs (\$10 each). There are about 20 of each, in varying sizes.

For more information, please email [auzzienotes@hotmail.com](mailto:auzzienotes@hotmail.com)

**LOOKING FOR UNUSUAL ORGAN MUSIC?**

While searching for some difficult-to-find organ music, I stumbled across the website for the American Historical Organ Society. To my delight I found a wonderful selection of CDs and sheet music available through their online shop. I can highly recommend this site and their service. Their website can be found at [www.organhistoricalsociety.net](http://www.organhistoricalsociety.net).

*Gemma*

Royal School of Church Music (ACT Branch)  
ABN 15957330863  
[www.rscm-act.org](http://www.rscm-act.org)

### **PLANNED TIMETABLE FOR THE YEAR**

At this stage, the committee has planned an outline of events for the year (final details to be advised). Our activities will include:

- April 5: AGM, City Uniting Church, 2.30pm
- May: Lutheran Service
- June: Composition Competition
- July: Organ recital with church music lecture
- August: Evensong Service
- September: Organ Ramble, St Clements' Anglican Church, Yass
- October: Organathon - 24hrs of organ and choral music
- December: Christmas Party