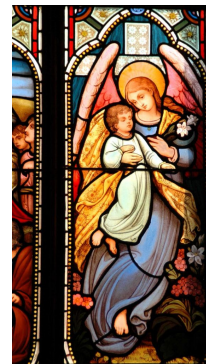




Royal School of Church Music (ACT Branch)

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2009



Defending Champion of Composition Competition is Joint Winner for 2009!

Adrian Wintle, organist and composer from Wagga and **Les Davey**, organist and composer from Ainslie took joint first prize at the 2009 Composition Competition. The task for 2009 was to set the words to the RSCM Choristers' Prayer to music.

The finalists' concert was held at St John's Anglican Church, Reid on 21st June in front of a packed church.

Ann Carr-Boyd was again the judge of the competition and she commented that the compositions were of a very high standard, making her job terribly difficult.

While Adrian's composition was more upbeat, Les's entry was more complete, showing how differently the concept of prayer can be approached.

The concert was supplemented by sublime music from organists Graeme Brown and Sheila Thompson and singer Madeline Rowland, Catriona Bryce, Gerard Clifton and Peter Laurence.

Runners up **Colin Forbes** and **Nigel Poole** also demonstrated clever and effective composition techniques by writing a modern setting and a chorale with segue to cannon respectively.

The 2010 Composition Competition details are yet to be released but it promises to be an exciting and rewarding event.



2009 Composition Competition Finalists
L-R Colin Forbes, Les Davey, Adrian Wintle, Nigel Poole and judge Ann Carr-Boyd

Gemma Dashwood

Message from the Chair

Last newsletter I referred to the Protestant Reformation in Germany, led by Martin Luther, and how this influenced changes in the church, particularly in the practice of artistry and music. However contemporary with Luther were reformers in Switzerland, most significantly John Calvin (1509-1564). Whereas Luther was content to identify perceived malpractice in the Church, the Swiss reformers considered more intense change was required to return the church to New Testament practices of worship, teaching and government. This prescribed all Christian believers to be “priests”, but congregations appointed suitable persons as elders or overseers (from the Greek “presbuteros”) hence a “Presbyterian” system of worship and practice developed. Forms of worship were significantly revised, including the use of music.

Calvin considered the use of musical instruments in worship represented “images” of which Christians were forbidden to reverence. Further, that any singing should only utilise words found in the Bible. Hence the only notable musical contribution of the early Calvinist churches was the compilation of Psalters utilising metrical forms, with some other scripture paraphrases being added later. When Calvin became pastor of a congregation in Strassbourg in 1538, he initiated the French Psalter which was ultimately completed in 1562. Congregations sang in unison and unaccompanied. Some tunes originating then are still popular e.g. the Old 100th. Calvinism spread to Scotland largely due to the efforts of John Knox (1505-1572) where it became the dominant religion, with many of its adherents subsequently migrating to Australia and establishing affiliated denominations here.

In due course, some pressure for change emerged, however the willingness to change was by no means universal, and many Presbyterian styled denominations to this day maintain Calvinistic musical practices. Human hymns appeared in some of the Scottish churches from the 1840's onward with organs following later. In 1898, the three main Presbyterian denominations in Scotland combined to produce the first Church Hymnary, however lacking local expertise, they engaged an Englishman, Dr. John Stainer as musical editor. A Revised Edition appeared in 1927, which again utilised a foreign musical editor, Dr. David Evans, then Professor of Music at the University of Wales. This book was universally popular and is still widely used, although succeeded by a Third Edition in 1973 and a Fourth Edition in 2007. Dr Evans' skilful harmonisations have been widely copied to many other contemporary hymnals.

I am considering next newsletter, to prepare some notes about the Wesley family and their significant contribution to hymnody and religious music.

Bill Fraser

Position Vacant

St. Stephen's Catholic Cathedral, Brisbane announces a vacancy for the position of Organist (part time). The Cathedral has a 3 manual Knud Smenge instrument, installed in 2000. Current responsibilities require an average of eight hours per week (much on this is on Sunday). The organist accompanies three services per Sunday (two with choirs and the third with a cantor). A certain amount of extra paid work (rehearsals, services, weddings, funerals etc) may be required from time to time during the week.

For further information concerning the Cathedral and its music, the organ, a job description, the application procedure etc please contact the Director of Music Dr. Ralph Morton GPO Box 421 Brisbane QLD 4000 Phone (07) 3336 9104 Fax (07) 3229 4158 Email: mortonr@bne.catholic.net.au

Upcoming Events

August 23rd

Celebratory Evensong 50th Anniversary of All Saints' Membership of RSCM

All Saints' Anglican Church Ainslie

4pm Rehearsal for those who want to sing in the choir

5pm Service

All Welcome (either in the choir or in the congregation)

The anthem for the service will be Les Davey's winning entry for the recent Composition Competition *The Choristers' Prayer*.

September 5th

Organ Ramble to Yass

10am St Clement's Anglican Church, Yass (1850)

A number of organists will demonstrate the beautiful Davidson Pipe Organ (1876).

Choral items are also being organized, together with congregational participation.

Entry includes morning tea.

Further information from Geoff Wells 62973222 or geodace@yahoo.com.au

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Some Thoughts on the Choristers' Prayer

In the wake of our composition competition, Sheila Thompson, music director of St John's, brought to my attention this paragraph from a chapter on the origins of Christian chant in the *Pelican History of Music*:

"It is worth noting here that by a decree of the 4th Council of Carthage the liturgical singers were given a blessing in the following beautiful words, 'Vide ut quod ore cantas, corde credas, et quod corde credis, operibus comprobas' ('Take heed that what you sing with your mouths you believe in your hearts, and what you believe with your hearts, you show forth in your works')."

The RSCM's UK website associates this Latin phrase with the Pontificale Romanum of 1595-6 in the form for admitting a Psalmista or Cantor. But if the Pelican book is to be believed, our Choristers' Prayer in fact dates from A.D. 419!

That it should be as relevant today as then is not surprising. It goes to the core of the relationship between music and faith.

Which comes first? Musical inspiration or a belief in God? For many, sacred music is an expression of their faith. Conversely, for agnostics, and even outright non-believers, sacred music can inspire spiritual awareness and perhaps the desire to believe. No doubt such diversity would be represented within the membership of the RSCM.

The nice thing about the Choristers' Prayer is that it works for all of us. Regardless of what we, as individuals, may or may not believe, if we are able to show forth in our lives the good and beautiful things that are given voice in the texts of sacred music, then we are all the better for it.

Nigel Poole

2010 Summer School ~ Adelaide ~ Update

We are delighted to announce that Siegfried Francke has accepted the position of Principal Organist and Accompanist for the Summer School to be held in Adelaide from 3rd to 10th January 2010. Siegfried is Parish Organist of Christ Church South Yarra in Melbourne, Victoria; sub-organist of St Paul's Cathedral and teaches music at Trinity Grammar School. He studied organ with June Nixon and with Richard Popplewell in London. He is an Associate of the Royal College of Organists and a Fellow of the Trinity College of Music. He is much sought after as an accompanist and has built a high profile as organ recitalist. Recent engagements have been with the Tudor Choristers, the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choir and the Geelong Chorale. He has long been involved in RSCM festivals and is currently on the executive of RSCM Victoria.

We are also very pleased to welcome Tom Healey as the Director of the Youth Course associated with the Summer School. Tom is Director of Music at St Andrew's Church in Brighton, Victoria, where he has been working with adult and youth choirs since August 2006. He was previously on the staff of Geelong Grammar School for many years, where he headed up the music program and was Director of Chapel Music. He studied choral conducting at the University of Melbourne and at the Westminster Choir College, Princeton, and has a wealth of experience working with young people and with adult choirs. He has directed youth choirs at RSCM Festivals and the 2006 Summer School.

The Youth Course will be a distinctive element in the Summer School. The Youth Course is designed for students at secondary school, although younger choristers with some singing and music reading experience will be welcome, as will older students who may prefer the Youth Course to the Summer School program. A discount of \$100 off the registration fee (available until 30th November) is available to full time students under the age of 22 years on 3rd January 2010. Students may live in at St Mark's College, or make their own arrangements. Some of the accommodation at St Mark's is suitable for family groups or friends who may like to share accommodation.

The *Voice for Life* program sponsored by the RSCM is a most effective educational and developmental tool for choral singers to improve their skills and understanding. Paul Ellis, Director of Music at St Michael and All Angels and Assistant Director at the Anglican cathedral in Christchurch New Zealand, will be offering workshops in *Voice for Life* at the summer school. He has directed many choir festivals and presented highly successful workshops promoting *Voice for Life*, and has been long involved with choirs for young people. He is National President of RSCM New Zealand.

You are reminded that applications to present a performance or workshop to the Summer School program close 31st July. If you are thinking of contributing, write or email now for information sheets about performances and workshops at the Summer School.

Contact: Email: SS10@rscmaustralia.org.au

Postal: Dr Warren Bourne, Organising Chairperson, RSCM Summer School Adelaide 2010; PO Box 325, Mitcham Shopping Centre, Torrens Park, SA 5062