

# An Unlikely Tool – The *Royal School of Church Music*

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Donrita Reefman

## ***Motto***

*Psallam spiritu et mente*

I will sing with the spirit and with the understanding also

## **Founder of RSCM**

### **Sir Sydney Nicholson and the School of English Church Music**

On the initiative of Sir Sydney Nicholson, then organist of Westminster Abbey, the School of English Church Music (SECM) was inaugurated at a meeting in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey held on 6 December 1927, the feast of St Nicolas. It was to consist of a training college for church musicians (the College of St Nicolas), and an association of affiliated churches who committed themselves to attaining high standards.

### **The Royal School of Church Music**

In 1945, by command of King George VI, the SECM became the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). Canterbury Cathedral allowed the school to function within the precincts of the cathedral, and the College of St Nicolas re-opened there in January 1946. By 1952 over 3000 churches were affiliated.

### **Salisbury**

The RSCM moved its administrative centre to Salisbury in Summer 2006. Its office is located within [Sarum College](#), a Christian ecumenical college in Salisbury's cathedral close. RSCM Music Direct was relocated to Norwich, where Norwich Books and Music now operate our sales functions.

Professor Harper retired as Director of the RSCM at the end of December 2007, and was appointed 'Emeritus Director'. He continues as RSCM Research Professor at Bangor University and as a Visiting Scholar at Sarum College. Lindsay Gray was Director of the RSCM from May 2008 until September 2012, and Andrew Reid took up the post in October 2012.

### **The future**

The RSCM is seeking to enlarge its ecumenical mission, to serve the needs of its affiliated members and the wider Church, to develop first-class resources, and to continue to train and educate musicians and clergy to make best use of music in worship. It is engaged in the processes of establishing effective national RSCM bodies in Australia, Canada, New Zealand,

South Africa, and USA, and of strengthening its regional infrastructure in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

## **Who for?**

Organists & Pianists

Choristers & Cantors

Instrumentalists

Choir directors

Clergy

Composers

Singing Assembly

### **Q. I am a member of the Guild of Church Musicians / Friends of Cathedral Music / RCO; why should I join the RSCM?**

A. We work in partnership with many other groups, but the RSCM has its own unique mission, which is to promote and enable the very best use of music in worship – whatever the resources, style or denomination. The RSCM is a large organisation with 8,500 members across the world, making us a powerful advocate for this mission. Your support as a member or a donor enables us to expand the resources and programmes we offer and serve churches, individuals and worshipping communities more effectively.

## **Different kinds of congregations**

### **Q. My church is not Anglican; is the RSCM for me?**

A. The RSCM aims to meet the needs of all those engaged in church music. We are open to every church denomination, and count a large number of school and community choirs among our members.

### **Q. My church doesn't have a choir; is the RSCM for me?**

A. Few churches have choirs these days! But almost all churches recognise the importance of music in worship. We support organists, pianists who want to become organists, instrumentalists, and solo singers. Our liturgy planner [Sunday by Sunday](#) is ideal for clergy who choose hymns and songs without the help of an organist or director of music.

### **Q. My church doesn't have an organ; is the RSCM for me?**

A. You don't need a pipe organ to have good church music. We want to help you to find the right music for your church.

### **Q. My church is evangelical/my church is charismatic/my church doesn't have traditional music; is the RSCM for me?**

A. We work with churches across the whole spectrum of theology and churchmanship. The important thing is to have good music that is appropriate for your church, your community, and your worship context and theology. Many churches have also discovered the richness of having different styles of music at different services or within a single service.

## **Advantages of RSCM Membership Australia**

<http://rscmaustralia.org.au/>

Membership of RSCM Australia, as a Catholic, has broadened and enriched my outlook and repertoire as a church musician. I have often been delighted to discover how much more I can bring to my own church music when informed by the church music practices of my colleagues from other churches. I have also found I have much to give other RSCM members as a Catholic church musician.

### ***Examples of Local workshops, festivals, sing-alongs, etc***

Cantor Workshop (NSW)

Psalmist Workshop (NSW)

Chant Workshop (NSW)

Contemporary Arrangements of Traditional Hymns (NSW)\

Catholic Worship Book II (NSW)

Seminar on Sound systems and Reading in Churches (WA)

Victorian Music & Christmas (NSW)

Christmas Services of Lessons and Carols (NSW; SA; WA; ACT; Vic)

Multicultural Church Music Festival (Vic)

Cantor Workshop (Qld)

Festival of Great Hymns and Organ Recital (Qld)

Andrew Lumsdon Evensong Workshop (NSW)

Good Friday Recital by Visiting German Organist (ACT)

Composition competition (ACT)

A Festival of Hymns for the Church Year – Choirs, Brass, Timpani and Organ (NSW)

Meet Your Church Musician Neighbours (Queensland)

Primary Schools Festival (NSW)

Secondary Schools Festival (NSW)

Grounding the Sacred – a Paper about Medieval Plainsong by Marie-Therese Levy (NSW)

Monthly Lunchtime Organ Recitals (ACT)

Hymnfest with Workshops and Playing Competition

Wesleyan Hymnsing (NSW)

Annual Choral Festival (WA)

Midwinter Dinner (NSW)

Choral Premier of New Mass Setting (ACT)

*Enchanting* – Psalm Singing (NSW)

From Bach to Chilcott – Organ Recital for Nepal

Variety Fundraising Concert for Choristers Camp (WA)

Annual Choral Festival at St Peter's Cathedral (SA)

Combined Evensong (NSW)

Open Cathedral Choir Rehearsal with Andrew Reid (NSW)

Showcase Concert, Christchurch South Yarra (Vic)

Matins for Pentecost (NSW)

Evening with Andrew Reid (Vic)

Schools Choral Workshop (Children's Choirs) - Andrew Reid (NSW)

### ***Summer/Winter Schools; Youth Camps***

Canberra 2016

Brisbane 2015

Melbourne 2014

Christchurch, NZ 2013

Perth 2012

Bathurst 2011

Adelaide 2010

Brisbane 2009

Annual Choristers Camp in WA

## ***CMQ magazine***

### **Some Recent Topics include:**

Different Styles of Church Music discussed

Hymn texts as crafted, inspired by the Bible and Influenced by events of our times

Examination of RSCM's expanding publishing portfolio

Songwriter and worship leader Matt Redman speaks about creativity in the worship song genre

Contemplation of the Cross and how music can help us understand its significance

Working with Children's Choirs

The Phenomenon of "Earworms" – pieces of music that we can't shake out of our head

Unusual forms of Hymnody

Hymn Meditation

The Role of the Organ Builder

The Place of Contemporary Bands in Church

What is Celtic Christian Music? (John Bell)

Forms of Psalm Singing

Interview with the composer, James MacMillan

Margaret Rizza's perspective on setting Celtic Texts

Music book and CD reviews

## ***Sunday by Sunday planning resource***

*Sunday by Sunday* is the RSCM's quarterly resource for church musicians, clergy and all who plan and lead worship. At its core is a week-by-week guide for every Sunday and major festival of the Church's year. In June 2009 (issue 49) we expanded *Sunday by Sunday* to include feature articles, training material and printed music reviews to make the publication even more useful.

Link for **Sunday by Sunday** Sampler:

[http://www.rscm.com/assets/publications/sbys/SbyS\\_sampler\\_2009.pdf](http://www.rscm.com/assets/publications/sbys/SbyS_sampler_2009.pdf)

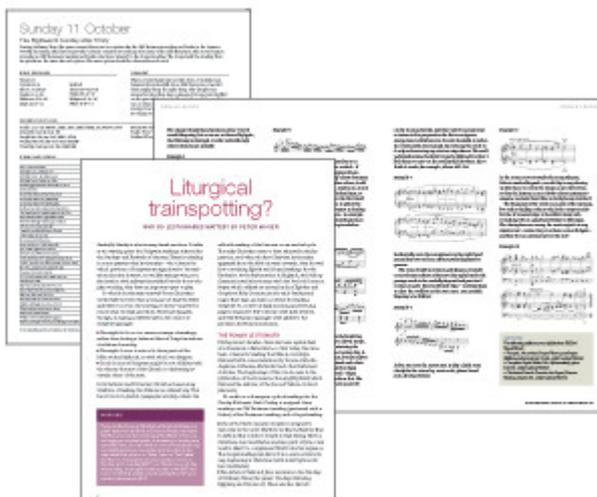
In addition to special contents, several lists of suggested music are provided for each Sunday and festival, in accordance with the themes and moods of the readings:

- Singing the Psalm of the day
- Hymns and songs from a wide range of styles and traditions

- Anthems and vocal music, including World Music and music from Iona and Taizé
- Organ music
- Music for children

For each piece you will find composers, details of sources and publishers, suggestions for liturgical use, and an indication of the relative difficulty of organ and choral pieces.

*Sunday by Sunday* follows the readings laid out in the Church of England's *Common Worship* Lectionary. This lectionary differs slightly from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) and rather more so from the Roman Lectionary (RL). Many festivals do, however, use the same themes and readings, and *Sunday by Sunday* indicates those few Sundays where the RCL or RL have a different Gospel reading. Drawing on the music and spirituality of a wide range of Christian traditions, *Sunday by Sunday* is a genuinely ecumenical resource.



## **RSCM Publications**

<https://www.rscmshop.com/>

The RSCM Press publishes music for the church and educational materials.

Our music covers the full range of musical styles and resources, serving the needs of everyone from those with no choir to those with lavish musical provision. But most is selected with the "middle ground" in mind.

The current programme includes series of Music for Common Worship (intended for the Church of England's new liturgies, but suitable for use in many denominations), Voice for Life (the comprehensive RSCM singing scheme), services for special seasons, RSCM Anthems and Services, and a range of occasional publications.

All RSCM publications bought through RSCM Music Direct are offered to Affiliates and Individual Members at discount prices.

Examples:

Anthems and Anthem Collections; Carols and Carol Collections: Music for the Liturgy; (New Translation of the Roman Missal) Choral Works; Contemplative Music; Festival Services; Hymn Books and Psalters; Organ Music; CD's

Season By Season

## **Publishing**

### **Q. What does the RSCM publish? Is it suitable for my church?**

A. [RSCM Press](#) publishes church music and educational materials. Our music covers the full range of musical styles and resources, serving the needs of everyone from those with no choir to those with lavish musical offerings. Most of the music is selected with the 'middle ground' in mind.

### **Q. We have a very small music budget. What discounts are available to members?**

A. Affiliated churches and choirs receive 25% discount on RSCM publications purchased through [RSCM Music Direct](#). Individual Members receive 12.5% discount. Many of our core publications have photocopiable pages to make them even more affordable for small churches or choirs.

## ***Local Newsletters***

See your state branch RSCM

ACT: [http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page\\_id=926](http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page_id=926)

NSW: [http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page\\_id=46](http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page_id=46)

Queensland: [http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page\\_id=48](http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page_id=48)

SA: [http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page\\_id=50](http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page_id=50)

Victoria: [http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page\\_id=52](http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page_id=52)

WA: [http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page\\_id=54](http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?page_id=54)

## ***Voice for Life Choir Training Scheme***

<http://www.rscm.com/education/vfl/trainingScheme.php>

Training a choir is both a challenge and a joy. The Voice for Life training scheme provides a framework for choral singers to develop their vocal skills, their musical understanding and their knowledge of repertoire. The scheme comes with a range of teaching material and supporting resources and gives plenty of advice on the practicalities of running a choir. It is intended to enable choir trainers and teachers to train their choir or group more effectively, and to help singers grow as people as well as musicians.

Voice for Life involves the choir trainer or teacher, and each member of the choir or group. The scheme is designed to be flexible so it can fit around your choir's schedule. Much of the training will become part of your usual rehearsal time; for example, the vocal exercises can be incorporated at the beginning of your rehearsal as warm-ups or to break up the rehearsal, and you can provide training on posture, breathing, diction, etc.

The Voice for Life [Choir Trainer's Books](#) contain all the information and advice you need to launch Voice for Life with your choir or group of singers. There are also other support

materials available to help you motivate, encourage and assess your singers including singers' workbooks, medals, badges, song collections, and wall-charts.

### ***Networking***

Summer Schools; Meet Your Neighbourhood Church Musicians; Midwinter Dinners; Other Events

### ***Contacts and Website***

<http://rscmaustralia.org.au/>

## Appendix: Details of Local RSCM Australia Events

### Grounding the Sacred (Member Participant) @ Australian Catholic University

Jul 23 @ 9:15 am – 4:00 pm

Sr Marie-Therese Levey rsj, former NSW RSCM branch committee member and active Catholic musicologist, writes below about the currently running conference [Grounding the Sacred](#), at which she presents a paper on Medieval Plainsong on Friday morning (see bottom of this post). The above link advises on how to register late at the conference desk in the Atrium.

**Thursday 23 July to Sunday 26 July 2015 inclusive**  
(RSCM calendar entry limited to initial date to tame display)

Australian Catholic University 25A Barker Road, Strathfield NSW 2135

*Grounding the Sacred* is the third in a series of conferences presented by *The Sacred in Literature and the Arts* (SLA), a community of interest that brings Australian and international writers, artists, musicians, academics, religious and members of the general public together to explore the interplay between the arts and the sacred. *Grounding the Sacred* will feature a mix of keynote addresses, conference papers, performances, readings and exhibitions revolving around the question: how can literature and the arts make the sacred tangible?

**St Stephen's Hymnfest**

**A Festival of Hymns  
for the Church Year**

**Choirs, Brass, Timpani and Organ**

**Sunday 13th September 2015**  
2:30pm - followed by afternoon tea  
Donations welcome

**St Stephen's Uniting Church**  
(opp. Parliament House)  
197 Macquarie Street, Sydney  
(02) 9221 1688  
[www.ssms.org.au](http://www.ssms.org.au)

### St Stephen's big hymn festival

this September will feature a massed choir, their brass quintet, organ and timpani. The theme for this year is 'A Festival of Hymns for the Church Year'. Interested choristers are invited to participate, but please prepare prior to rehearsal, as outlined here: <http://ssms.org.au/HymnFest2015.html>

**RSCM** | Royal School of Church Music  
**AUSTRALIA**  
New South Wales Branch

Join us for an afternoon of  
**Meet Your Church Music Neighbours**  
BRISBANE NORTHSIDE

2.30pm - 4.00pm  
St David's Church,  
78 Mangrove Road, Sand Hill  
Sunday, 27 September 2015

**FREE EVENT!**  
Includes afternoon tea

Church musicians (organists, pianists, guitarists, flautists, saxones, choristers, choir directors etc) are sometimes described as "a lonely bunch of people". We play or sing in church at the same time every weekend but our colleagues are playing or singing in church every weekend. As a result we don't hear or see each other (whether in the same suburb or same denomination); we don't share with each other. It's hard to develop a "community" of church musicians under such circumstances!

Please RSVP by the 23rd of September (so we know approximately how many to cater for):  
http://trybooking.com.au  
Contact Person: Charles Clark

The event is sponsored by RSCM, an organisation dedicated to helping parish churches of all denominations and sizes with their music.

## RSCM Queensland presents this free morning tea for church musicians on Brisbane's Northside

Here is a wonderful opportunity to meet other church musicians in your area, and to hear what happens in their churches as well as tell them what happens in yours.

You have to give just 90 minutes (drop in for less time if you can't manage the 90), have a cup of coffee or tea, and talk about your church music situation. You can talk about your successes and the issues you face and likewise hear from your neighbours. Whatever the conversation, it is certain that a morning like this will give you affirmation and inspiration. *Click image to view full-size >> or [download the pdf](#)*



A must-book event for all with an interest in church music!

## MIDWINTER DINNER

Friday, 21 August 2015

Choral Evensong at 6 pm before Dinner at 7  
St Paul's Church, 205 Burwood Rd, Burwood

Speaker: Robert Forsyth, Anglican Bishop of South Sydney

**\$50** per head (B.Y.O.) to Gerry Hayes (02) 9150 5219

or <http://trybooking.com/146189>

[http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?ailec\\_event=nsw-midwinter-dinner](http://rscmaustralia.org.au/?ailec_event=nsw-midwinter-dinner)

# Victoria: Brother Colin Smith Festival



## BROTHER COLIN SMITH FESTIVAL

Marking the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Brother Colin's Death

Come, sing and experience the spirit and prayerfulness of the liturgical music of the late Br Colin Declan Smith. Repertoire will draw on the following popular Colin Smith collections: Sing to the Lord \* Christ Our Way \* Psalms Year C \* Exsultet (revised ed.) \* Mass Shalom (revised ed.) \* Excerpts from Mass Hallel

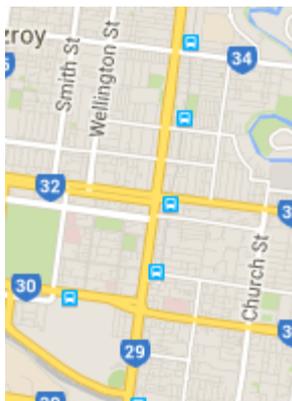
The afternoon will be led by Mrs Donrita Reefman, director of Br Colin's *John Paul Singers* from May 2005

Music will be available for purchase on the day

Director: Mrs Donrita Reefman, St Mary's Catholic Church, Bairnsdale

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| St John the Evangelist Catholic Church, 576 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne |                  |
| Registration: 10:30am   | \$20 Members     |
| Festival: 11am-2pm  | \$30 Non-members |

For more information & RSVP: [vic.chair@rscmaustralia.org.au](mailto:vic.chair@rscmaustralia.org.au)



When:

October 10, 2015 @ 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Where:

St John the Evangelist Catholic Church  
576 Victoria Parade  
East Melbourne VIC 3065  
Australia

Cost: \$20 (members) \$30 (non-members)

Come, sing and experience the spirit and prayerfulness of the liturgical music of the late Br Colin Declan Smith. Repertoire will draw on the following popular Colin Smith collections: Sing to the Lord \* Christ Our Way \* Psalms Year C \* Exsultet \* Mass Shalom (revised ed.) \* Excerpts from Mass Hallel

The afternoon will be led by Mrs Donrita Reefman, director of Br Colin's *John Paul Singers* from May 2005.

## **RSVP October 3:**

[vic.chair@rscmaustralia.org.au](mailto:vic.chair@rscmaustralia.org.au)