



News Release from the Royal School of Church Music

John Harper to retire as Director General in 2007

John Harper, the Director General of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), has announced his decision to step down from the post at the end of 2007; he plans to devote more time to sacred music studies.

Professor Harper, who will be sixty next year, said, 'My commitment to sacred music and liturgy is undiminished, but after almost ten years dominated by management, I now want to focus on teaching, research and writing.' He will continue as a research professor at the University of Wales, Bangor, which works with the RSCM in Sacred Music Studies.

Paying tribute to Professor Harper's energy and extraordinary commitment, Mark Williams, the Chairman of the RSCM Council, said, 'A great deal has been achieved under John's leadership. There is a new educational core at the heart of our work, including Voice for Life, Sacred Music Studies, and the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir. A new training programme - The Skills of the Church Musician - will be in place before he leaves. He has reinstated a vigorous programme of publishing, not least the series of Music for Common Worship. John has also put in place a robust infrastructure to run the RSCM, which puts us in a strong and sustainable position for the future.'

The RSCM has begun the process of finding a successor, and advertisements will appear in due course.

Notes to Editors.

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) is an educational charity promoting the best use of music in worship, church life, and the wider community. It is an open, life-long learning organization, offering training programmes, published resources, courses, and activities. With over 8,500 affiliates, members and friends in over 40 countries it is an international network, encouraged by over 750 volunteers, and supported by a small staff based in the UK. For further information about the RSCM, go to the website www.rscm.com

A photograph of Professor John Harper is available in The Picture Gallery on the RSCM website. http://www.rscm.com/about_us/pictureGallery.php

Professor John Harper. Biographical note.

Professor John Harper took over the leadership of the RSCM from Dr Harry Bramma in 1998. He has had a life-long career in church and choral music, starting as a chorister at King's College Chapel, Cambridge under the direction of Boris Ord and Sir David Willcocks. John Harper was Organist & Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College, Oxford, in the 1980s, and he directed the music of St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, and the Edington Music Festival in the 1970s. He has held academic lectureships at the universities of Birmingham and Oxford, and the Chair in Music at the University of Wales, Bangor.

He is chairman of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, founder director of the Centre for Advanced Welsh Music Studies, and a consultant member of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission. As chairman of the Early English Organ Project, he led the reconstruction of two 16th-century English organs. His guide to Western Liturgy (1991) is used world-wide, and has been translated into Polish and Japanese. He is editor of the series, *Music for Common Worship*, and of the monastic hymnal, *Hymns for Prayer and Praise*. His other research fields include Frescobaldi and Orlando Gibbons. He continues to be active as a composer of sacred and liturgical music. He is a contributor to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *The New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.

For further enquiries contact

Stuart Robinson:

RSCM Media Relations Organiser

stuart@4sitesmedia.com 07831 827701

OR

Heather Bamber

RSCM Marketing & Communications Administrator

hbamber@rscm.com 01722 424847 or 07786 331364