



News Release from the Royal School of Church Music

Royal School of Church Music to be featured on Songs of Praise.

BBC TV's popular Songs of Praise programme is to celebrate the work of the Royal School of Church Music, which this year marks the 80th anniversary of its foundation. The special programme of music and interviews will be broadcast on BBC One on Advent Sunday 2nd December.

A selection of advent hymns has been recorded at Hexham Abbey in Northumberland for the programme, sung by a massed choir of around 300 singers drawn from RSCM-affiliated churches all over the north of England. These include traditional favourites such as *O come, O come Emmanuel*, *Long Ago Prophets Knew*, and *Hills of the North Rejoice*, as well as *Like a Candle Flame* by Graham Kendrick, and a chorus from Handel's *Messiah*.

The music was conducted by regular *Songs of Praise* conductor Gordon Stewart, a former director of the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir. "It had not been possible to get the singers together before the evening of the recording," said Gordon, "and I was delighted by the quality of the singing and the willingness of the singers to keep going until we got things right. There was a wide range of music to record, and the singers rose to all the challenges in the best traditions of the RSCM."

The RSCM Millennium Youth Choir, conducted by David Ogden, are also featured; last month they recorded *Let all mortal flesh keep silence* in St John's and St Peter's Church in Ladywood, Birmingham for *Songs of Praise*, as well as some Christmas carols to be broadcast during the following week's programme on December 9th.

The programme also features a quartet of singers from an RSCM-affiliated choir at St Thomas' Church in Brentwood called "SongCycle" – who as their name suggests, travel around by bike, and sing! And we hear the story of Amanda Michell, a member of the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir, who was born profoundly deaf. She is determined not to let this affect her music studies, and is currently a choral scholar at Royal Holloway, University of London.

The programme is presented by Aled Jones, who joined the singers in Hexham Abbey for the recording.

For further details, visit the *Songs of Praise* website at www.bbc.co.uk/religion/programmes/songsofpraise, where a Factsheet will be available shortly before the broadcast. Viewers will need to check the transmission time in TV listings.

Ends.

7th November 2007

Notes for Editors

Photographs of Gordon Stewart and of the Millennium Youth Choir can be downloaded from the online picture gallery. http://www.rscm.com/about_us/pictureGallery.php

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) is an educational charity and promotes the best use of music in worship, church life, and the wider community. The RSCM also publishes music and training resources, and organises courses, short workshops and activities. With over 8,500 affiliates, members and friends in over 40 countries it is an international network, supported by over 750 volunteers and small team of staff based throughout the UK. For further information about the RSCM, go to the website www.rscm.com.

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