



News Release from the Royal School of Church Music

BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong to move to Sundays.

The Royal School of Church Music has broadly welcomed the move of BBC Radio Three's Choral Evensong from its regular 4 pm slot on Wednesdays to the same time on Sunday afternoon. "I am delighted that in its new schedules the BBC is protecting Choral Evensong as a live broadcast wherever possible," said Professor John Harper, the Director General of the RSCM. "It is not so many years ago that the whole future of Choral Evensong was under threat. It's also encouraging that the BBC believes the audience will increase substantially, even double."

Wednesday afternoon at 4 pm has been a hallowed time-slot for many listeners to the broadcast of Choral Evensong - the series celebrated its 80th anniversary only a few weeks ago.

However Professor Harper says that the new time will have its disadvantages. "There will be a number of logistical issues for the BBC and the host cathedrals, churches and collegiate chapels to address - there are many more services to work around on a Sunday," said Professor Harper. "On the other hand, the choristers who take part won't have to come out of school, and the lay clerks who often have to take leave from their day-time employment will be on hand."

"Perhaps the biggest loss will be the reminder that around the country some 100 communities of choirs, clergy and congregations are gathering to sing the choral office of Evensong on weekdays, maintaining the cycle of singing psalms and canticles, hearing Scripture, and praying, as they have for at least 1,000 years."

The last regular Wednesday Choral Evensong will be broadcast on Ash Wednesday, 21 February 2007, from St John's College Chapel, Cambridge. However, the BBC will sustain the custom of broadcasting Choral Evensong on Ash Wednesday each year. All other broadcasts of Choral Evensong will be on Sunday.

Notes for Editors.

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. It offers training programmes and courses, a variety of publications, 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

The Wednesday afternoon broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3 comes from a different location each week, and is usually transmitted “live”. The RSCM’s Millennium Youth Choir is one of the contributors, with a broadcast taking place during the choir’s annual summer course.

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