



News Release from the Royal School of Church Music

AT LAST! A TRAINING SCHEME FOR ORGANISTS.

A major new scheme to support church organists and musicians, has been launched by the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). The scheme, called CHURCH MUSIC SKILLS is believed to be the first of its kind to offer support to players of all standards and of whatever denomination.

So far, it is the Skills programme for organists which has just been launched; other units for choir directors, cantors and ensemble leaders will follow over the next twelve months. The programme is based on distance learning, and combines practical skills with supporting studies on a number of relevant topics. “The authors of the learning materials and the course tutors are all highly regarded experts in their field,” says Esther Jones, the Director of the RSCM Church Music Skills programme which is open to musicians both in the UK and abroad.

For organists, the scheme offers help with the playing of hymns, songs and choruses, as well as accompanying psalms, anthems and settings. The associated studies explore everything from choice of music and repertoire, to copyright and managing a budget. To measure progress, participants may, if they wish, work towards a Church Music Skills Award. Alternatively, there is a flexible study scheme for those church musicians pursuing their own personal goals and at their own pace.

For much of this year, more than 50 students all over the world have taken part in a pilot scheme prior to the launch. “We know it works,” says Esther Jones. “Those who took part have provided valuable feedback; we have been delighted that it has been very well received by people of all ages and abilities.” David Brookes, an organ teacher at Dilworth School in Auckland, New Zealand, put forward his organ pupils to take part in the pilot scheme. “One young player has made rapid progress, and has mastered basic pedalling techniques using the scheme’s learning materials,” he said.

Other participants have also welcomed the new scheme; “I cannot congratulate you too highly on the contents of your units – it is a wonderful comprehensive and practical course.”

Ends

24 November 2008

Notes for Editors

The Church Music Skills programme is one of three training programmes run by the RSCM. For further information including prices, go to www.rscm.com/education/skills.php or contact the RSCM on 01722 424843.

Photographs to illustrate this story can be downloaded from the Picture Gallery in the Media section of the website – go to www.rscm.com/media

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. More at www.rscm.com

For further media enquiries contact:

Stuart Robinson: RSCM Media Relations Organiser srobinson@rscm.com 01492 818183 / 07831 827701

Heather Bamber: RSCM Marketing & Communications Administrator hbamber@rscm.com 01722 424847

The Royal School of Church Music
19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EB
Tel: 01722 424848
Fax: 01722 424849

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