

RSCM Honorary Awards 2007

Text of the presentations made at the RSCM Celebration Day in Llandaff Cathedral on Saturday, 12 May 2007

Those receiving awards were introduced by the Director General, Professor John Harper, and the awards were made by Mr Mark Williams, Chairman of Council

It's a great joy for the Royal School of Church Music to be here in Llandaff, to affirm the work of this cathedral and especially its choirs and musicians; and also to affirm the work of St Davids Cathedral whose choir is with us, and of all the churches represented by those present at this service. It's also a privilege for us that Llandaff Cathedral in turn affirms the work of the RSCM in the United Kingdom and throughout the world by welcoming us here.

May I thank all who have enabled us to be here, especially the Dean and Canon Residentiary, the Director of Music and his assistant, the Headmaster of the Cathedral School, and the Vergers; and may I also thank all of you who have come here to join in this thanksgiving, and especially the singers and their directors of music. I should particularly like to give personal thanks to the Archbishop of Wales for making time to be with us today. Diolch yn fawr i chi gyd.

We come to honour both the creative work undertaken by musical directors, composers, scholars and writers, and the essential and often outstanding support given by others to enable that creative work to flourish. Many of you whom we honour today have come a very long way – from New Zealand, from South Africa, from America, from Hungary as well as from England and Wales. All of you have made time in busy lives to be with us today: we are privileged that you are here with us in person, and you are most welcome.

The RSCM can never honour everyone deserving of an award, and those we honour today are therefore representative of all the work that enables and inspires the worship and music of the church, and the proclamation of Christ through music in the world.

Our first awards are for the Fellowship of the RSCM. These awards are made to those who have made a distinguished contribution to music and worship at an international level.

I am very pleased to present to you the composer **Judith Bingham**. Judith Bingham is a professional singer as well as an international composer, and she demonstrated an enviable humility in her willingness even to sing at a launch event for Common Worship on a Saturday afternoon in a London parish church, where I first met her. But it's her contribution as a composer that we honour today, not only the whole of her creative achievement which expresses in new sounds the gifts of God's creation, but especially the sacred and church music that forms a critical part of her corpus. It is music which is challenging and uncompromising, but music which has both lyricism and spiritual strength. In recognition of her outstanding contribution to composition, the Council is very pleased to appoint Judith Bingham to be a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music.

Owen Burdick is one of the leading directors of music in America, at one of the most prestigious parishes – Trinity Church, Wall St, in New York. His work and standing alone merit this award. But I want to draw particular attention to his work since 9/11. Only 200 yards from the World Trade Center, Trinity was overcome by debris on that fateful day: it became both crime scene and human mausoleum. It has been a huge task – still ongoing – to restore all the fabric, including every single piece of sheet music. Many a musician would have sought an easier path by moving away from a scene of pain and devastation to a new post. He stayed: even disguising himself as a priest in order to gain access through the security cordon. I particularly wanted Dr Burdick to receive his award here in Wales, for he is of Welsh descent: his grandfather was a slate miner in Blaenau Ffestiniog. And so I present him to you in the language of his grandparents. Mae'n bleser mawr i'r Cyngor penodi Dr Owen Burdick Cymrawd yr Ysgol Frenhinol Cerddoriaeth yr Eglwys.

It is hard for us to imagine what it was like to be a practising Christian under a Communist regime, let alone to be a Christian who managed to sustain and promote the great heritage music of the church through his scholarship and publications in such difficult circumstances in Hungary. That is the achievement of Professor **László Dobzay**, one of the great scholars of Gregorian chant of our time, and one who has done so much to foster chant studies through international cooperation. And then, with the collapse of Communism, he founded the church music department in the Liszt Ferenc Music Academy, where church musicians, both Lutheran and Roman Catholic, train full time on a four-year course. For his courage and perseverance in times of difficulty, for his outstanding plainsong scholarship, for his nurture of church musicians, and for his commitment to the church we salute him. The Council is delighted to appoint Professor László Dobzay to be a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music.

Dr **Alan Thurlow** has suffered neither Communist oppression nor terrorist devastation. Indeed it is his undramatic and unassuming but totally faithful long service we honour in sustaining the daily round of choral prayer and praise at the highest standards in Chichester Cathedral for over a quarter of a century. That is every bit as important, and worthy of recognition. Chichester is one of the jewels of the English cathedrals, and in the intimacy of its choir you are in close contact with the divine: there is no need to shout to God there. Dr Thurlow has also done much to support music in the diocese and the work of the RSCM; and nationally he was for many years the chairman of The Friends of Cathedral Music whose support to choral foundations and promotion of cathedral music are so valuable. The Council is therefore very pleased to appoint Dr Alan Thurlow to be a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music.

We move on now to the Associateship. This award is made in recognition of important contributions to church music and to the RSCM, generally at a national level.

Two of those receiving honours today cannot not be with us in Llandaff. They are closely involved in running a major RSCM Festival for the North of England in Durham Cathedral. At much this time **Anne Harrison** and **Hugh Davies** are receiving their awards from Dr Simon Lindley on Council's behalf. (The text of these citations can be found at the end of this document.)

But four new associates are with us here.

Bruce Aitken has come from New Zealand. He is typical of many of our best volunteers: he is a lawyer, master of the Presbyterian Knox College in Dunedin, pro-chancellor of the University of Otago, and a lovely man, passionate about church music and the work of the RSCM. He has been a key figure in the formal establishment of RSCM New Zealand as an independent body, and continues to work to secure its future through endowment.

Teresa Brown has been coordinator of the RSCM's work in Eastern England for five years, collaborating with the volunteers to deliver the RSCM mission, and acting as a link with the central staff. But that is only one part of her work of outreach as a Roman Catholic musician working in the community and in the church. Her own spirituality comes across strongly in the music she writes herself and makes with others; and she shows how instruments can be used sensitively and imaginatively in worship.

Council recognises these important contributions, and is very pleased to appoint Bruce Aitken and Teresa Brown to be Associates of the Royal School of Church Music.

This summer **Timothy Noon** will move from St Davids to Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, so this award marks the end of a very fruitful time in West Wales, not only in the cathedral whose musical tradition he has nurtured and developed, but in the community through the St Davids Festival, and in the RSCM in West Wales whose work he has led. His great gifts will be well used in the Roman Catholic Church, and I am sure he will continue to offer much to the RSCM in the North West.

[At the last minute Ian Orr was prevented for family reasons from attending the Celebration Day, but this citation was read out.]

Ian Orr has for many years run a remarkable parish choir in Leicestershire. South Wigston is now a suburban village of Leicester, but it originated as a railway community in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the parish church of St Thomas dates from the 1890s. There Ian Orr has built up and sustains a large traditional choir of boys and men, by no means an easy feat these days, and he has established both choral and organ scholarships for young and aspiring singers and players.

In honouring both of these men, the RSCM acknowledges their work in sustaining choirs which attain high standards in places that do not have substantial funding or endowment. The Council is delighted to appoint Timothy Noon and Ian Orr as Associates of the Royal School of Church Music.

I should like to present two honorands who have travelled from South Africa to be with us today, one to be an Associate, the other an honorary member, an award made primarily for non-musical contributions to church music and the RSCM.

After a period in Kenya Dr **Robin Walton** had a long career in university teaching in South Africa, coupled with dedicated service as a church musician. He has done much to take forward the educational work of the RSCM in the northern provinces of the Republic, centred on Johannesburg. In particular, he developed and oversaw a syllabus for the training of church musicians under the auspices of the RSCM.

Daphne Allison has also served the RSCM nobly in South Africa, and continues to do so as secretary and treasurer of the Northern Branch, and as the first national secretary and treasurer of the newly formed independent organisation of RSCM South Africa.

The RSCM should have enormous pride in the work of its volunteers and members in South Africa. They upheld the values of equality and integration throughout the apartheid years, and peoples of all colours worshipped, sang and lived together each year at summer schools, often at considerable risk. In recognition of the achievement of RSCM South Africa, and the particular contribution made by these two representatives, the Council is pleased to appoint Dr Robin Walton to be an Associate and Daphne Allison to be an Honorary Member of the Royal School of Church Music.

Stuart Robinson is the first coordinator for RSCM Wales, and in spite of the mountains that make Wales such a difficult country to traverse he has engaged with all the area committees and many of our affiliates and members, and stimulated change and new initiatives. In his role as RSCM media coordinator he has promoted the RSCM, and dealt so ably with the media. I have been particularly grateful for his support in the past month. Mae'n bleser mawr i'r Cyngor penodi Stuart Robinson Aelod er Anrhydedd yr Ysgol Frenhinol Cerddoriaeth yr Eglwys.

The Certificate of Special Service can be awarded for any distinctive contribution to the music of the church or the work of the RSCM. These awards are normally made at local RSCM festivals. However, it is appropriate that we should acknowledge the long service undertaken for the RSCM by **Colin Jones** in this his home area of Morgannwg. And we also salute the long service of over 30 years given to St Davids Cathedral Choir by **Larry Richardson** as a lay clerk. The Council is very pleased to award Colin Jones and Larry Richardson Certificates of Special Service.

We turn now to the new awards in Sacred Music Studies. The first nine students completed the RSCM Diploma in Sacred Music Studies last Summer and Autumn; and others are now completing the course now. Five of them are here today. This is a challenging course for church musicians, run in association with the University of Wales, Bangor, and Council offers congratulations to **Ann Duthie, Nicholas Kerwin, Sandra Paterson, Anthony Smith and Raymond Stythe-Jones**.

And finally, the very first postgraduate award of the Licentiate of the Royal School of Church Music. **Pat Lynch** lives in Scotland, and much of her work has focused on music in small rural churches; but she was brought up in St Davids. And so it's particularly good that her old cathedral choir should be here to congratulate an old chorister on being the pioneer for this award. Mae'n bleser mawr i'r Cyngor penodi Patricia Lynch Licentiate yr Ysgol Frenhinol Cerddoriaeth yr Eglwys.

That has been a long process, but it is important to give due regard to those who have come to receive awards from all over the world and all over Britain. This is the last time that I shall make this presentation. And it is a particular pleasure for me that I do so in what has become my adopted country, Wales. Being director of the RSCM is an extra-ordinary, unique and very privileged experience in which I have learnt so much and met so many wonderful people around the world. So often I am humbled by the faith, the spirituality and the deep humanity of those whom I have encountered through the RSCM, many of whom would count themselves as no more than modest musicians. They are real musicians – virtuosi – because

they resonate the song of God in their very being. Being director of the RSCM is also far more than a job: it fills the whole of your life. And I am enormously grateful to my wife for lending me body and soul to the RSCM for almost ten years. Some of that time has been tough, not least in the last month. Let me assure you though, that the RSCM's high standards, integrity and care for all people are sustained as they always have been.

The RSCM is a very special organisation and we must cherish it. It is also fragile as an independent charity that has to find its own funds and relies so much on volunteers: your involvement and support is vital. All around the world as well as throughout Britain there are people whose lives and faith have been transformed by their encounter with the divine creation which is music; and in a remarkable number of cases that transformation has been enabled by the RSCM.

In a moment we give thanks for that blessing by singing Teresa Brown's Gloria in excelsis. But first the Archbishop wishes to speak.

At this point, the Archbishop of Wales presented Professor John Harper, Director General, to be appointed Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music. His words were wide-ranging, but were based on the following citation.

The Council has asked me to make a final presentation of a Fellowship to the Director General himself. During the last decade the RSCM has had to face a series of challenges in order for it to be ready to meet the needs of the churches and church music in the twenty-first century. Some of that work is evident in the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir, in Voice for Life and Music for Common Worship, in the new education programmes, and in the newly established RSCM bodies around the world. But much of the work is not visible, as an organisation is reshaped, refocused and indeed relocated.

Council wants to express their thanks to John Harper for his leadership, energy, creativity and sheer hard work. I want to add my own tribute, because John and his wife Sally have contributed much to Welsh music and culture over the last fifteen years. And John has provided the Church in Wales with the first fully bilingual setting of the new Eucharist – simple, adaptable music for a church that worships in Welsh and English. We shall be glad to have John back in Wales full time next year, and look forward to the growth of the new International Centre for Sacred Music Studies at Bangor under his leadership.

I offer my own thanks to the RSCM for all it contributes to the church and its music throughout the world, and especially here in Wales; and I offer my prayers for its future success under a new director. And so to the presentation. Mae'n bleser i'r Cyngor penodi Yr Athro John Harper Cymrawd yr Ysgol Frenhinol Cerddoriaeth yr Eglwys.

Additional citations read by Dr Simon Lindley on behalf of the Council of the RSCM in Durham Cathedral on Saturday, 12 May 2007

The Royal School of Church Music awards a small number of honorary diplomas each year to recognise the special contributions made to the church through music and through liturgy. Today, at this festival in the north, we honour two musicians who have contributed much to the work of the RSCM, and to church music in this part of England.

Hugh Davies is now director of music at Kendal Parish Church, whose choir is participating in this festival. Before that he was organist of St Asaph Cathedral. Over many years he has supported the RSCM's work, especially on residential courses. He has also shown great and ongoing commitment to building up choirs of children and adults from volunteers both at St Asaph and in Kendal

Anne Harrison is responsible for the team that produces the RSCM quarterly guide, *Sunday by Sunday*, which is so valued by clergy and musicians. She is also RSCM coordinator for the north of England and music editor of *Praxis News of Worship*. Over the years she has made very important contributions as a facilitator of music and worship both in the diocese of Durham and at St John's College, Durham.

The Council of the RSCM is very pleased to appoint Hugh Davies and Anne Harrison to be Associates of the Royal School of Church Music.

The RSCM has introduced new awards for those undertaking Sacred Music Studies. This course of study is intended to help musicians and clergy to use their skills and knowledge to better effect in their own church. The Reverend **Christopher Clinch** is one of the early recipients of these awards. He has successfully completed studies which lead to the RSCM Certificate in Sacred Music Studies, and he has almost completed the next stage for the Diploma. I am delighted to offer him our congratulations and to present him with his certificate.