



News Release from the Royal School of Church Music

“*In the beginning*” wins RSCM composition competition

The Royal School of Church Music is pleased to announce the winner of the Harold Smart Composition Competition 2007. The one clear and outstanding entry was by Alan Smith, from St Andrew's Church, Burgess Hill, East Sussex. His piece *In the beginning* is a setting of a Christmas poem by Kevin Carey, the text of which can be found on the Jesus4u website (www.jesus4u.co.uk/hymns/nine/coda).

The adjudicators of the competition were Professor John Harper (formerly Director of the RSCM, now Emeritus Director), and Tim Ruffer (Head of Publishing). They gave the following commendation:

"This is an anthem for two-part voices and piano, written for high voices but adaptable to other combinations. It demonstrates a level of fluency and assurance in its compositional technique which set it apart from the other 19 entries (which included some worthy submissions, mostly for four-part choir). A strong underpinning harmonic framework, confident and idiomatic writing for both keyboard and for voices, a sense of the whole, flexibility in the treatment of phrase lengths and subtle tonal direction are all strengths of the piece. In the beginning would work well in an orchestrated form - indeed that would enable some of the inner details of the accompaniment to be elucidated even more clearly. Given the concerns that the adjudicators have expressed in recent years about harmonic grasp and compositional fluency, it was very good to see such an attractive piece of lyrical writing that demonstrated such all-round technical competence."

The Harold Smart Composition Competition is held annually by the RSCM in memory of the late Dr Harold Smart. The entries should be set for a choral group to sing in worship, either accompanied or unaccompanied, and a theme is specified each year. More information can be found at www.rscm.com/publications/haroldsmart.php, and details of the 2008 competition will be posted on this page in June 2008.

ENDS

7 January 2008

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. 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

Photographs for media use are available from the Media & Picture Gallery <http://www.rscm.com/media>

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