



## News Release from the Royal School of Church Music

### THE PSALMS AND AN 80th ANNIVERSARY

**An exciting service and resource book has just been published to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). Drawing its inspiration from the Book of Psalms, **PSALLAM** contains a wide collection of easy and more challenging works for choirs both large and small, as well as for congregations.**

**Psallam** reflects the international nature of the RSCM. The content has been identified by members of the RSCM in the United States of America, led by Ben Hutto, a leading church musician and former president of RSCM America. The book reflects the diverse identity of the United States. It includes texts in English, Spanish, German, French and Hebrew, and music influenced by jazz, blues and African-American spirituals, as well as native melodies from America, Africa, Latvia, Wales and the Caribbean.

‘No book of the Bible has been a greater source of inspiration over the centuries than the Book of Psalms,’ said Professor John Harper, Director of the RSCM, who has led the project. **Psallam** follows through three central themes found in the Book of Psalms: trust in God, lament and praise. As with other RSCM resources, much of the material is new or newly arranged. There is new and recent music from a group of American composers – Dorothy Papadakos, David Ashley White, Gerre Hancock, Thaddeus Cavuoti and Ben Hutto – and the Canadian Denis Bédard. Canon Chris Chivers’ adaptation of the Magnificat to the African song ‘Mayenziwe’ is included alongside a setting of Nunc dimittis based on the spiritual ‘Steal away’ by John Harper, who has also composed a new setting of the RSCM Choristers’ Prayer. There is a new arrangement of ‘There is a balm in Gilead’ by John Barnard, and a stunning arrangement for choir, brass, percussion and organ of the hymn ‘Lift high the cross’ by Sir David Willcocks.

‘In **Psallam** we have sought to honour both the universality of the psalms and the universality of the RSCM mission,’ said Ben Hutto. ‘The content of the book has a distinctively North American flavour, and the musical selections embrace the manifold cultures and nationalities which have come to our shores and established our religious and musical life: Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the fusion of two or more of these sources in traditional hymns and anthems, in spirituals, in gospel music and even in liturgical jazz.’

**Psallam** reflects the RSCM’s commitment to developing new forms of liturgy that can provide inspiration and challenge to singers and whole congregations in today’s church. The form of service

has been drawn up by the RSCM's director, John Harper, who has also arranged or harmonised some of the music. 'I have been passionate about exploring new liturgical forms since my teens; seeking new ways of enabling people to engage with music in worship. And no greater challenge exists than to help congregations and singers to think about the psalms, getting to the root of their meaning and their expression of the whole human experience in relation to God.'

The musical demands of the book vary considerably; in most instances there is a choice of easier and more challenging music, and much of the music can be sung in different ways. This enables the book to be used by churches with modest or considerable musical resources, and to involve the whole congregation and not just the singers in the choir. Rehearsal notes about each piece are available on the RSCM website <http://www.rscm.com/publications/psallam/index.php>

In the United States, **Psallam** will be used extensively for the first time at a RSCM Choral Festival in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco on Saturday November 17<sup>th</sup> 2007. At this occasion members of RSCM affiliated choirs and other singers will be able to take part in a day long programme of workshops and rehearsals.

**Ends.**

**8 October 2007**

### **HOW TO OBTAIN PSALLAM:**

**USA:** Price \$12.95 (RSCM Affiliated members can claim a 25% discount)

Order directly from the American publishers: GIA Catalog number G-7248

By post: GIA Publications, Inc, 7404 South Mason Avenue, Chicago, IL 60638

Telephone: (800) GIA-1358(442-1358) or (708) 496-3800. Fax: (708) 496-3828

[http://www.giamusic.com/sacred\\_music/index.cfm](http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/index.cfm)

**UK:** Price £5 (RSCM affiliated members can claim a 25% discount), £3 for a bulk order of 100+.

Order directly from RSCM Music Direct (Cheques made payable to SCM-Canterbury Press)

St Mary's Works, St Mary's Plain, Norwich, NR3 3BH.

Telephone: +44 (0)845 021 7726 then dial 206. Fax: + 44 (0)845 021 8826

Email: [musicdirect@rscm.com](mailto:musicdirect@rscm.com) or shop online at <http://www.rscm.com/shop>

### **Notes for Editors:**

**FOR REVIEW:** Please send requests for review copies of PSALLAM to Heather Bamber (contact details below).

**The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM)** was founded in 1927. It 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](http://www.rscm.com). **RSCM America** has more than 700 affiliates crossing denominational lines and the boundaries of nearly every state. RSCM America has its own board of directors supervising RSCM programs in the United States. [www.rscmamerica.org](http://www.rscmamerica.org). Kevin Radtke is the RSCM America Coordinator: (609) 921 3012

### **For further media enquiries contact:**

**Stuart Robinson** RSCM Media Relations Organiser [srobinson@rscm.com](mailto:srobinson@rscm.com) +44 (0)1492 556378 / 07831 827701

**Heather Bamber** RSCM Marketing & Communications Administrator [hbamber@rscm.com](mailto:hbamber@rscm.com) + 44 (0)1722 424847