



News from the Royal School of Church Music

CHURCH NEEDS MORE YOUNGSTERS, SAYS SURVEY.

The need for churches to devise ways of involving more young people is one of the issues highlighted by a survey of church music in Wales. The survey, carried out by the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), also asked questions about sung services in Welsh, the make-up of choirs and music groups and the supply of organists.

Most of the ninety churches which responded to the survey are affiliated to the RSCM, and come from all parts of Wales. Nearly 70% hold a service in Welsh, for most of which the musical content is hymns. 60% of respondents hold an evening service; 15 referred specifically to holding the service of Choral Evensong. The organ is still the main instrument of accompaniment for services, although one quarter of the responses also reported having a music group. Two-thirds of respondents have a choir, and amongst the music for services, psalms are still widely sung.

The survey reveals some important facts about church choirs. The membership of most of them is made up of adults, though a shortage of men is apparent. The number of young people singing in choirs also seems to be low with only two churches claiming to have between 11 and 15 in their choirs. 50 respondents skipped this question about young people in its entirety, and very few respondents made any mention of recruitment initiatives. In his report of the survey's findings, Stuart Robinson, RSCM Coordinator for Wales says that the process of recruitment isn't necessarily as complex as churches might think. "There are many examples of churches which have been successful [with recruitment]. Young people are the Church of Tomorrow, and what better way to involve them from a young age than by giving them something active to do, singing from the choirstalls rather than passively sitting in the pews."

Despite the difficulties, there's much cause for optimism, says Stuart Robinson. "I have been struck by the extent of the music-making across churches in Wales; quite simply, whether they are small or large in number, people love to come together and sing to the Glory of God."

The RSCM will be using the results of the survey to help shape its provision of training for church musicians in Wales. The full results along with a summary can be downloaded from the RSCM website www.rscm.com/wales

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Notes for Editors

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) is an international ecumenical charity that educates, supports and enables musicians, composers and clergy in promoting sacred music in churches, schools and the wider community. The RSCM publishes music and training resources (such as its popular *Voice for Life* training scheme for singers of all ages), and organises a wide range of courses, short workshops and activities. With over 8,000 affiliates, members and friends in over 40 countries it is supported by over 600 volunteers in area committees and a small team of staff based throughout the UK. More at www.rscm.com

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