

15 MAY 2010 DURHAM

This is a transcript of the address given by Lindsay Gray, Director of the RSCM, at Celebration Day, Durham Cathedral, 15th May 2010.

I should like to add my thanks to those who have made this day possible; it is wonderful to be here in Durham Cathedral and warmest congratulations go to those who have been honoured with awards at this service.

For many of us here today Durham is a special place, and I was delighted when Mark Williams suggested it as a venue for his final Celebration Day as Chair of Council; he and I had both sung here in the 1970s under the direction of Richard Lloyd. It is also a great privilege to be amongst such an array of choral singers; thank you all for coming here today and for all you do in church music week by week.

I should also like to thank all those staff and volunteers who are moving on to other rôles for all they have done for the RSCM, including the Regional Coordinators who have worked hard with our Area committees. Special thanks go to Anne Harrison who has contributed so much as Regional Coordinator for this Area, Durham, together with Cumbria and Northumberland; let us show our appreciation to them all in the usual way....

(APPLAUSE)

Many interesting projects are underway and we are already reaping the benefits of the tremendous support of the Liz and Terry Bramall Charitable Trust which has enabled us to create and appoint new Regional Music Advisers to travel extensively across England and support and extend the great work currently being done by our 600+ volunteers. We particularly want to make a difference at 'ground level': we want to find as many ways as possible to support church musicians, and also to bring new people into church music, especially the young.

Music in worship brings people together – today it has brought more than 300 singers together – and I am always aware of this 'togetherness' and fellowship as I travel to different RSCM venues. In a world where people of different cultures and race do not always co-exist happily, music in worship can play a very important part. I was especially conscious of this during my recent visit to eight cities in South Africa where it was immediately apparent that church music has helped in the nation-wide cause to bring together people of different cultures, backgrounds, races, colours and languages. RSCM volunteers worldwide work very hard to achieve this togetherness and this was exemplified for me when I noticed the help being given to a young teenage tenor from a black township in Port Elizabeth who had problems attending a rehearsal because his family had gone without food for a week and he needed the bus fare to feed them all. RSCM help was at hand; local volunteers came to the rescue.

There were similar stories in other cities and I hear both in the UK and elsewhere exceptional stories of help and support provided by RSCM members and volunteers to enable church music to take place where it otherwise might not. People come together for this very important cause.

My growing experience and knowledge of church music in many other countries, together with the considerable challenges and potential here in the UK, contribute to one clear message – *there is much more that can and needs to be done in the cause of church music – but we urgently need you to help us.*

Please take home the 'Friend of the RSCM leaflet' in your service sheet and ***join us as a Friend of the RSCM.*** If everyone today here was to become an RSCM Friend it would make a huge difference to what we can do – there is just so much potential.

In addition, you may like to support your church and the RSCM together in our Music Sunday 50:50 Campaign on 13th June, as shown on the back of the service sheet today. In these two ways you can help us ensure that church music will be strong and secure for many years in the future, and we shall continue to hear worship enhanced as it has been here today in Durham.

Thank you.

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