



The Victoria Branch of RSCMAUSTRALIA: A National Church Music Association Inc.

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Victorian News

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June 2018

Calendar of Events

Wednesday 11 July	7.30pm	RSCMVIC Committee Meeting
Friday 29 July		Deadline for August issue
Saturday 11 August		Sing the Day Away with Jonathan Grieves-Smith at St Matthew's Albury
Monday-Tuesday 13-14 August	7pm/7.30pm	Choral Workshop with Roger Sayer at Christ Church South Yarra (ANCA, CCSYMF, RSCM)
Wednesday 12 September	7.30pm	RSCMVIC Committee Meeting
Friday 28 September		Deadline for October issue
Thursday 11 October	5.45pm	Stephen Darlington conducts Trinity College Choir for Evensong
Wednesday 14 November	7.30pm	RSCMVIC Committee Meeting

From the Chair

Recently, our youngest child turned eighteen. The parents among you will understand that, after a total of thirty-five years' responsibility for our growing children, the habits of guiding, directing, leading and generally "making sure" they're OK are difficult ones to break. Upon much reflection and prayer, I've therefore come to understand that "relinquish" must be the keyword for my relationship with our son at this point of his life (extra challenging in his particular case).



This new insight comes at an interesting time for me, as my role at St Francis' was recently made redundant – for me, just as I was "warming up" with a number of engaging projects the role involved, and at a time when the relationships I'd formed with folks at St Francis' were beginning to bear some great fruit. While I have come to expect that God opens new doors as old ones close, leaving the people and projects that had grown on me at St Francis' came with a deal of sadness. And so, I've had to mindfully "relinquish" my role there, just as I've had to relinquish my former role with my son.

The change has further-reaching implications for me. I'll no longer regularly be in Melbourne. I have a unique opportunity to build a business idea I'd been contemplating. I can put more attention into the permaculture projects, workawayer hosting and hospitality business on our farm in East Gippsland. I can devote more time and energy into being a wife and caring for my nonagenarian parents who live in their cottage on our property.

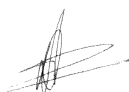
The change also led me to reflect on my role as Chair of the Victorian Branch Committee of the RSCM. After prayer, discussion and pondering, I have come to the conclusion that what I'd set out to do as chair has come to a point of "hand-over-readiness" – RSCM Victoria has made a certain mark, collaborating with talented Church musicians and other agencies to give our members value for their membership, not to mention the now established annual fundraising liturgical-event-plus-dinner.

Moreover, I'm excited to say that, in answer to prayer, we now have some great new members joining the committee, who I know will add further richness, skill, vitality and experience to the branch, which can only be of greater benefit to our members. There are emerging ideas for further branch activity initiatives which the new committee-team will activate with the help of you, RSCM Victoria members.

It only remains for me to say that I now *relinquish* my role to Tony Way, who graciously has agreed to the role of acting chair until the 2019 AGM. Tony is well known to you all, not only because of the amazing St Francis' choir he directs but also for his networking, administrative and leadership skills as a well-seasoned church musician. I look forward to the new blessings which will come to us through RSCM Victoria with Tony's leadership. I will leave it to Tony to introduce the new folks to you and fill you in on what's planned for the remainder of the year ahead.

I look forward to our future encounters at RSCM events!

With kindest regards to all



Donrita Reefman

From the Chair

Dear RSCM Friends

As you see elsewhere in this newsletter, changed life circumstances have led Donrita Reefman to 'relinquish' her role as chair of RSCM Victoria. I join with the rest of the committee and with you, the wider membership in thanking Donrita most sincerely for her very generous expenditure of time and energy over the last three and a half years at the helm of our branch. We have been blessed indeed to have had someone of Donrita's abilities working to re-energise our organisation. We wish Donrita every blessing in the next phase of her life's journey.



Donrita is not the only person to be saying farewell from the committee. Branch secretary, Dr Houston Dunleavy has been appointed as Academic Director of The Australian Guild of Music Education. As a result of this major appointment, Houston can no longer devote time to the branch. We congratulate Houston on this significant professional milestone and thank him for his energy and good humour during his time as secretary. We also wish him well for the future.

These two major departures from the committee may seem like (to paraphrase Oscar Wilde) more than carelessness, but it is a great pleasure to welcome two new committee members. Mr Philip Nicholls, director of music at St Paul's Cathedral has agreed to join the committee. Philip's geniality, practicality and erudition will be greatly valued by us all. Ms Emily Tam, director of music at St Fidelis' Catholic Church, Coburg will also join the committee. Emily runs both adult and children's choirs in her parish and we look forward to harnessing her youthful enthusiasm. Welcome Philip and Emily!

As Donrita mentions, I have agreed to chair the branch until the 2019 AGM. My grateful thanks to Fay Magee and Beverley Phillips for agreeing to act as minute secretaries during this period.

While I have met many members of RSCM Victoria over the years, it may be useful to give a little background to my relationship with RSCM. Although I was born in Brisbane (where I received music education from about the age of four) I have lived in Melbourne since 1983. In 1984, while still a music student at Melbourne University, I attended my first RSCM summer school, which that year was in Adelaide under the direction of John Rutter. Further summer schools followed and then in the early 1990s I joined the Victoria branch committee for the first time. This included the valuable experience of helping to prepare the 1992 Bendigo summer school with international guests, Jonathan Rennert and

Richard Proulx. Although I attended summer schools and various branch activities from time to time since then, I did not have any regular involvement again until about four years ago when I was re-elected to the branch committee. Subsequently, I have also become a state representative on RSCM Australia's national council.

Part of my motivation for reconnecting with the branch comes from a belief that the time is ripe to re-invigorate and re-imagine RSCM. Several basic premises come to mind:

- RSCM is ecumenical;
- RSCM does not exist in a vacuum;
- Small can be beautiful;
- We need to talk to each other and create community.

We have neither the time nor the space to go into detail about those four points, but some brief and obvious remarks must be made.

Ecumenical: RSCM was founded in 1927 when the three-tiered Anglican universe of village, parish and cathedral choirs was the prevailing model. While the fruits of the English choral tradition are a joy, the last 60 years have changed our world-view for ever. What can we do to support well-performed music in a variety of styles across a variety of traditions, often in situations where there are very limited resources?

Isolationism: Part of the answer to that question lies in realising we are not alone. We must be open to partnering with other organisations who have aims similar to our own. Some possibilities include ANCA, ACCET, SOV, ANZCO, UD and various denominational bodies.

Small is Good: Better to plan something small and do it well than let grandiosity lead us to an ineffective flop. If you have an idea for a small but useful event, we want to hear about it!

Community: Those of you who flip through CMQ, Sunday by Sunday and this newsletter and then promptly forget about RSCM: attention!! Your committee wants to hear from you, wants to see you and your choir at events and wants you to network with others about church music. Church music can be a lonely job, but there is support (and conviviality!) to be had if you connect with others.

Climbing down from my soap box, may I encourage you to save the following dates!

Saturday 11 August (TBC)

Another 'Sing the Day Away' event with Jonathan Grieves-Smith at St Matthew's Albury.

Tuesday 14 August – Register from 7pm for 7.30pm start

Choral Workshop with Roger Sayer (Organist, Temple Church, London) at Christ Church, South Yarra

Thursday 11 October, 5.45pm

Stephen Darlington (Christ Church, Oxford) conducts Trinity College Choir for Evensong

With best wishes for your work

Tony Way

Welcome

to new Individual Members

Amanda McAully of Kingston TAS
Ann Hobbs of Kingston Beach TAS

Organist for St Joseph's Chelsea

The Catholic Parish of St Joseph's Chelsea is looking for an organist to play at the weekly Sunday 9.30am sung Mass as well as at services for special feasts. There is a weekly choir practice. St Joseph's Catholic Church has a Frederick Taylor Organ (1906), 2 manuals and pedals. The church is located close to Chelsea railway station. Please contact Fr Kevin Williams for further details:

03 9772 2211 or Chelsea@cam.org.au



The organ was originally built for Kew Presbyterian Church in 1906, and then relocated to Brunswick Uniting Church in 1996. In its new home at St Joseph's Catholic Church Chelsea (June 2011), it now has several new stops, and a new solid state control system.

(Wakeley Pipe Organs <https://pipeorgans.com.au/>)

Organ Scholarship at The Church of the Resurrection

Following the purchase and installation of a fine 2-manual pipe organ in 2015, The Church of the Resurrection, Macedon (The Anglican Parish of Gisborne), is keen to encourage young people to discover the joys of playing the organ. Those under the age of 25 are invited to apply for a scholarship that would enable tuition on this instrument.

Dr Dianne Gome, Director of Music at the church, will give weekly lessons to the successful applicant, and both the Resurrection organ and the digital instrument at St Paul's Anglican Church, Gisborne, will be available for practice. The student will gain grounding in both manual and pedal technique and will study a range of works, including much associated with the liturgical tradition.

The successful applicant would be required to sing in the church choir at Sunday morning services at least once a month and, as progress allows, to play for some or all of a service.

Applicants are required to have proficiency in piano at AMEB 6th grade level and to attend an audition/interview.

The scholarship is valued at \$3,200 per annum.

For further information

email sdggome@patash.com.au or

phone 03 5426 4801



Sing the Day Away

**A Sing the Day Away event
will be held on Saturday 11 August at
St Matthew's Albury.**

Led by Jonathan Grieves-Smith, this event follows on from the successful 2017 Singing Day at Holy Trinity Cathedral Wangaratta.

The Workshop begins with registration at 10am and the day concludes with a public Choral Event in the late afternoon.

An open invitation is extended to all choristers, choirs, friends and congregation members to attend and enjoy a day of singing together.

Cost and bookings to be advised.

**For more information contact Bec Beall on
0408 670 406 or bec_beall@hotmail.com**

Choral Workshop

**A Choral Workshop
on the interpretation of English Church Music
led by Roger Sayer
will be held at Christ Church South Yarra
on Sunday 14 August**

This is a collaboration between
RSCM, ANCA and
Christ Church South Yarra Music Foundation

Roger is Organist and Director of Music at the Temple Church in London.

A Balancing Blog

This blog, posted on 27 March, caught the eye as a follow-up to the two recent articles on music and balance in a small church or parish.

“For nearly 100 years OCP (Oregon Catholic Press) (www.ocp.org) has been committed to providing the very best resources, music and service to Catholic parishes and worshipers all over the world. Our dedication and commitment to publish the finest music and worship resources is matched only by our devotion to those we serve. As the Church has grown and evolved, we have sought to grow and change with it so that we can continue to fulfil our mission of publishing products, resources and music that bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all.”

The small parish: Developing your volunteer-run church choir: Dr Carlos M Vázquez-Ramos

“I am in charge of the choir! Now what?” As sometimes happens in small church choirs, a generous volunteer, though lacking in traditional musical training, has responded to the call of service and has stepped up to help lead their parish choir. This blog is for that person.

Maybe you inherited a music ministry in a sudden way. Perhaps the music director at your community moved away, and you are newly in charge of selecting music for the small church choirs at your parish. This advice is not just geared particularly toward someone who is starting a Catholic music ministry, but also people who are looking for the best ways to engage their singers and church musicians and grow and run an efficient choir practice and music program.

All tips and instruction come from Dr. Carlos M. Vázquez-Ramos, who has served as director of music and liturgy at Nativity Catholic Church in Brandon, Fla., since 2005.

Who are we in the Church?

Before forming or assuming the responsibility of the choir or any other ministry in the Church, it is important to understand the vision and mission of the parish, especially the vision of the pastor. As director of music in my parish, I try to be in tune with the needs and activities of the community and not be isolated within my ministry. To be disconnected results in unnecessary frustrations. This may seem irrelevant to our musical task, but it's fundamental for the success of the group.

First of all, the music director must be a spokesperson for the pastor in all parish affairs. Who are we? We are branches of the great tree that is our parish community. As music directors, when we keep our choir and other groups informed and connected, we send a message of unity. We let our group know that we're working together. For example, if there's a prayer chain in the larger parish for all who've lost house or job, it's important that the choir take part for the good of the entire community. Similarly, if the choir rehearsal is scheduled at the same time as the parish Lenten mission, it's important to move the rehearsal so the choir can participate in the mission. The foundation of our ministry should be solidly established, centered in the larger community, and rooted in Christ.

Discipline and rehearsal

Like some sports, music involves a team (in this case the choir) and a place and time to prepare the plan of action. That place and time is the rehearsal, and it should be taken very seriously.

We all need structure, in ministry as in school. Remaining firm in everything that has been agreed upon strengthens the group. It seems absurd for someone to ask what time the 8 p.m. rehearsal starts. But it could be due to inconsistent start times in the past. If the rehearsal starts at 7 p.m. and it's necessary to set up microphones and music stands, I recommend that the director arrive at least 45 minutes early: to anticipate the unexpected and make sure rehearsal starts on time. Otherwise, a change in rehearsal time should be seriously considered. Being late produces discomfort and frustration in the group and is one of the most common reasons people leave the choir.

As far as the length of the rehearsal, if the group has agreed on a 1.5 hours, that's exactly how long it should last. If more time is needed, the choir should be informed so they can prepare. Never wait until everybody arrives in order to begin. This sends the erroneous message that the director will always wait, and it's not fair to those who arrive on time. Ambivalence on the starting time translates into a lack of interest in the rehearsal. Time is gold.

The choir's dress, once established, should be respected. What the choir wears helps define the group as a single entity. It's the responsibility of each member to wear the agreed-upon clothing and make the

necessary arrangements if he or she has an appointment before or after Mass.

There are many situations music directors will encounter. But the role of the choir is clear: to convey the message of the word of God through music. Nothing should interfere with that mission.

Planning the rehearsal

Your first rehearsal with a new choir has arrived and so many questions run through your mind. How will I start? Have I chosen the right songs? How many songs are we going to be able to rehearse? When are we going to sing at Mass? I have to confess that I have always treated the rehearsal like a rite in which Jesus takes an essential part. I approach each rehearsal as if it were the first one. It is normal to feel some anxiety about how things are going to flow. However, the most important thing is to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The planning of a rehearsal has to be flexible; we always have to be ready for the unexpected. After all, when the group has a spiritual need at any time, everything else should be secondary. The format you choose should simplify and help, not hinder, the objective, implementation and flow of the rehearsal. Here is an outline with suggested times for each section:

Reading of the Sunday Gospel, reflection, and prayer. (15 minutes)

Sing and rehearse something familiar, taking advantage of the opportunity to work with more technical aspects of the music. For example: "Pescador de Hombres/Lord, You Have Come" (20 minutes)

Introduction of new songs and/or Mass parts: (45 minutes)

The Psalm

New Selection

New Selection

Mass Parts

Discuss issues related to the group. (10 minutes)

Reflection and prayer

It is important to mention that though I am thinking specifically about the choir, the principles in this section apply to any type of ensemble. Every rehearsal needs structure in order to be effective. I have said that prayer is fundamental to the spiritual growth of the group. By reading the Gospel, we get in tune with the liturgy to be celebrated and we see the message of the word of God reflected in the chosen songs. When I started giving my groups the opportunity to reflect on the Gospel, it seemed that I was wasting time. Few people participated and when they did it seemed to be out of obligation.

However, as time went on, participation improved and little by little we have been transforming into small communities of faith. The members are eager to participate and the reflections are more profound. When the reflections are finished, we offer an Our Father for the needs of the group and the community in general. The 15 minutes invested in prayer are without a doubt the most important part of the entire rehearsal.

Working with known material

Why is it important to begin the rehearsal by singing something that is well known or at least familiar to the group? Simply because as directors of the ministry we have the responsibility of creating a relaxed atmosphere before the real work begins. Many choir members work all day long, confront difficult situations at work and home, and, even so, take time to be at rehearsal. After all, they want to be part of the group because they want to sing and/or play, and to pray by offering God their time and talent. We should go out of our way to accommodate them.

Through familiar material we can work with technical aspects of the music such as tempo, dynamics, intonation and interpretation, among others. I suggest that you rehearse each detail in the form of a spiral. In other words, we have to let our group rehearse a section of the song before stopping and making corrections. For example, if each time we sing, "Lord, you have come to the seashore," we stop and do not get past that phrase, we can be certain that the concentration and interest of the group will be lost. On the contrary, if we allow the choir to sing one verse and the refrain, we will have a more concrete idea of what we want to improve. The technique of rehearsing in a spiral pattern is very effective because the group can clearly see the progress from one repetition to the other. As directors, we have to focus on progress more than perfection and, above all, we cannot forget to let the group know when we notice progress. We all appreciate when our effort is noticed.

When considering the time (tempo) of the song, we can ask ourselves the following questions: Are we singing too slow or too fast? How can we know? There are many ways of knowing, but the text is our best guide. If we pay attention to the message behind the music, immediately we will know if the song is dragging or if it is so fast that it's impossible to sing. We should guard the character of each song like a treasure. Problems of rhythm and tempo separate us from the composer's intention.

Dynamics give life to the composition. Through loud (*forte*) and soft (*piano*) dynamics, among others, we make certain parts of the text stand out. The interpretation of the text is closely connected with dynamics. For example, if we think about "Pescador de Hombres/Lord, You Have Come," it is impossible to sing the refrain with the same intensity as the verses. Verses provide the story's narration; in many songs they contain profound theology. The refrains usually proclaim and confirm the central message of the story. In the refrain, "O Lord, with your eyes set upon me, gently smiling, you have spoken my name ...," we reaffirm our trust in God and our promise to be his disciples. This gives us a guide as to the song's interpretation. As a general rule, the verses should not sound the same because each has its own distinct message.

Introducing new material

The time devoted to prayer at the beginning of the rehearsal takes on a new dimension when you begin to introduce the new material. If the new songs are for the following Sunday, the choir has to be able to recognize the relationship between the songs you've selected and the readings. My experience has been that if the director is excited about the new material, the choir will be too. So we have the power to affect the motivation of the group and make this part of the rehearsal smooth and productive. In a rehearsal lasting approximately 1.5 to 2 hours, I recommend that you not present more than two new songs. It is a good strategy to start with the psalm since it helps us to synthesize the Liturgy of the Word. If the psalm has a musical setting, we can concentrate more on the sound and the vocal aspects. When the psalm is not set to music and we want to sing it (it should always be sung, at least the refrain), we should have a detailed plan for teaching it.

How do we present a song? First of all, we should talk about the text and its relation to the readings. If we have the recording, we can play it for the group. It is important to know how the piece sounds before it gets the individual touch of the ensemble. If we are using a hymnal, like *Glory & Praise* or *Flory Canto*, we can share with the group another song written by the same composer and talk about his or her compositional style. Also, we can share some biographical information if we have it. Then we can introduce the song in the following manner:

Melody: The entire ensemble, including the instrumentalists, should sing the melody. Harmonies can be added later if there is room for them. Not all songs have to have parts (harmonies). The music itself and the composer's intention will determine that. On many occasions, I have heard choirs that, by adding harmonies, totally overwhelm the melodic line or the first voice.

Rhythm: By listening to the melody we notice the places where the choir is not following the right rhythm. This happens primarily when the choir hasn't learned the melody well and is trying to force the text into a different melody. A good technique for resolving rhythmic problems is to play the melody on the keyboard and let the choir clap the rhythm. This technique, in a funny but effective way, reveals to us immediately where the problem is and who has it.

Text: Reciting the text and rhythm of the song without singing is a good way of working through diction and enunciation problems. If the text gets lost in the melody, we are in trouble.

Dynamics: Does it need to be louder or softer? We will understand this as we continue to get more familiar with the text. The more we rehearse, the better our interpretation.

Instrumentation: Instrumentation is something that depends on the group. Some groups can add instruments easily because their musicians can read music, improvise, or find the chords along with the rhythm. In other groups, additional rehearsals with instrumentalists must be held so they can learn their parts. Collaboration with more advanced musicians is crucial in this case. Some advanced musicians may find it challenging to help others.

Rehearsing Mass parts

The Mass parts should be rehearsed or, as I say to my groups, they should be refreshed. You may not need to sing through them in every rehearsal, but practice them at least once a month if you rehearse

weekly. Since Mass parts often have repeats, the text can get lost and the melodies become weak. Recently I asked the choir why we sing the Gloria. The answers I received were interesting and quite creative. We should talk about the Mass parts more frequently.

Ending the rehearsal

We should end each rehearsal by paying attention to the issues that pertain to the social life of the group. Birthdays, anniversaries, the arrival of a new baby, a new job, and special events, among others, are occasions to celebrate that can enrich the spiritual life of the group.

Once we take control of the planning and pacing of the rehearsal, then we are prepared to start working with more technical issues. Let us exercise passion, calm, and patience in all that we do as directors of the ministry. Our musical ensembles are branches of the great tree that is the Church.

https://www.ocp.org/en-us/blog/entry/the-small-parish-developing-your-volunteer-run-church-choir?utm_source=enews_leads&utm_campaign=4172ad1080-5715-180509-hymnals-developing_volunteer_blog&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_77bce82863-4172ad1080-98254893&mc_cid=4172ad1080&mc_eid=5b639ffe42

Royal School of Church Music

www.rscm.com

We are delighted to welcome Hugh Morris as our new Director.

Hugh has held a number of prestigious positions, most recently as Director of Music at Derby Cathedral, where he has successfully led the flourishing music department since 2015. With a wealth of expertise under his belt, Hugh studied music at Cambridge University and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists. Hugh has also worked in a number of different Cathedrals, churches and schools across the UK including Hexham Abbey, Salisbury Cathedral and Christchurch Priory. As an accomplished choir trainer and organist, Hugh enjoys performing a wide variety of music. During his time in Derby he has collaborated on new choral ventures with classical, folk, and jazz musicians; as well as composing new music for the Cathedral and beyond.



Speaking about his new appointment, Hugh expands “I am really excited to be leading the RSCM into their next important chapter. I want to celebrate all that is best in church music while at the same time having a vision for an exciting future ahead”.

The Rt Hon Lord Gill, Chairman of Council, warmly commends Hugh. “On behalf of the entire RSCM team I would like to congratulate Hugh on his appointment, and we look forward to his tenure. Hugh brings with him considerable expertise to continue to develop a strong charity to meet the needs of today’s church; ensuring diversity of church music within all our churches and communities.”

Hugh will be formally taking up this role as of 1 August 2018. In the interim Hugh will be familiarising himself with the RSCM and the many opportunities for leading us into the next important chapter of celebrating all that is best in church music.

RSCM 2019 International Summer School

International Summer School 2019 (5 – 11 August) will be based in Norfolk with a pilgrimage theme and a focus on the progression of worship through and beyond time. We will visit inspirational places and be based in comfortable, pleasant surroundings. Booking will open in summer 2018 when prices for 2019 are known; register with us now at iss@rscm.com to receive the full details when available.

RSCM Victoria Subscription Fees for 2018

Subscription fees are due and payable by 1/1/2018

for the period 1/1/2018-31/12/2018

Affiliate Member—Metropolitan \$145

Affiliate Member—Non Metropolitan \$120

Individual Member \$95

Friend \$80

Victorian Newsletter only \$30

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Victorian Council of Churches

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Vacant

Music Resource Library & Archives:

The RSCM Victoria Music Resource Library & Archives is housed at St Francis' Church 326 Lonsdale Street Melbourne. Contact Tony Way for catalogue, information and access

RSCM AUSTRALIA**RSCM Australia Web Page:**

www.rscmaustralia.org.au

RSCM Australia Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/RSCMAustralia>

RSCM Australia Aims and Objectives:

*To promote the study, worthy practice and improvement of music in Christian worship in Australia

*To facilitate communication between church musicians of all Christian denominations in Australia

*To encourage the composition and publication of church music in Australia

*To establish formal links with Christian denominations and organisations within Australia

*To develop, promote and administer award or certificate schemes at various levels, specifically related to church music in Australia

ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC

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