

Newsclaf

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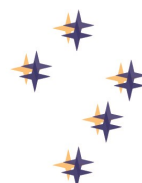


From the Chairman

A fresh perspective is a much-maligned term. It simply means seeing something from another viewpoint. As church musicians, it is often not practical for us to exchange places- as a director, band-member or chorister, or even as a congregant. It's a rare luxury when it happens, but can be incredibly valuable.

I recently had that luxury at St Andrew's when I invited the organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford to direct my

choir for an evensong, whilst I sang in the basses (that was an eye-opener in itself!). Watching another rehearse and interact with choir members was a great education, and made me reevaluate the way I do things? Is this the quickest way of achieving the desired result? How can I make the choir sound differently? What's the best way of using rehearsal time? These were all questions which kept popping into my head during Richard Moore's time with us in March. I mention this as we at RSCMNSW are extremely excited to be able to exclusively invite one of the world's most versatile and accomplished choral directors, Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, to work with us all In August. Our famous Midwinter Dinner will feature her as our afterdinner speaker- I know that she is incredibly funny as well as having an extraordinary career, in the suitably warm setting of our recently refurbished Upper Chapter House here at St Andrew's.



And then the day after we are having a full festival choral day, with her at the helm, culminating in a service the Cathedral. I first witnessed Joanna conducting with the Sydney Philharmonia choirs who had brought her out, earlier this year at the Opera House, and then after with a workshop for RSCM at St Philip's York St. those of us who were present then will I'm sure be the first to book for the dinner and choral workshop- as we treated to an incredibly fresh perspective on what we do as church musicians. As a singer and director who has worked with Tenebrae, Trinity College Cambridge, The Tallis Scholars, National Youth Choir of GB, Tonus Peregrinus etc, and notably as musical director of the Swingle Singers for 7 years, she also is, I'm told, the RSCM's most popular published composer!

So please don't miss this extraordinary chance to be energised, refreshed, challenged and entertained by signing up to her visit. And if you're free the following week, you are welcome to attend the workshops and services on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th with the schools of NSW in our wonderful RSCM schools' festival. Looking forward to seeing you all there!

Warmest regards,
Ross



The Royal Organist:

Westminster Abbey Emeritus
Organist James O'Donnell

29 JUL



Internationally acclaimed conductor and former Westminster Abbey organist and Master of Choristers James O'Donnell performs a solo recital of organ masterpieces on the Sydney Opera House's magnificent Grand Organ.

Further info and booking at:

<https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/classical-music/royal-organist>

Famous! RSCM | Royal School of Church Music AUSTRALIA New South Wales Branch **Mid-Winter Dinner**



6pm: Festival Choral Evensong

-sung by St Andrew's Cathedral Choir, music including *King's College Cambridge service* by **Joanna Forbes L'Estrange** & Parry's '*I was Glad*'

7pm: The Famous Midwinter Dinner

socialise over a splendid meal in the heated and refurbished Upper Chapter House with friends and listen to renowned composer, conductor and singer **Joanna Forbes L'Estrange** regales us with tales of an extraordinary life working with David Willcocks, Ward Swingle, Stephen Cleobury and Burt Bacharach!

10pm: Carriages

Bookings essential:

www.trybooking.com/DCAGA



Choral Festival 2025



"Joanna's experience and enthusiasm transformed the singers from choir stalls to stage"
Dr Stephen Layton, Trinity College Choir, Cambridge

Led by
**Joanna Forbes
L'Estrange**
Saturday 2nd August
Upper Chapter House,

Jo Forbes l'Estrange is one of the most versatile and experienced choral directors in the world today. Sometime director of the multi-Grammy® Award-winning vocal group *The Swingle Singers*, the RSCM's most popular published composer, director and singer with Tenebrae, St John's College Cambridge women's Choir, Choir of the Earth, Trinity College Cambridge, Sydney Philharmonia etc, Jo is one of the most inspiring and refreshing leader around today.

9.30am: Registrations and refreshments

10am: Come and Sing rehearsal (i)

enjoy the brilliant choral coaching sessions and preparation from Joanna in the heated and refurbished **Upper Chapter House**.

12.30pm: lunch (byo)

1.30pm: Rehearsal (ii)

4.30: Festival Service in St Andrew's Cathedral

Bookings essential:
www.trybooking.com/DCAHG



Tell Out, My Soul! The work of Timothy Dudley Smith

A workshop with Ross Cobb 1 March 2025

2024 saw the passing of one of our great modern hymn writers in Bishop Timothy Dudley Smith (see September 2024 issue for a tribute by Ross Cobb)



Back in March, we gathered for a workshop looking at some of his legacy from well loved classics such as Lord for the Years, Name of All Majesty with music by Michael Baughan and the much sung Tell Out My Soul, music by Walter Greatorex. It was also an opportunity to look at some of his lesser known hymns such as the upbeat When the Lord in Glory Comes, and Praise the Lord of Heaven.

Sometimes his hymns would be to familiar hymn tunes such as Lord of the Church to Londonderry Air, and Fill Your Hearts with Joy and Gladness to the tune Regent Square.

Memories of my time playing at All Souls Langham Place in London came back when hearing Safe I The Shadow, and I Lift My Eyes.

We agreed that not **all** of the hymns were ones to include next Sunday, but regardless of that, Dudley Smith's poetic approach always shone through.

Lord of the church, we pray for our renewing
Christ over all, our undivided aim.
Fire of the Spirit burn for our enduring
Wind of the Spirit, fan the living flame!

We turn to Christ amid our fear and failing
The will that lacks the courage to be free,
The weary labours, all but unavailing,
To bring us nearer what a church should be
(Tune Londonderry Air)

Peter Black
Membership Secretary and Newsclef Editor



“Home and Away” vocal and choral workshops, 28 March and 4 April

TONUS AUSTRALIS and the RSCM NSW were delighted to be able to host a special two-part ¡TONE UP! workshop during the visit to Sydney of composer and singer Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, a long-time friend and colleague of fellow director Antony Pitts, who have sung together in the British ensemble TONUS PEREGRINUS for over 30 years. Joanna and Antony brought their different skills and expertise to bear in a program focusing on Joanna's reworking of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, *A Season to Sing*, as well as early music and rounds going back as far as the 13th-century *Sumer is icumen is* (in 6 parts). Two of your committee members attended the sessions, and give their account of the event here.

RSCM NSW and Tonus Australis presented two vocal and choral workshops on successive Friday evenings, in late March / early April. Led by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, former Musical Director of the Swingle Singers, and committee member Antony Pitts, former Artistic Director of The Song Company, participants sang a wide range of music from early polyphony in original notation to Swingle-style *a capella*.

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange was visiting Sydney to conduct her choral re-imagining of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* which she has called *A Season to Sing*, at the Opera House with the Sydney Philharmonia Choir and David Drury at the organ. This work marks the 300th anniversary of *The Four Seasons* and is published by the RSCM.



Having sung Joanna's lovely Christmas *Carol of the crib* last December, two participants: committee member Megan Ainsworth and Rhonda Davey made the 500-kilometre trek from Armidale to join the first workshop.

Joanna's vocal warmup exercises were excellent. We valued her attention to detail in all her sessions and her positive attitude. The opportunity for participants to share in solos was affirming for those attending. Antony's passion for early polyphony was both very much evident and also helpful in encouraging participants to sing these pieces.

Following warmups, the workshop split into two groups, with one focussing on early polyphony in original notation from composers including William Byrd. Meanwhile the other group looked at movements from *A Season to Sing* including *Make a Joyful Noise (Autumn Allegro)* (with lyrics drawn from Psalms 100 and 150) *Winter (Freeze)* (with lyrics by Vivaldi) and the Swingle-style scat *Cosy Indoors (while outside it pours)*. Participants who attended both workshops were able to focus on early music at one workshop and the Swingle style at the other workshop.



The early music chosen by Antony was complex but achievable: the old music notation was intimidating but very satisfying to accomplish. This was assisted by also having music presented in modern notation. Rhonda observed that the older notation had more space in the sound.

The groups then reunited to enjoy the acoustics of St Philip's Church Hill and sing a selection from both styles that had been worked on, in combined full harmony.

Even after two workshops, we would have benefitted from longer sessions and were left wishing for more. We highly recommend these workshops.

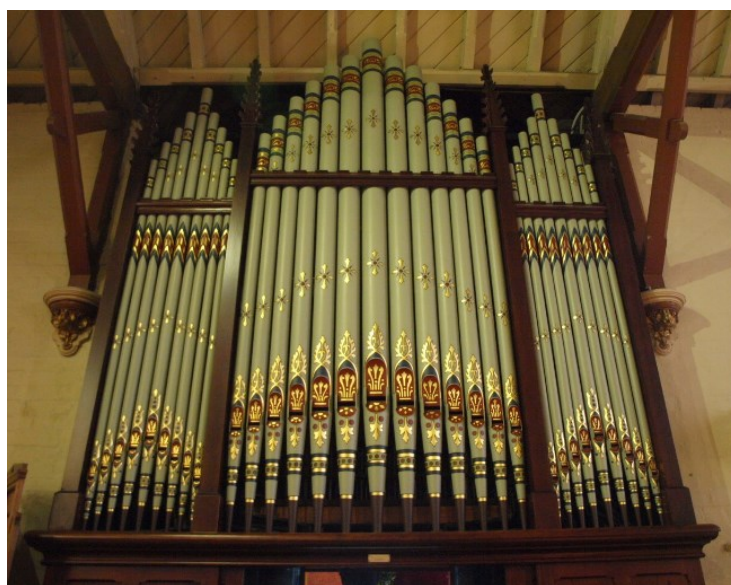
Megan Ainsworth and Philip Reichardt

St Luke's Young Organist Series

Saturday 14 June 2025 3pm

Samuel Giddy returns to perform on the rare 1883 Wordsworth & Maskell Pipe Organ at St Luke's Enmore (13-35 Stanmore Road, Enmore)

Samuel will follow his last performance at St Luke's in 2023 with another pedal solo and a celestial adagio by J S Bach. Amongst other works, the programme includes a transporting Arabesque by Louis Vierne, organist at Notre Dame de Paris from 1900 until his death in 1937.



Entry, Programme & Refreshments by note donation (to contribute to the performer's fee)
Enquiries to Kathy: katydrum@proton.me

St Paul's Burwood



DAY OF PENTECOST – Sunday 8 June 2025

8:00am **Said Eucharist** *with hymns*

10:00am **Choral Eucharist**

Setting: **Missa Omnes Sancti** (Malcolm Archer)

Motet: **Come Holy Ghost** (Thomas Attwod)



Thanksgiving for the Holy Communion Thursday 19 June 2025

6:00pm **Choral Eucharist**

Setting: **Missa de angelis** (Gregorian chant)

Motet: **Ave verum corpus** (Edward Elgar)



2025
#Gibbons400

RSCM
THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC
Australia

RSCM NSW presents

¡FASCINATING GIBBONS!

Glenn Gould's favourite tune

SATURDAY 21 JUNE
ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL

2pm
workshop-lecture
5pm
sacred recital
(with audience participation)

led by
ANTONY PITTS

THE HYMNES AND SONGS OF THE CHURCH

Hear and sing the complete Orlando Gibbons melodies as published in George Wither's 1623 *Hymnes and Songs of the Church*, with new realizations and original settings by Pitts & L'Estrange, as recorded by TONUS PEREGRINUS for Naxos on *Hymns and Songs of the Church* – the root and some recent branches of a very English hymn tradition.

BOOK NOW:
<https://www.trybooking.com/DBYZK>



UPCOMING EVENT

FASCINATING GIBBONS—Glenn Gould's favourite tune #Gibbons400

2pm Workshop-lecture | 5pm Sacred recital (with audience participation)

**Saturday 21 June 2025 - St Andrew's Cathedral
led by Antony Pitts**

"Since my childhood I have been aware that the music that moves me most stems from chorales and hymns", said Glenn Gould in an interview in 1979, "Indeed I always said the most fascinating beautiful little piece in all of music is a hymn by Orlando Gibbons, by the name 'Thus Angels Sang'. I couldn't count the times I've let these bars wander through my mind, or how often I've played them on the piano, or how often I've listened to the Deller Consort sing them – hundreds, probably thousands of times."

To commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of Orlando Gibbons in June 1625, come and hear (and sing) the complete Orlando Gibbons melodies as published in George Wither's 1623 *Hymnes and Songs of the Church*, with new realizations and original settings by Pitts and L'Estrange—as recorded by TONUS PEREGINUS for Naxos on *Hymms and Songs of the Church* <https://www.tonusperegrinus.co.uk/hymns-and-songs-of-the-church>



BOOKINGS NOW OPEN AT:

<https://www.trybooking.com/DBYZK>



Thank you, William Clark

This Easter just past saw the end of a mighty epoch. Dr William Clark OAM stepped down as our Director of Music after 33 years in the role.

Bill has been at the heart of the choral music tradition at St Mark's. His knowledge of Anglican liturgy and music is second to none. He has tirelessly worked to bring together choirs Sunday after Sunday and has achieved extraordinary things with limited resources. Many members of the choir regard Bill as their musical mentor.

Bill has played the organ for countless weddings and funerals. I would argue that there are few people who have been to as many weddings as he has! The number must be in the thousands.

But it is also the case that Bill's heart for Jesus and for the glory of God is what drives him. Ever modest, Bill sees choral music as an act of Christian service more than anything else. The music of our 8am service adorns the worship of God's people and the preaching of the word. It has drawn many people into an encounter with the divine source of life.

With thanks to God we wish Bill well in his retirement!

Rev Dr Michael Jensen

Rector



St Mark's Church, 1 Greenoaks Avenue, Darling Point NSW 2027

St Mark's *Organ Recital*



Sunday 25 May 2025, 3pm
For Organ Scholarship Fund
Admission by program - \$25
Organist Bailey Yeates

Register at
stmarksdp.org/whats-on/



A Friends
of St Mark's
Event

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHORAL CELEBRATION

Sing to the LORD a new song – sing to the LORD, all the earth!

Sing to the LORD a new song!

Composer and conductor Antony Pitts introduces the 2025 International Christian Choral Celebration

As the William Byrd Fellow & Ambassador at Excelsia University College in Sydney, I have the privilege of chairing the 2025 International Christian Choral Celebration, which celebrates musical excellence, our diverse worship traditions, and the underlying unity of the Christian faith. Excelsia is inviting choirs worldwide to join the International Christian Choral Celebration – we hope to end up with a giant playlist of some of the finest and most touching choral performances from across the world, to serve both as inspiration and as a catalyst for further discussion and exploration.

ENTER YOUR CHOIR

Entry is completely free, and open to church, community, school, college and other amateur or professional choirs – of all kinds and sizes from across the world. Entry is simple: all you need are links to two (existing or brand new) videos, each being a performance of a song or piece of music with a Christian text or theme – in any language, in any genre, from any period. The only conditions are that one of the two pieces should be a setting of words or a theme from the Psalms; all performances must be unaccompanied – no instruments (though clapping and body percussion are allowed!); and each piece should be no longer than eight minutes. The entry deadline is 1 July, but there is no need to wait, as earlier entries help us to shape the themes and structure of the final Celebration playlist.

WILLIAM BYRD PRIZE

To encourage entries, Excelsia is offering the William Byrd Prize of \$5000 (Australian dollars) for the performance that most moves the listening panel. More than four centuries ago, William Byrd wrote some of the most beautiful sacred music for voices, both for public worship in churches, chapels and cathedrals, and for private worship at home with family and friends. Byrd was a Christian believer who stood firm in the face of severe restrictions on his faith from the government and society of his time, and sometimes outright persecution. Today singing Christian texts and songs, in some places, is still a very brave thing to do. Those of us who can freely sing do so in solidarity with others around the world who are not so free. Excelsia is hosting this International Christian Choral Celebration to encourage Christians everywhere to sing out in praise of God and in proclamation of the Gospel, with its power to transform lives.

LISTENING PANEL

Coinciding with the LUMEN 2025 conference in September, when I will be giving a related keynote presentation*, the Celebration will culminate with a curated day of music in front of a discussion panel of expert choral directors and worship leaders, which will be streamed online. The panel at this year's Celebration is a diverse lineup of music leaders, including the Directors of Music at both Sydney's Roman Catholic and Anglican Cathedrals, and representatives of other parts of the Church, including both Orthodox and contemporary worship leaders. The Panel will

listen together and compare notes, exploring music's role in worship and reflecting on what can be learned from listening and responding to different traditions and kinds of music-making. The ICCC is a global event that, with your help, aims to celebrate Christian choral music of all kinds, bringing together choirs from around the world into a richly diverse playlist. But more than just an online musical gathering, the ICCC is a vibrant act of worship through many voices singing in harmony.

SINGING IS A TASTE OF HEAVEN

I have always sung – as a boy in the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace, and later founding TONUS PEREGRINUS while an undergraduate at New College, Oxford – still going strong after 35 years. To me, singing in harmony is a taste of heaven. I have written choral music for many very fine choirs including the Choir of New College Oxford, Rundfunkchor Berlin, The Swingle Singers, and the Choir of Westminster Cathedral, as well as festivals such as Cheltenham Music Festival, Edington Festival of Music within the Liturgy, and the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music. Here in Sydney I composed a 50-part motet for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs to be sung at Sydney Opera House, and have just completed a piece for Excelsia called *Re-New*. When asked for my advice on preparing submissions for the Celebration, I come back to the same basic principles: be authentic – sing music that you know and love; listen to each other to get the tuning and balance as perfect as possible; make sure the words come across clearly and powerfully; consider the impact your singing may have on those who listen; and do it all in a spirit of worship.

HOSTED BY EXCELSIA

Excelsia University College has a 40-year history of teaching creative and performing arts with a multi-denominational background of Christian mission and discipleship that draws on the vast range of musical and liturgical traditions of all three major streams of the Christian church – Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. Faith and the creative arts come together in transformative ways at Excelsia: students are encouraged to explore their gifts while grounding their craft in purpose, and our mission in action is to cultivate a new generation of artists who are guided by integrity and inspired by Christ-centered faith – creativity and Christianity lived out together in harmony. Join us to sing out in praise and solidarity, celebrating the transformative power of the Gospel in music!

Antony Pitts, Easter 2025

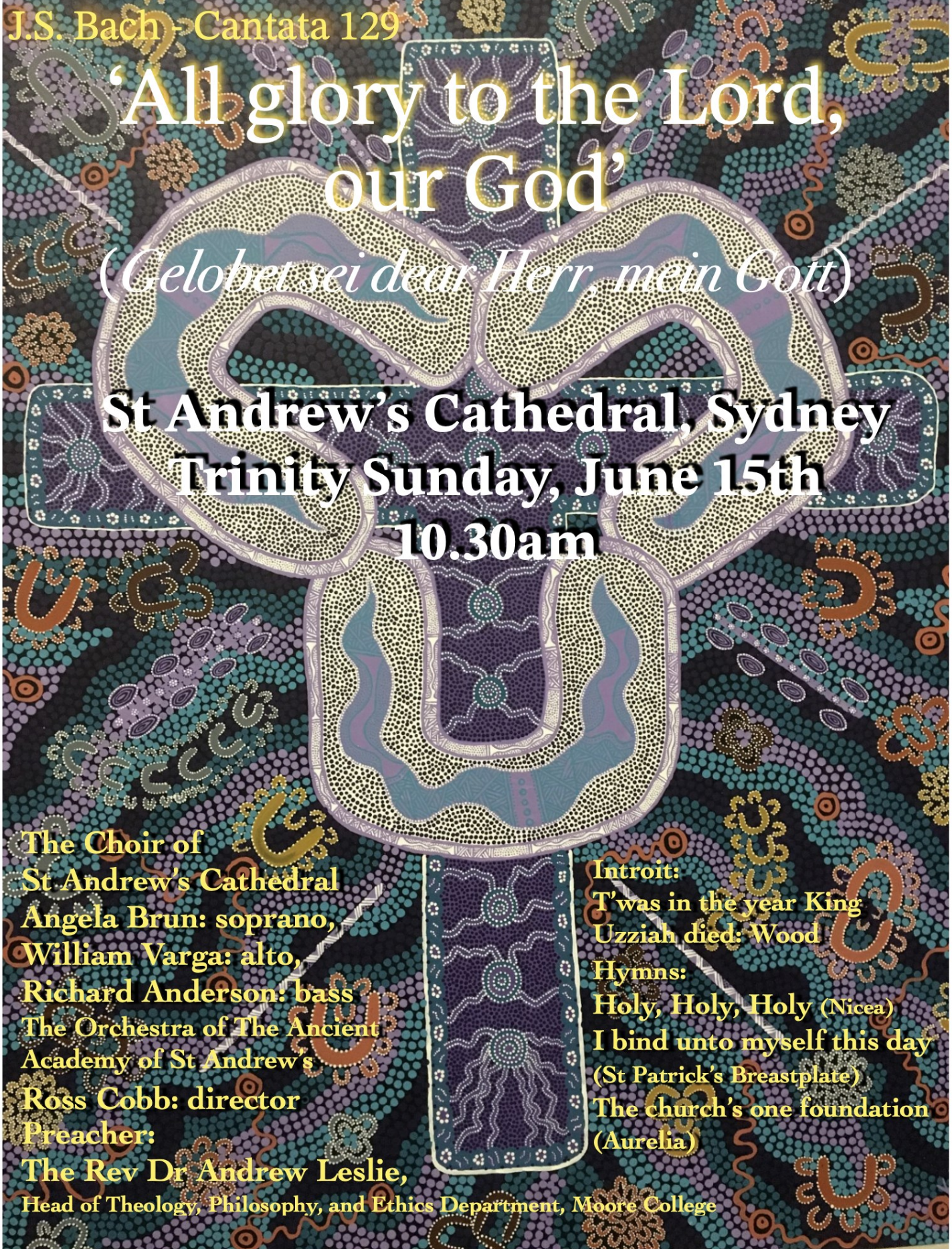
For further information and how to enter with your choir, please visit and share this link: <https://excelsia.edu.au/international-christian-choral-celebration/>

*LUMEN 2025 keynote: *Polyphony & Polycrisis – What lessons and models can we learn from the performance of ancient many-voiced sacred music to guide us in a century of unprecedented change and challenge?*

Antony's choral music is available to download at <https://one.equal.music/scores> and to print-on-demand at <https://www.lulu.com/search?contributor=Antony+Pitts&page=1&pageSize=100>, and his website is at <https://www.antoniypitts.com/>

His latest album with TONUS PEREGRINUS, *One Equal Music – 12 motets from Requiem for the Time of the End*, can be heard via <https://www.tonusperegrinus.co.uk/>





J.S. Bach – Cantata 129

‘All glory to the Lord, our God’

(Gelobet sei dein Herr, mein Gott)

St Andrew’s Cathedral, Sydney
Trinity Sunday, June 15th
10.30am

The Choir of
St Andrew’s Cathedral
Angela Brun: soprano,
William Varga: alto,
Richard Anderson: bass
The Orchestra of The Ancient
Academy of St Andrew’s
Ross Cobb: director
Preacher:
The Rev Dr Andrew Leslie,
Head of Theology, Philosophy, and Ethics Department, Moore College

Introit:
T’was in the year King
Uzziah died: Wood
Hymns:
Holy, Holy, Holy (Nicea)
I bind unto myself this day
(St Patrick’s Breastplate)
The church’s one foundation
(Aurelia)

Choral Evensong for Ascension Day, Thursday 29th May

Jesus our risen Lord is also the ascended King!

Join the choir and congregation of **St Andrew's Cathedral** on Thursday 29th May to celebrate Choral Evensong for Ascension Day. The service leader & preacher will be The Rev Dr Matt Wilcoxon, Rector of Darlinghurst. Matt and his family leave in July for the USA, where he will become the Rector of The Church of the Incarnation in Harrisonburg, VA.

Light refreshments will be served.



Music for the service

Introit: I will not leave you comfortless: William Byrd

Responses: Radcliffe

Psalm 47

Canticles: Stanford in C

Anthem: *Viri Galilaei*: Patrick Gowers

Hymn: Alleluia, sing to Jesus

Voluntary: *Transports de joie*: Messiaen (from *L'Ascension*)

The Anstey Psalter

The very recently launched Anstey Psalter, a well-overdue new translation of the psalms for the Australian church, is an exciting task taken on by internationally recognised Adelaide Hebrew scholar and Anglican Priest, Dr Matthew Anstey. With it he hopes to create a modern translation of the psalms, correcting past errors and omissions, and including recent insights and discoveries, while also creating something of poetic beauty and musicality; psalms that are not just to be read, but spoken and sung aloud.

Anstey Psalm Trial

As is often the case with new liturgical texts a seven-week trial has been created beginning on Trinity Sunday 2025 (June 15, also RSCM Music Sunday) to gauge the public response to its style and approach. Congregations are encouraged to use the psalm texts in the same way they normally would – reading out loud, or antiphonally, reading with a sung response, singing or chanting with or without a response, and so forth. If music is involved, they are welcome to use the musical resources provided, which have been composed and compiled specifically for the Anstey Psalter and remove all the hard work.

RSCM SA Chair, Richard Black has composed and compiled a sung response and a range of psalm chants for each week's Psalm. They include a simplified Anglican chant which is most effective with a cantor or small choir, a classic Anglican chant for the parish choir, a contemporary Anglican chant for the cathedral or more adventurous parish choir, and a Gregorian chant for a more contemplative approach. The sung response has been crafted so it can be used in conjunction with any of the chants including the Gregorian chant.

RSCM SA Secretary, Becky Llewellyn, is composing anthems for each Psalm using the full text of the translation. They are set for a variety of choral situations, from melody line only, through duets and trios, to full SATB - with and without accompaniment. It is not expected that any one organisation will sing all of these compositions during the trial period but rather select the anthems that suit their resources.



The trial is intended for interested parishes, schools and other organisations inside and outside the Anglican Church.

You can register to be part of this trial at ansteypsalter.com.

Once registered, the full resources of psalm texts and music will be made available for use. Organisation and individuals are further encouraged to provide feedback via the website.

The trial and new translations are fully endorsed by The Most Rev'd Geoff Smith, Primate, Anglican Church of Australia:

"For millennia, the Psalms have provided a rich resource for worshippers of God to come to God in times of joy, sadness, thanksgiving and doubt. The Psalms occupy a special place in Anglican liturgy and are featured in our lectionary every day of the year. Matthew Anstey's translation allows today's worshippers to encounter the Psalms in contemporary language. I commend the translations to you for trial use".

Richard Black



Choral Evensong

The St Mark's Choir is delighted to be continuing Choral Evensong services. We encourage anyone who values the services contained in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer to attend these Choral Evensong (Evening Prayer) services.

Sunday 29 June 2025, 3:00-4:10pm

Sunday 26 October 2025, 3:00-4:10pm

The 29 June service music will include choral music by Thomas Tertius Noble (Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in B Minor) and Samuel Sebastian Wesley ("Blessed be the God and Father"). Reverend Dr Michael Jensen will preach. The 26 October service music will feature special music and hymns to celebrate All Saints Day.

St Mark's is one of a very small number of parishes that has a liturgical Choir. We are the recipients of a generous scholarship programme, encouraged by our Rector and supported by St Mark's Music and a very generous parishioner.

We look forward to welcoming you for this musical treat and time of reflection. For enquiries, please contact choir@stmarksdp.org

PARTBOOKING

Conjugating “partbook” after F. Scott Fitzgerald:

Present: I partbook, thou partbook, it partbooks, we partbook, you partbook, they partbook.

Imperfect: I was partbooking.

Perfect (past definite): I partbooked.

Past perfect: I have partbooked.

Conditional: I might have partbooked.

Pluperfect: I had partbooked.

Subjunctive: I would have partbooked.

Voluntary subjunctive: I should have partbooked.

Preterite: I did partbook.

Imperative: Partbook!

Interrogative: Partbookest thou? (Dost partbook?) (or Wilt partbook?)

Subjunctive Conditional: I would have had to have partbooked.

Conditional Subjunctive: I might have had to have partbooked.

Participle: Partbooking.

Experience the ancient joy of partbooking!

Journey through space and time to a dinner party in the late 1580s, somewhere between Oxford and London at the home of Robert Dow, where he would bring out five very special books, giving them to his dinner guests around the table, as they enjoyed his wine and his company. Although most of the music in them is sacred polyphony in Latin, the “Dow Partbooks”, as they’re now called, were clearly written out by him for use at home. Perhaps there is also the sense of performing slightly furtively “underground”, as his contemporaries (including William Byrd) were forced to keep some of their musical activities hidden from the authorities, in a time of religious persecution by the State. But none of that should take away from the sense of enjoyment that is literally written in to the manuscripts. It was in 1581 (in his late twenties) that Dow began to write out all his favourite five-part music into these partbooks – at the beginning of each he inscribed “Vinum et Musica Laetificant Corda” – “Wine and Music Make Hearts Merry”!

Singing from partbooks is very different from the way singers normally perform today: unlike modern sheet music, where you can see everything else that’s going on, a partbook just has one part. What’s more, there are no barlines, so even keeping in time is a challenge! But this is the way famous composers such as William Byrd, and friends like Robert Dow, actually experienced their own music when it was written, so we are in excellent company when we attempt to sing from the stunning DIAMM* facsimiles of the five original Dow Partbooks. As well as a single drinking round (*Hey down, down, down, sing ye now after me*), there is a cornucopia of ravishing sacred polyphony by the top names in late 16th-century England: William Byrd, Robert Parsons, Robert White, Thomas Tallis, along with a mysterious “Mr Tayler”!

*University of Oxford’s Digital Image Archive of Mediaeval Music



I first explored the Dow Partbooks in Europe with TONUS PEREGRINUS – for a long-running project called *Vinum et Musica*, and then with The Song Company in *Byrd-Round-Table* in 2018 and *Byrd Underground* in 2021, during which time I also took on the challenge of teaching a new generation of young artists how to sing from these and other early musical manuscripts. Since 2023 TONUS AUSTRALIS has been running multiple ¡TONE UP! workshops – evening and weekends in Sydney and Melbourne, and four-day residential courses at The Old Monastery in Stroud (NSW), with a focus on learning to sing from original notation. Applications for the next residential course in January 2026 are now open: <https://www.tonus.au/toneup-apply-old-monastery>



As a taster, the RSCM is planning to host some 'Upper Room' sessions of polyphony at the pub, to be held at a central Sydney venue. Places will be limited, and fun will be had by all! Further details will be provided when available.

Antony Pitts

April 2025



The Choir of St Paul's has been providing quality choral music for 150 years.

The choir's repertoire spans over a thousand years from 10th century Gregorian chant to the music of the 21st century.

JOIN NOW!

to sing the musical treasures of the Church & help keep Church Music alive.

For more information please contact the Director of Music, David Russell
(music@stpaulsburwood.org.au)

The First Hymn - Sydney Premiere featuring Ben Fielding and CityAlight

A world first for music, faith, and history.

Join us for the Sydney premiere screening of *The First Hymn*, a documentary about the earliest-known Christian hymn with music and lyrics intact, and enjoy a special performance of the modern hymn by co-writer Ben Fielding, joined by CityAlight.

6 - 7pm	Join us for drinks and canapes in the foyer
7 - 7.30pm	Welcome / CityAlight performance
7.30 - 9pm	Documentary screening
9 - 9.30pm	Ben Fielding and CityAlight perform and teach the new First Hymn

About the documentary

The First Hymn is presented by Australian historian John Dickson, now a professor at Wheaton College. He explores the discovery of P.Oxy 1786—as the hymn is known to scholars—in the ruins of the ancient Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus. His journey of discovery takes him to Oxford University, where the papyrus fragment is currently stored, and on to Nashville, where the dream to revive the ancient song takes root.

As part of the production, Chris Tomlin and Ben Fielding—two of the world's most respected Christian composers—work to resurrect this song as a piece of modern worship music. Their efforts span continents and cultures, resulting in a truly beautiful piece of music that is both engaging and accessible to the modern church. *The First Hymn* culminates with the release of their creation in a concert finale in front of thousands of fans.

About Undeceptions

“Undeceptions” is a term C.S. Lewis used for moments of clarity, when preconceptions fall away and truth stands clear in its beauty. That’s the mission of Undeceptions. It’s a safe space to ask tough questions about faith and uncover the beauty in the answers. We approach these questions as ‘confident Christians’: happy to face doubts, happy to take the hits, happy to concede that there are some good arguments on the other side, and there’s some very bad history on our side. But in the end, the robustness of Christianity is clear.



With over 3 million downloads and a rapidly expanding global audience, now is the time to listen to Undeceptions. If you're not sure what to make of the Christian faith, or want to be more confident in talking about Christianity in a way that makes sense to doubters and skeptics, then listen to Undeceptions wherever you get your podcasts.

About CityAlight

CityAlight is a team of musicians supported by St Paul's Anglican Church, Castle Hill. Their vision is to write songs with biblically rich lyrics and simple melodies for Christian churches to sing. These include 'Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me', and 'Only A Holy God'. Their songs have taken them all around the globe, including Singapore and the USA, and garner over 1.5 million monthly listeners on Spotify.

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FEAST OF PETER & PAUL

Sunday 29 June 2025



8:00am Said Eucharist *with Hymns*

10:00am Choral Eucharist

Setting: **Missa Eliensis** *(Wills)*

Motet: **Give us the wings of faith**
(Bullock)

5:00pm Choral Evensong

Setting: **St Paul's Service** *(Howells)*

Anthem: **O how amiable** *(Vaughan Williams)*



Feast of the Dedication

Sunday 6 July 2025

10:00am **Orchestral Mass**

Introit: **Locus iste** (Bruckner)

Setting: **Missa Sancti Nicolai** (Haydn)

Motet: **Behold the Tabernacle** (Willan)

Guest Preacher: The Rev. Jonathan Adams

info@stpaulsburwood.org.au

The Story Behind the Hymns

HOW WE CAME TO SING HYMNS

Didn't we always sing hymns? Like most questions, the answer is "Yes" and "No". A good place to start is with St Augustine's commentary on Psalm 73:

Hymns are praises of God with singing: hymns are songs containing the praise of God. If there is praise, but not of God, it is not a hymn: if there is praise, and praise of God, but no singing, it is not a hymn. Therefore, if it is a hymn, it will properly have these three things, not only praise, but of God, and singing.

What is not clear from this simple quotation, is that Augustine was talking about Psalms. When we talk about hymns, we mean metrical compositions, that is verses in metre with rhymes. This distinguishes hymns from chants, either Gregorian or Anglican, which we use to sing non-metrical texts.

That Augustine was writing about Psalms, brings us to another distinction, that between scriptural texts and those written by human authors. Early church rules restricted singing to versions of scriptural texts. The Council of Laodicea, held somewhere between 343 and 381, said, in Canon LIX, "No psalms composed by private individuals ... may be read in the church". Reading included singing.

I make two final distinctions, first, that between music sung by a choir and music sung by the congregation. Hymn singing is essentially congregational. Second, the distinction between the text and the tune to which it is sung. We are accustomed to singing a familiar tune to a specific text. It was not always so. What this article traces, therefore, is the move to metrical versions of scriptural texts, from there to metrical non-scriptural texts, and from choral to congregational singing as a regular part of Christian worship.



Thomas Cranmer

The "we" in my title refers to the Anglican Church or, more specifically, to the Church of England. For that reason, I start with the first English prayer book, Thomas Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) of 1549, during the reign of Edward VI, who became king on 28 January 1547, at the age of nine. The rubrics to this, and later, versions of the BCP said very little about music. The first BCP said that the canticles and psalms could be sung and that, "where they doe syng" the Bible readings could be "songe in a playne tune after the maner of distincte readyng", that is, intoned, a practice that made the text more audible in a large space. The famous rubric, "In Quires and Places where they sing, here followeth the Antheme", did not appear until the BCP of 1662, after the restoration of the monarchy.

We may not easily understand that every BCP has been part of an Act of the Westminster Parliament and, therefore, legally binding. The earliest BCPs were part of the political structure of the realm, requiring uniformity amongst the subjects. It was an offence to depart from them. The rubrics and other directions were, therefore, particularly significant, as we shall later discover.

Cranmer commissioned John Merbecke, the organist at St George's Chapel, Windsor, to compose simple settings, similar to Gregorian chant, for the various parts of the liturgies of Matins, Evensong and Holy Communion in the 1549 BCP. The music to which St James sings the Nicene Creed is based on Merbecke's work, *The Booke of Common praier noted*. None of this, however, referred to congregational singing. It is hard to be certain what happened in parishes away from the centres of the larger cities and the universities, which had establishments for choral singing.

In 1559, Queen Elizabeth I issued a set of "Injunctions" for the better ordering of ecclesiastical affairs. Injunction XLIX encouraged the continuation of music in those places where there were established choirs. The singing of parts of the liturgy was encouraged. Also, Elizabeth said:

... for the comforting of such that delight in music, it may be permitted, that in the beginning, or in the end of common prayers, either at morning or evening, there may be sung an hymn, or suchlike song to the praise of Almighty God, in the best sort of melody and music that may be conveniently devised, having respect that the sentence of the hymn may be understood and perceived.

Thus, even though it would not be proper to depart from the rubrics during the service, it would be proper both before it started and after it ended, to sing a hymn. We should also note the emphasis, also present in Cranmer's rubrics, on ensuring that the texts were understood by the people. Almost certainly, this applied only to non-metrical psalms and, possibly, only to places with musical establishments, such as university colleges and cathedrals. Nevertheless, it was later taken to apply everywhere and to hymns in any form.

During Edward VI's reign, Thomas Sternhold, his Groom of the Robes, began to write metrical versions of some of the Psalms. Edward heard them, liked them, and encouraged Sternhold to continue his work. Sternhold died in 1549 and so had not proceeded very far in his endeavours. He sought out ballad tunes for his metrical psalms and avoided the tunes to what he regarded as the "amorous and obscene" songs sung around him. In this search, he was followed by later hymn writers. It is simply not true that they took tunes sung in public houses and taverns and set them for their hymns. The last thing that they wanted was people singing their words when, in the back of their minds, they were remembering something "unworthy".

Edward was followed by Mary I, who restored the Catholic Church. Cranmer, amongst others, was martyred and many clergy fled to the continent and, particularly to Geneva, which was under the control of John Calvin. The versifying continued there, culminating in a *Genevan Psalter*. After Mary died, much of this work was converted into a metrical psalter and authorised by Elizabeth I. Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes, Collected into English metre* (1562) (the Old Version), famously contained William Kethe's "All people that on earth do dwell", a version of Psalm 100 and its still-used tune "Old 100th".

The *New Version of the Psalms* (1696) by Nahum Tate (Poet Laureate) and Nicholas Brady generally replaced the Old Version. This version of psalms comprised the first hymnal, *National Psalmody*, introduced to St James in 1829, although with tunes more contemporary than those



prescribed by Tate and Brady. Like the earlier version, this collection also contained metrical versions of scriptural texts other than the psalms. We still sing one such text, “While shepherds watched their flocks by night”, a metrical version of Luke 2:8-14. Tate and Brady set those words to “St James” (NEH 464), which we still sing. The New Version also had official approval by Order-in-Council 3 December 1696 and, together with the Old Version, made up the only texts that could legally be sung in the Church of England.

Most metrical psalms were in one of three metres: Short Metre (SM) (6.6.8.6), Common Metre (CM) (8.6.8.6) and Long Metre (LM) (8.8.8.8). This meant that almost the whole psalter could be sung with only three tunes. I don’t suggest that any limited themselves in that way. It does show, however, that the singing of metrical psalms could easily happen with a limited repertoire of tunes.

We owe the arrival of non-scriptural hymns to English non-conformists and, principally, Isaac Watts (1674-1748), an Independent (Congregational) minister. He produced his own metrical psalter and a large number of non-scriptural hymns, which could be sung legally in such churches and chapels. The legal restriction did not apply in the Church of England if singing was done outside of the formal liturgy or in non-church premises. This option encouraged John Newton, an Anglican priest, whose *Olney Hymns* was published in 1779. Charles Wesley, also an Anglican priest, was a major hymn contributor. Methodists sang their hymns in their own chapels and were free from legal restrictions.

A SELECTION
OF
PSALMS AND HYMNS,
FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE,
ADAPTED TO THE FESTIVALS OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND;
AND
TO SOME PORTIONS
OF THE
EPISTLES, GOSPELS, OR LESSONS,
APPOINTED
FOR EVERY SUNDAY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

BY THE
REV. T. COTTERILL, A.M.
FORMERLY MINISTER OF LANE-END, STAFFORDSHIRE, AND
LATELY OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, SHEFFIELD.

Enter the Rev'd Thomas Cotterill (1779-1823), perpetual curate of St Paul's, Sheffield. In 1810, Cotterill published his own hymn book, *A Selection of Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Use*, which contained a metrical psalter other than either the New or Old Versions, and a number of hymns, beginning with Charles Wesley's "Hark the herald angels sing". He began to use this book in his church.

In April 1820, two of his parishioners, Daniel Holy, silverplater, and Samuel Broomhead, Esquire, brought charges against Cotterill in the Consistory Court of the Diocese of York, presided over by the Chancellor, the Worshipful G V Vernon MP, sixth son of the archbishop, the Most Reverend Edward Venables-Vernon-Harcourt. The charge was:

for his having introduced of his own pretended authority into the Public performance of divine Service in the said

Chapel of St Paul in the said town of Sheffield a certain Selection of Hymns and a metrical Version of Psalms not set forth or allowed by Law to be used in Churches or Chapels of the Establishment of the Church of England or by any competent authority whatsoever and for his having used or sung or caused to be used or sung in the said Chapel and as a part of the public Service sundry of the Hymns and Psalms contained in the said Selection

The chancellor took the whole matter very seriously, noting that “There was, perhaps, not a Clergyman in the kingdom who had not violated the law, if Mr Cotterill had done so.” He was suggesting that the law was already very frequently ignored. In his judgement, he found the law quite vague and confusing but concluded that Mr Cotterill had indeed broken it because all authority for activity “supplementary to the Liturgy established by Statute ... must emanate from the head of the Church”, that is, the monarch.

However, his father, the archbishop, offered to mediate between the parties and subsequently produced his own hymnal, paid for its printing, and gave Cotterill 1,000 copies for use in his church. He also gave copies to two other clergymen who were possibly next in line for prosecution. The chancellor urged Cotterill’s prosecutors to accept this outcome, saying that he should otherwise “consider them as wanting not only in a sense of their own interest, but in a regard to Christian charity and practical religion”. They took this wise advice. Formal legality failed to triumph over common sense.

These proceedings rendered the legal restrictions obsolete. As one commentator said, the archbishop’s actions afforded “an additional testimony, in favour of the modern practice of introducing into the Church, selections of Psalms and Hymns, accommodated to the popular taste and feeling”. The pretence was over. Non-scriptural hymns could now be sung in the Church of England, and during divine service.

Once the Church of England could sing hymns, the market for new compositions expanded quickly. New writers contributed. Their verses did not necessarily conform to the three traditional metrical psalm metres, so tunes were in short supply. John Wesley’s first hymn compilation in 1786 had 528 hymns but distributed them over only 194 tunes. Thus, hymn tune composition also expanded rapidly.



Archbishop Edward Venables-Vernon-Harcourt

Not long after the Cotterill decision, the market was flooded with more than 100 privately organised hymn collections. This unregulated supply of hymnals stimulated the search for some widely accepted common collection. Cotterill belonged to the evangelical wing of the Church of England but a new force was arriving on the scene: the Oxford Movement. The movement’s historical view of the Church of England stimulated a search for ancient Greek and Latin hymn texts to be translated into English as well as hymns long associated with the liturgical calendar. German Lutheran hymns were also translated. John Mason Neale and Catherine Winkworth were leaders in these fields.

Members of the Oxford movement began the process that ended ultimately in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (A&M). First published in 1851, A&M was wildly successful, well beyond its compilers’ expectations.

Literacy was a significant impediment to the signing of hymns in church. It is estimated that, in 1700, only 40% of English men and 25% of English women were literate. By 1800, the estimates rise to 55% for women and 65% for men. To the extent that hymn singing took place in areas or churches frequented by the working class, the illiteracy rates were much higher. Although the Methodists and others produced printed hymnals, many of their members could not use them.

Where the congregation was illiterate to any extent, hymns were sung by the “lining out” method where a leader sang a line first and the congregation repeated it. This method of singing was described in *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God, Throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* of 1645, which replaced the BCP during the Commonwealth period, i

in this way:

That the whole Congregation may join [in the singing] every one that can read is to have a Psalm-book, and all others, not disabled by age or otherwise, are to be exhorted to learn to reade. But for the present, where many in the Congregation cannot reade, it is convenient that the Minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other Ruling Officers, do reade the Psalme, line by line, before the singing thereof.

After a sufficient time, everyone would have learnt by heart the words of a significant number of hymns. Access to music was even more difficult. Scores had to be engraved by hand on copper plates or etched by acid, a process that also involved hand drawing. Indeed, the term “score” refers to the engraving process. It was expensive and tunes were usually produced in separate books available only to leaders and musicians.

The 1851 music edition of A&M was the first hymnal that had the words and music on the same page. Its production depended on the development of separate lead blocks of music that could be combined with the typeset text to produce a single printed page. The music edition of A&M was, therefore, a significant technological breakthrough.

It was always possible to sing without musical accompaniment, but instruments made the singing heartier and more satisfying. Very few English churches had organs in the 18th century. Their building had been stopped during the Commonwealth and only slowly recommenced. Most churches that had any music used a west gallery band of available villagers, playing whatever instruments they could. This band was frequently associated with a west gallery choir, which often had a life of its own beyond the direction of the clergy.

The Oxford Movement encouraged the installation of organs and the replacement of the west gallery choir with a robed choir in the chancel, closer to, and more controllable by, the clergy. Village churches could install a harmonium or small organ, to be played by the minister’s wife or daughters and needing only a boy to pump the bellows. This move spelt the almost universal end of west gallery music and gave control of church music to the clergy and trained professionals. The production of hymnals was not only to help people sing. The process had an ideological edge; it allowed the compilers to control the doctrines contained in what the people sang. John Wesley, Thomas Cotterill and the compilers of A&M were quite clear about this. The inclusion of tunes also allowed the musical quality to be controlled. Indeed, it was the hymnal with tunes that standardised the relationship between text and music that allows us to say the name of the hymn as soon as we hear the music. That was not possible when leaders chose the tunes from separate music books and any locality had its own limited range of what it could sing.

I am not sure whether or not Thomas Cranmer would approve of the ways in which we use hymns today. But it is the case that hymn texts, hymn tunes and how they are sung are subject to popular tastes and styles. We rarely today sing a hymn to the tune that the author might have chosen. We may not like the text’s religious language; the way it perpetuates old-fashioned usages or the constant use of the masculine. We alter the texts to reflect our own views and, sometimes, find new tunes. Some will regard this with horror but, if we understand the history, this is how it always was.

At a recent concert, the famous English choir The Sixteen, sang nine tunes composed by Thomas Tallis in 1567 for some metrical psalms from Archbishop Parker’s Psalter. Matthew Parker (1504-1575) was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1559 until his death. Elizabeth I, although she reportedly disliked him personally, favoured him because of his moderate views and because he had been chaplain to her mother, Anne Boleyn. His inquisitiveness is said to be the origin of the epithet “nosey Parker”. More importantly, he was behind the production of the 39 Articles and the

version of the Book of Common Prayer used in Elizabethan times.

In 1567, Parker published his own metrical Psalter, translating into verse from the Hebrew. The work began with a long poetic preface extolling the virtues of Psalm singing and a long argument from St Athanasius to the same effect. Each psalm was preceded by its “argument” and followed by a collect. Here is his version of Psalm 23.

The Argument

The Christian man
Confesses he can
How God his life doth guide
With meat so good
Of heavenly food
From death his soul to hide

Psalm XXIII

The Lord so good: who giveth me food
My shepherd is and guide:
How can I want; or suffer scant,
When he defendeth my side.

To feed my need: he will me lead,
In pastures green and fat:
He forth brought me: in liberty,
To waters delicate.

My soul and heart: he did convert,
To me he sheweth the path:
Of righteousness: in holiness,
His name such virtue hath.

Yea though I go: through death his woe,
His vale and shadow wide:
I fear no dart: with me thou art,
With staff and rod to guide.

Thou shalt provide: a table wide,
For me against their spite:
With oil my head: thou shalt bespread,
My cup is fully dight. [set in order]

Thy goodness yet: and mercy great,
Will keep me all my days:
In house to dwell: in rest full well,
With God I hope always.

The Collect

Lead us Lord by the rules of thy comfortable precepts, that when we have obtained the habitation of thy everlasting mansion, we may be fully satisfied with the cup of joyful eternity, through Christ our Lord.
&c.

Michael Horsburgh

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50th Anniversary Gala

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chamber
choir

Sydney Chamber Choir

Sam Allchurch
Conductor

Brooke Window
Soprano

Richard Butler
Tenor

Nicola Bell
Oboe/Cor anglais

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Clarinet

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4/5 August	Senior / Junior Schools Choral Festival
25 October	Festival of Great Hymns
15 November	Christmas Themed Event
Date TBC	Hymn Festival—NSW South Coast
Date TBC	Prom Praise—Sydney Town Hall

Newsclaf Issues 2025

Issue 3	August (contribution deadline 4 August)
Issue 4	November (contribution deadline 3 November)



RSCM Choristers' Prayer

***Bless, O Lord, us Thy servants
who minister in Thy temple.
Grant that what we sing with our lips,
we may believe in our hearts,
and what we believe in our hearts,
we may show forth in our lives.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.***

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