

Diocese of Galloway - Music Core Group

February 2006 Newsletter

Many thanks to those of you who returned our survey forms. A summary of the results is enclosed.

In the next few weeks we are intending to telephone round all our parish contacts, to make sure our information is up to date. So please expect a call from us, and if we leave a message on your answering service it would be a tremendous help if you 'phone us back!

FUTURE EVENTS

We have one or two ideas for events this year, but details are not yet finalised so there will be more information in our next newsletter.

OTHER EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

The RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) organise courses and workshops throughout the year across the UK. For more information, visit www.rscm.com. They are now sending out a Scottish newsletter to their members, with information about what's going on in Scotland.

There will be a sight singing day for adults on Saturday 20 May at Dunblane Cathedral. A Scottish Triennial Festival is being held on 4 November at St Michael's Church, Linlithgow, and this will be directed by Gordon Stewart (organist of Huddersfield Town Hall, conductor, recitalist and broadcaster). For more information about either of these events contact Kathleen on 01620 893245 or Kathleen@rscmscotland.org.

The Society of St Gregory are organising a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from 21 - 29 October 2006, led by Fr Allen Morris (Secretary of the Department of Christian Life & Worship of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales). The Music Director is Martin Foster (Assistant Secretary of the Department of Christian Life & Worship). Bookings are through Special Pilgrimages, telephone 0800 371972.

PORTABLE ROLL PIANO

Just what you wanted for Christmas and didn't get! This is basically a (silicon rubber) keyboard that rolls up, and comes in 4 octave or 5 octave length (and shorter - but it's hard to see what use that would be!) The 49 key version (4 octaves) is 10 inches x 4 inches x 5 inches. When unrolled it is only 1/8 inch thick. It weighs only 1.5 lbs, and is powered by four AA batteries. It has 100+ different sounds/voices, 10+ demonstration songs and a record/play function. It is MIDI compatible.

The idea is a good one, but the product would benefit from some 'development' before you rush out and buy one! There seems to be only one manufacturer making them at the moment (Yamano).

To be able to play this 'piano', you need to roll it out on a flat surface. The black notes are not raised, so when you try playing, it's very easy to hit black notes when you think your fingers are on white notes. Also, if you 'hold' on to a note in the 'wrong' way - it may sound several times! The touch doesn't seem to be completely even, and some notes (Es in particular) didn't seem to respond as quickly/easily as others. The overall sound isn't that loud and to use it to accompany singing or other instruments you would need external amplification.

It's very difficult to play it evenly - and attempting anything above grade 1 or grade 2 standard might be a bit ambitious! Even then, it would take a lot of getting used to. When Nicola tried one, the music shop she was in gradually emptied It was also physically hard work and 10 - 15 minutes led to strained fingers/hands. It was great fun, though!

WEB SITE REVIEWS

No book reviews this time, but we've looked at useful things on a couple of web sites.

www.catholic-ew.org.uk/liturgy/music/

There are plenty of resources on the web site of the Liturgy Office of England and Wales, and it would be worth having an hour to two spare before you visit it!

This includes a leaflet called 'Musicians and their ministry at Mass', 'Singing the Mass' (which lists priorities for which parts of the Mass should be sung), guidelines for the production of orders of service, information about common responsorial psalms, a composer's guide, a parish musicians' guide to music at funerals, and plenty of other materials.

So - even if you don't much enjoy browsing the internet - have a look at this site and you will probably be pleasantly surprised!

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/boards/worship/worshippublicationsmusic

There are three useful leaflets that can be downloaded from this page of the Church of Scotland's web site.

'All that hath life and breath' is about helping the whole of a congregation to take part in the music of the church and has a useful section on teaching a congregation to sing well.

'With heart and hand and voices' is about leading the music of the local church. It contains helpful background information about organs (useful for beginner organists), hints on

congregational accompaniment, advice about leading a choir and improving singing, and a section on metre (how the metrical index works).

'Assist our song' (on choosing hymns and music for worship) is mainly for musicians in the Church of Scotland, but is worth reading to find out how another denomination organises things and for the useful snippets of information throughout that can be used anywhere.

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Visit our website at www.gallowaymusic.net

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