



The Magazine of the **Guild of Church Musicians**
No 97 January 2019

LAUDATE

From the Editor of Laudate

Welcome to our first magazine of 2019!

We are in the process of arranging an exciting programme of events for the year and you can read about these in this issue. Please make a note of our AGM event which is taking place at All Hallows-by-the-Tower on 11 May and our visit to Birmingham Cathedral, on 15 June. There will be opportunities for Guild members to join a special choir on both these occasions – something we haven't done for some years now, and we hope that this will be an added incentive for you to join us on these occasions.

The January issue of the Magazine always incorporates the old Yearbook material about the structure and organisation of the Guild but always adds more articles of general interest. We are especially proud to welcome our new Australian Warden Revd Dr Daniel Dries, and you can read all about him on page 4.

You are warmly invited to fill in our questionnaire about your views on what the Guild stands for and to let us know about your musical activities. You will be able to do this either by post or by emailing back the form you can download on our website. I'd like to hope that we can move further towards using email to keep you in touch with our activities – although this means keeping us informed of your contact details too! If any of your details do change, kindly let me know so our records can be updated speedily.

With every good wish to you all for 2019 – and all it might hold!

Michael Watson



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Cover image: Rt Revd Richard Hurford hands over the Australian Wardenship of the Guild to Revd Dr Daniel Dries on 7 October 2018

YOUR ARTICLES AND OPINIONS ARE EAGERLY SOUGHT

It would be good to receive more feedback from Guild members about what you want to see in *Laudate*.

You are welcome to contact the Editor by any of the following means:

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Do visit us on the internet at www.churchmusicians.org

What I have gained from taking the ACertCM Examination

Josephine Smith BA(Hons) HNDPA(Mus) ACertCM MISM

I was casually looking at some pages on the RSCM website a few months ago and I came across a link to The Guild of Church Musicians. I had never heard of them before this, so I clicked on the link and ended up on the site. After close examination I decided to become a member with a view to encouraging some of the members of our church Music Group to take the *Preliminary Certificate*. I studied all the examination options and I kept coming back to the *Archbishops' Certificate (ACertCM)* and felt a compulsion to take it. I tentatively made enquiries and the next minute I was entered for the examination! I found the communications with the members of the Guild to be second to none and my initial communication was with Dr Benham, the Chairman of the Academic Board. The first item that I needed to tackle was the 3500-word essay. There was a choice of essay titles or I could have chosen my own but I settled on 'What Purpose does Music Serve in Christian Liturgy and Worship?'

Having not written an academic essay for 22 years, when I did my BA (Hons), this was fairly daunting but I did some research and started putting some ideas down on paper. Dr Benham was extremely helpful and allowed me to send him drafts until he felt it was satisfactory enough to send in. Writing the essay made me delve into areas of church music that I have not delved into before (plainsong, decoration of the melody line with harmony, the Quaker religion, polyphony) and I also undertook some interviews with members of our church to gain their opinions on the subject.

My music choices, which I played on the flute, were my own arrangement of *As the Deer Pants for Water* by Martin J. Nystrom, *Cantique de Jean Racine* by Gabriel Fauré and *La Tempesta di Mare* (3rd Movement) by Antonio Vivaldi. My piano accompanist, Rahna Windsor, accompanied me for all my pieces, and one of my talented young flute pupils Ariana Bendall, played the second flute in the *Cantique de Jean Racine*. I produced a programme note for each of these pieces and collated them into a bound booklet.



As part of the ACertCM I needed to attend two courses provided either by the Guild of Church Musicians, the RSCM or other bodies, but distance was difficult, so the flexibility of the GCM became apparent because they allowed me to read and study a substantial part of the book *O Sing Unto the Lord* by Andrew Gant (Profile Books, 2015). I did my best to internalise the plethora of information within it, whilst taking a copious amount of notes to allow me to revise it before the viva part of the exam. I learnt a great deal about church music including the colourful harmonies, figured bass and the introduction of stringed instruments into services and much, much more.

It was agreed that my other 'course' would be to attend the Massed Choir at Lichfield Cathedral, organised by the RSCM. I bought the book *King of Glory, King of Peace* a few weeks beforehand and learnt all the pieces that I had been informed that we would be singing. My husband drove me there and he sat in the congregation and watched the proceedings with interest. Usually, thrown into a group situation such as this I would have been rather apprehensive, but everyone in the massed choir was so friendly and the experience of singing in such a large, quality choir was absolutely

breath-taking. We sang the beautiful *A New Commandment* by Richard Shephard with such sincerity, and *Crown Him with Many Crowns* with the descant plus many others. We all processed out to a faultlessly played voluntary on the stunning Lichfield organ and then we had after-service prayers feeling elated and full of God's glory. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and my husband and I will be attending the event again next year.

It seems strange to enjoy an exam, but the exam day was one of the highlights of my life. The two examiners were incredibly friendly and so easy to talk to, full of positive comments and I can't thank them enough for everything. The viva part of the exam was something that I felt apprehensive about but the three of us had a thoroughly enjoyable conversation! All in all, I really enjoyed the whole examination and I recommend that anyone contemplating this exam should contact The Guild of Church Musicians and make enquiries. The flexibility, friendliness and professionalism of the members of the academic board shines through and I hope if you decide to enter for the ACertCM you will gain as much knowledge and enjoy the whole experience as much as I did.

The Presentation of the Archbishop's Certificate at Lichfield Cathedral on Sunday 18th November 2018

It was decided, after successfully completing my ACertCM qualification that I would go to Lichfield Cathedral to accept my certificate and medallion from the Dean, along with the RSCM candidates who had passed their Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. After a trouble-free journey to Lichfield, we arrived at 13:45, just in time for the rehearsal at 14:00. After gowning up, we all went to rehearse the presentations and then the music which we would all be singing together with the Cathedral Choir, *O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem* by Howells and Dyson's *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis*.

Once we all felt comfortable with everything we waited in the choir stalls for the service to begin. For me, I had only received a copy of the music two days previously and on that Sunday morning, I was singing and playing at our sister church St Matthew's Church, Meerbrook where the Rt Rev Bishop Geoff Annas was confirming seven candidates from local



churches. His sermon was very amusing and he mentioned the X-Factor as he is such an upbeat Bishop! So apart from listening to recordings of the music and having a quick look through, I was more or less sight singing with the Cathedral Choir, quite an achievement on my part as I managed to sing it all without any hitches.

Yet again, singing with the Cathedral choir was breath-taking and another highlight of my life. I seem to be having more and more liturgical and musical highlights since joining the Guild of Church Musicians and the music which we sang was just mesmerising and atmospheric, especially the Howells. The Dean presented me with my certificate and medallion and at the end of the service we all processed out proudly along with the Cathedral Choir and we said our post-service prayer. Bishop Geoff came over afterwards and shook my hand commenting on the fact that he had seen me earlier at the previous church; then photos were taken with both the Dean and the Bishop.

There were times when I was struggling with the essay that I wrote for the ACertCM exam – and asked myself why I put myself through all this, but the highlights completely outweigh the wobbles. If it wasn't for deciding to take the Archbishop's Certificate, I would not have experienced and learned all that I have and met so many lovely people along the way.