

Notepaper



Music Development in the churches of the Diocese of Lincoln
Quarterly news

Passiontide 2010
www.lincoln.anglican.org/music

Less than a year...

The Countdown

The MDO project is a 3-year, 3-day a week project to provide sustainable support for the worshipping life of C of E churches here through music. So far we have a hands-free training project for children which is proving useful for adults too, 8 placement churches offering apprenticeships for teenage players, an all-adults tutorial network in the making, music for unaccompanied singing for the many churches with no players, affordable music for the smaller choir, and the formation of the Diocesan Ladies' Choir for general outreach/mission and twining with Harnosand. I would like to see comparable Gents' and Youth choirs, a network of borrowable Worship Bands who would travel to play, and a set of recommended links to other sites offering downloadable music resources. Not ambitious, then!

Above all though, the speed of take-up needs to double.

Rationale for Ladies' Choir age-range

Some people are puzzled by the age-range set for the Ladies' Choir. Of course at first sight this will appear to be narrow or even unkind, but I hope you will see from what follows that in fact the opposite is the case.

The age-range of 25 – 65 (when in service) is set to pre-empt the vexed and painful prospect of how to "retire" people once they start to have trouble with night driving, 12-hr coach travel within Sweden (we are to twin with La Chorale of Harnosand) and vocal deterioration. The benefit of an upper limit is that no-one need leave for reasons of inadequacy, but by virtue of reaching an arbitrary date well before decline is likely. Across the land we have the

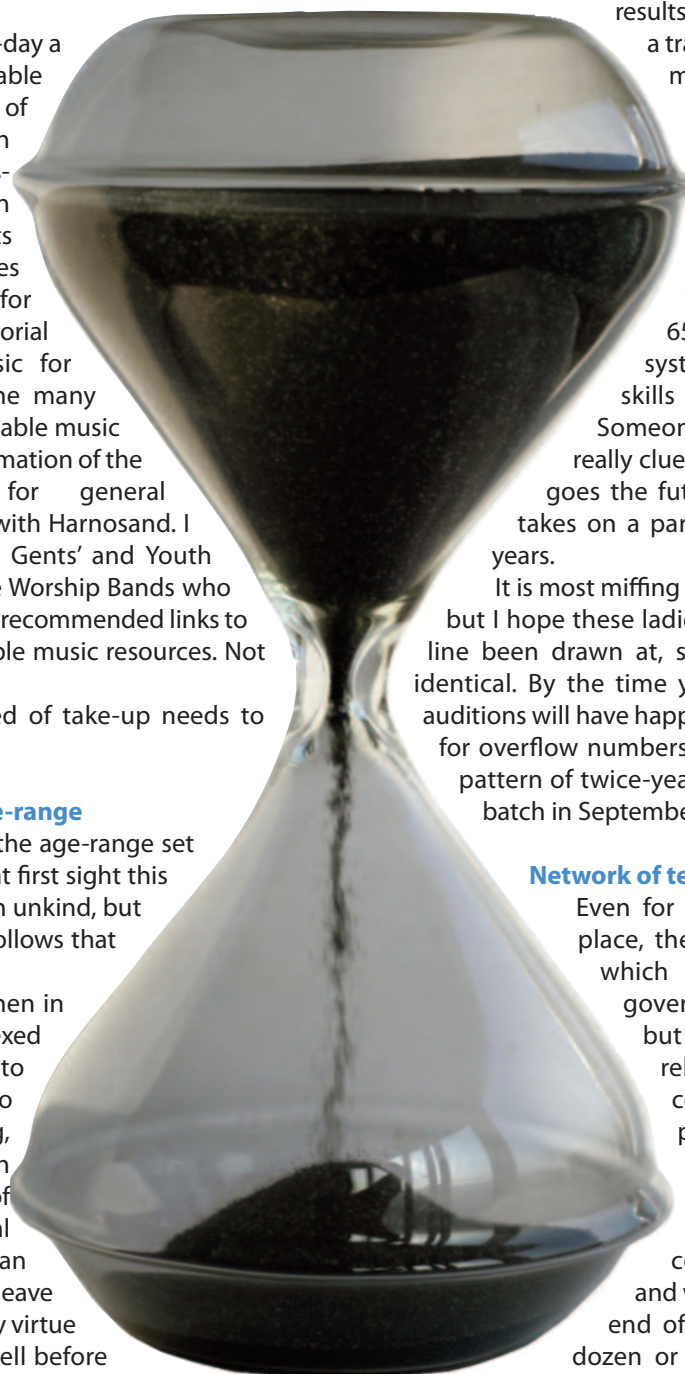
results of failure to see this coming, and a travelling choir is not going to suit many older singers, or be affordable by students. The younger range is set to avoid instability for the choir, whilst people move around in education and first jobs etc.

Taking the longer-sighted view, trained singers aged only 65 will be released into the parish system to serve as leaders with the skills they have learnt in the choir. Someone aged 55 joining now will be really clued-up in 10 years time, and there goes the future of the diocese if she then takes on a parish role for say, another 10-15 years.

It is most miffing for those aged 64-5-6 right now, but I hope these ladies will understand that had the line been drawn at, say, 70 the problem would be identical. By the time you read this the first wave of auditions will have happened. Further slots are available for overflow numbers - please ask - and a recruiting pattern of twice-yearly will be put in place, i.e next batch in September.

Network of teachers for adults

Even for all-adults learning in a public place, there are new safeguarding laws which must be followed. The government is producing guidelines but there is some delay on their release, during which I can continue to compile my list so please say if you wish to join it as a qualified musician, or to recommend another. I would love to see the map evenly covered by 50 musicians ready and willing to teach - target date, the end of June! Why 50? One for every dozen or so churches, that's why! How many do I have now? 16. Hmm. Keep trogging.



What's on?



Forthcoming Courses

The starter-courses in organ-playing and singing (Jan-Feb) need to be followed up soonish [the Spilsby gang is operating independently now] so how about this?

Further organ studies for Grade 3 and above piano, and further singing for anyone who did the first course or has studied previously, are as follows:

Organ 11 – 12.30 at Nettleham; singing on Sat 12th June, 2 – 3.30 at St. Faith, Ermine.

Booking by 22nd May please, by email or phone; £10 pp on the day.

Children's Work

As you know, the diocesan singing/catechism programme for 9 – 11 yr olds is now up on the web www.singouthosanna.org for download and local delivery without trained leadership, just safeguard-checked help. It seems to work for 9 – 90 yr olds in practice, I note!

Something odd is going on here. In some places the seed withers before it has sprouted, and no children take it up, or a few run with it for a while then drift away. In others, children seize it avidly (be prepared for the profound questions they'll ask you) and they are dead keen on it, even if modernly fidgety in demeanour whilst it's on. Tell them there's no choir next week at your peril! I have no idea what that's about but I do see one thing – you can but try.

I suggest you don't wait for the schools to have timetable space for this, as it takes an hour a week and unless they supplant their RE and worship time with it, it may not fit. I suggest you offer it as tea-time church for the village and invite families to tea & bun whilst the kids prepare the service from the CDs. You know that the Alpha course is fuelled by intravenous pasta, and before that the wry song "Will you come to the Mission, will you come? (there's a free cup of tea and a bun)" sent up the church as bait-peddlers; but after all, we have something eternal, priceless and ineffable to offer as well as stodge, be that Italian pasta or Anglo-Saxon dough.

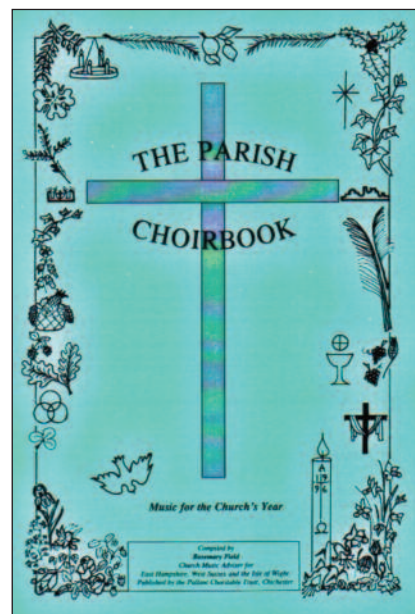
Ask me to come and demo it if that will help your people feel brave enough to try.

Consolidation

The Eucharist Setting

This year, my task is to consolidate what I've started as you know. To this end I am pushing for the Meon Eucharist setting to be adopted by places without accompaniment, to give them something intended to be sung that way. I am more than happy to come and teach it, and there are recordings available for further support in the learning and singing-through.

For modest choirs, there is the Parish Choirbook, which is designed for the variable voice-parts you find in today's volunteer groups. It has a run of music for the church year together with some staple things. At £2 a copy you would pay more than this for one anthem alone in separate sheets, so you may as well have the lot and ignore what you can't find a use for. I compiled it in 1996 for the same



situation in Hampshire, find myself using it for my volunteer choir in central London and know posher choirs who keep a set as fall-back music for emergencies. You would be hard pressed not to find something in it for your group, be that a 2-part carol or an Iona snippet, or an English Plainsong thing for when they all clear off at half-term! Believe me, I live the choir-trainer's despairing life too.

Notepaper will be published four times a year with updates about the Music Development work at times when you need them.

To contact Rosemary for further information or general enquiries

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please ring 01522 504023. Rosemary's work will doubtless take her out of the office just when you ring, so please do leave a message and don't give up at that point!

or you can write to her at the above address

or email her on rosemary.field@lincoln.anglican.org

Her diocesan mobile number is 07525 966832 and that is operational Thursday-Saturday inc, and will take messages at other times.

Music Lesson

Reading compound time ".....who could ask for anything more?!"

Compound time is easy to identify; the top figure of the time-signature will be 6, 9 or 12 and each pulse is a dotted note. This gives it an unmistakable lilt, because, perforce, a dotted note is worth 3 of the next value down the list.

For example, a dotted crotchet equals 3 quavers. Every pulse sounds like a miniature waltz-time.



This is why it's called compound - because it's groups of mini-waltzes within an overall framework of 2, 3, or 4 stresses per bar.



The subdivisions of the pulse are in groups of 3s and 6s.

You can have 2, 3 or 4 mini-waltzes per bar. The give-away is the top figure:

6 on top means 2 pulses (2 dotted notes, 6 shorter ones)

9 on top means 3 pulses and (3 dotted notes, 9 shorter ones)

12 on top means 4 pulses (4 dotted notes, 12 shorter ones) per bar.

Lower figures mean what they always did:

8 = quavers, 4 = crotchets and 2 = minims.

You know the old adage about three twos versus two threes? Well, it could come in handy here!

6/8 means, literally, 6 quavers in a bar. So far, so simple. But of course, you are not going to count manically at that speed and 6 quavers could be seen as 3

pairs of 2, with the stress falling alternately (3/4 time) or 2 groups of 3, with the stress falling on the first and the 4th (6/8 time).

The printing gives it away - the tails of the notes will be grouped to match the time-sig - either 3 pairs, or 2 threes.

To count in 6/8 time, count only the 2 main pulses per bar ("1, 2, 1, 2" etc) and get used to the standard rat-runs for the sub-divisions. Often they are long-short or short-long within the pulse;



remember that a crotchet is only 2/3 of a pulse and a quaver 1/3 in this time-signature. That is the main point to absorb - plain notes are less than one pulse, as a dotted crotchet is your whole-pulse symbol. A whole bar on a dotted minim is dead obvious as there's nothing else in it! 9/8 and 12/8 read in exactly the same way, it's just that they are extended by an extra pulse, or two, respectively. Only if the tempo is very slow or there are lots of shorter notes with fiddly proportions is it worth actually counting the shorter notes in all their glory as 6, or 9 or 12, to sort out the detail.

***The two bars (above) sound identical but the first is written to show the 6 quavers of 6/8 time and the second looks exactly like the 3 crotchet units of 3/4**

To read in 6/4 (or 9, or 12) is slightly harder to see at a glance because the pulse is a dotted minim and therefore the subdivisions are crotchets, which have no tails to join. Where there are quavers they will be joined to show the layout, but that is no help if the music moves in crotchets. Learn to see them as adding up to 3 per pulse, and if necessary mark your copy where the pulses start.

If you are not yet completely dazed, I advise a mid-Lent shot of chocolate and coffee. Now comes the awkward bit: composers WILL write cross-rhythms. These are when you see one thing and hear another (intentionally!) and result in the listener hearing e.g. 3 stresses in a bar where the singer sees only two. This is achieved by making the music move only where it would take a stress in the opposite time-signature - for example, in 6/8 time, on the 1st, 3rd and 5th quavers of the bar (*see below). We can take heart that recent music is pretty simple about this compared with the medieval period when the written complexity would have given Pythagoras a migraine. But people were more cerebral then, and music was less about feeling and more about construction for the mind to view and marvel at. Isn't it odd how arts and sciences have duelled all these years for control of the vehicle of communication?

Viewpoint

*"God does not require us to be successful
- only faithful" - Mother Teresa*

Offer this to all those of you who labour on in remote places with few people and mega freezing buildings, ever-increasing costs and that certain indifference among your neighbours which makes you feel like wailing that "I, only I, am left!"

Not until I saw the Judean wilderness did old ignorama here realise that is was empty - my childhood use of the word was limited to the over-full area of the back garden into which only the dog ventured, emerging festooned in burrs. That the wilderness is a picture both of the soul and the church, is consoling. This surely is what Jesus faced, tempted to wow the world with a cheap stunt, to self-gratifying miracles and to doubting the inner God whom he both prayed to and is.

This is surely enough to identify with any of our situations. For us, the question is more practical: are we being good stewards by our dogged faithfulness or are we just wasting our talents, like the flower in the poem, on the desert air (even if Lincs deserts are a trifle on the bracing side!)? This is a tough one; the C of E is burdened and gifted equally with lovely buildings which require sustaining; we are not in the position of those who have donated the ancestral home to the National Trust as the C of E IS that for churches, and for many of the things they symbolise. Non-Anglican churches mostly use only what they really need, making their people travel to the nearest outpost, and often being fuller and leaner as a result. Don't be fooled - they don't have bigger congregations! But in these remote C of E churches lies the spirit of English Christianity - the feeling that no hamlet should be devoid of a chapel, no village short of a church and no city without its cathedral. But, for the remote church the message might sometimes appear to be, "we are history, not making history". The door is weeded up like Holman Hunt's picture and the interior, wet. The organ is bust and the choir all buried, the sole concessions to life being a calor-gas thing and a copy of Crosslincs. Where in all this does the judgement lie between success, failure, and faithfulness? I think it is very

important to remember that the Lord spares the city for the sake of the only just person therein - so he doesn't actually do numbers-equals-worth thing, then. And equally, it is important not to get complacent when the queue stretches down the street - surely umpteen thousand sheep can't all be wrong? (Are you sure?) The temptation to try almost anything to get people inside the door is great. Rather like being shown that panorama from the mountain-top.....

There is a flawed teaching about that only behaviour which provenly damages others is actually wrong. By the same flawed token, only behaviour which provenly helps others can be counted right. But think about the Father who sees everything done in secret, and rewards accordingly. We are told that this God values prayer offered privately without public display; and presumably, weeps over what else is done in secret. So, isolated actions are not morally neutral. Yes, God does require us to be faithful. Successful is what the world requires; telling the difference is not easy

if we allow numbers and popularity to be our sole criteria. It's being faithful where we are which counts, and being the witness to the real thing amid the dreamland of contemporary England. This you do; and in this I hope to support you in the coming year, what with the children's work programme and the new travelling choir, once the latter is up and running. A common heritage of worship and culture is a sustaining factor in any religion, and all other religions have their songs, stories and precepts; it is to the alienation of these among secular England that we owe the phenomenon of people seeking the Lord everywhere BUT in his church.

And we know that come the spring rains the wilderness will blossom - and how. As we enter Holy Week yet again, the pattern of pain, gain and triumph is here to remind us of the macrocosm, whilst we struggle along in the microcosm. Faithful cross! *Above all other, one and only noble tree; None in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit they peer may be.....*however lush the greening appears elsewhere. ■

