



RSCM Epiphany Festival 2017

For the third year in succession, RSCM Oxfordshire and Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, together organised an Epiphany Festival Service which this year took place on Saturday, 14th January. Eighty-five singers, members both of RSCM-affiliated choirs and individuals (drawn from Berkshire, Birmingham, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, London, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire) joined together with the Cathedral Choir under the skilled and encouraging direction of Dr Stephen Darlington. They were accompanied by William Wallace, Senior Organ Scholar at Christ Church, who also contributed Bach's *Pastorella* (BWV 590) and the Allegro con brio from Mendelssohn's *Sonata in B flat* (Opus 65, No. 4).

Rehearsal preceded the service, followed by a tea break, and then the well-attended Festival Service began at 6 pm. The service included five Lessons, two of which were read by Karen Gadd and Peter Smith from the RSCM Oxfordshire committee. Music ranged in age from a Walford Davies harmonisation of the 15th century *Coventry Carol* to carols arranged or composed by living musicians. These included *I see your crib* (Beth Hughes), *A song was heard at Christmas* (David Wilson), *No frightened shepherds now* and *The daylight is fading* (both by Paul Wigmore). Another choir item was *From the rising of the sun* (Gore Ouseley), while the Cathedral Choir also sang *Stella quam viderant* (Palestrina) and *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day* (Gardner).

The congregational hymns were 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness' (*Was lebet*), 'Mary came with meekness' (*French traditional*), 'Eastern monarchs, sages three' (*Tres Magi*), 'On this day earth shall ring' (*German traditional*), 'The sinless one to Jordan came' (*Solothurn*) and 'Jesus come! for we invite you' (*Neander*).

Singers leaving the cathedral were heard to say 'See you next year'. Perhaps the Epiphany Festival will become an annual fixture. It certainly provides a much-appreciated opportunity to sing with the Cathedral Choir.