



CHORISTER OUTREACH PROGRAMME

- part of Sing Up, the Government's National Singing Programme -

NOTES FOR SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The Chorister Outreach Programme is a national government-funded scheme designed to encourage and enable cathedrals to use their musical resources to promote singing among children in primary schools. It is part of the national *Sing-up* programme, led by the government's Singing Ambassador Howard Goodall, which aims to achieve *Singing School* status for every primary school by the year 2012.

In Devon, the project is run as a collaboration between Exeter Cathedral and the Devon County Council Music Service. It is also supported by the Royal School of Church Music, Devon Area, and the Benedictine Community at Buckfast Abbey. The programme aims to instil and develop the joy of singing among children in primary schools, by offering specialist teaching input, continuing support and high-quality performance opportunities. It also aims to raise levels of access, achievement and aspiration, and to encourage and develop collaborative projects for singing for both pupils and staff.

Following a highly successful pilot with four Exeter schools in the Spring of 2007, the project was fully launched in the Autumn Term of 2007. To date, the programme has involved around 1400 children.

SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Schools nominated by County Music Development Leaders, and usually from a particular locality within Devon, are invited to participate in the outreach programme for one of the three academic terms. Each school or group of schools will receive three visits from the programme's Musical Director or his Associate. Where neighbouring schools link up to share rehearsals, the project will hope to contribute towards any transport costs that are incurred.

Music will be chosen and arranged by the Musical Director and this can be made available in advance of the start of the project. All schools will work on the same three songs, and pdf files of the sheet music and backing tracks will be provided as rehearsal aids. The Musical Director will encourage and advise on good singing technique and performance practice.

On the third visit, a group of cathedral choristers will also be present who will sing second or third parts or descants as required to enhance the overall musical effect. This work will be in preparation for a major concert / performance opportunity in a prestigious venue - usually Exeter Cathedral although Buckfast Abbey and other suitable venues may also be used.

In addition to the three songs prepared jointly, each participating school will also be invited to contribute an additional musical item to the concert which demonstrates their own particular musical strengths. This can be choral, instrumental or a combination of the two. The cathedral choristers will also sing and may also contribute instrumental items in the programme. It is hoped that this opportunity will offer a stimulus and encouragement to the participating schools in developing their own choral and instrumental programmes.

Schools will be asked to agree the number of participating children before the project begins, as there has to be a practical limit on numbers. The same children should attend each rehearsal session as well as the final concert. It is hoped that schools will give permission for any official photographs taken at the concerts to be used for publicity purposes. If there are objections to this then they should be stated at the outset.

It is most important that preparation for the outreach concerts is not seen just as a one-off opportunity, but as a building block for the enhancement of singing in the schools concerned. To that end, the Musical Director and the Devon Music Service Music Development Leaders will be happy to make themselves available to assist schools in preparation projects, and to make follow up visits which can explore singing opportunities further - see also next section. They can also make recommendations about exploring of other musical skills. An evaluation sheet following participation in the project will offer opportunities to discuss ways forward.

DEVON COUNTY JUNIOR CHOIR (DCJC)

The Devon County Junior Choir was formed in September 2007, as an integral part of the Chorister Outreach Programme. It is for primary school age children from Years 3 to 8 who are really enthusiastic about singing and who would enjoy the opportunity to enhance their singing technique and perform regularly. The choir meets regularly on Saturday mornings, 09.30 - 11.00 am, in the music department of Exeter Cathedral School - Kalendar Hall, South Street, Exeter. The choir' repertoire is developing rapidly and covers a wide variety of musical styles. The choir has an exciting programme of concerts and other performing opportunities - full details can be found at www.dcmc.org.uk, where there are contact details and where an application form can be downloaded. Prospective new members will be asked to take a simple audition.

PERSONNEL

Musical Director – Stephen Tanner, BA, FTCL, ARCO, LTCL, PGCE

Stephen is Director of Music at Exeter Cathedral School. He is also Assistant Organist and Director of the Girl Choristers, Exeter Cathedral. Stephen is a highly experienced choral director, teacher and published composer, with many broadcasts, recordings and overseas tours to his credit. He is an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

Associate Musical Director – Andrew Downton, BA (Oxon), PGCE

Andrew is a former Exeter Cathedral School pupil and Exeter School music scholar, who graduated in music at Oxford University and then qualified as a primary school teacher. Having spent some years as a full-time classroom practitioner, he is now a freelance musician whose teaching includes some work in primary schools. He is also a member of a 'Dire Straits' tribute band called *dIRE tRAITS*.

DCJC Conductor - Rachel Smith, BA, PGCE

Rachel is an experienced primary school teacher, specialising in music and is highly regarded for her musical work with children. She was jointly responsible for music in two schools and Music Co-ordinator in one before taking up her present post as assistant to Stephen Tanner at Exeter Cathedral School. She also teaches piano at Exeter School. Rachel is a former member of the National Youth Choir and several Devon County music ensembles, she is a well established performer in piano, choral and solo singing. She currently sings in Exeter Philharmonic Choir and is a founder member of the close-harmony vocal quartet *Viva*, in which she is also the pianist and arranges much of the music. Rachel has recently worked as a Singing Tutor with the National Children's Choir of Great Britain and was also part of the International A Cappella School's inaugural course with King's Singer, Stephen Connolly.

NB the above-named, and all participating adults, have full CRB disclosure.