

Welcome to this issue of the RSTC Newsletter.

We aim to keep members informed of what is going on in and around RSTC and what is on offer during the coming months. We always welcome feedback and suggestions from members on anything concerning the events we stage and how they are carried out.

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Sir John Rutter: A Maestro of Modern Choral Music



‘John Rutter’s Christmas Celebration’ at The Royal Albert Hall signifies the start of the Christmas period and is a firm favourite of RSTC members – usually selling out in a very short time! Rutter himself conducts the whole proceedings in his usual light-hearted manner, getting the audience involved both with carol singing and taking part in his now-famous musical quiz.

Early Life and Education

John Milford Rutter was born in London on September 24, 1945. Raised in a musically appreciative household, Rutter's affinity for music became apparent early. He attended Highgate School in North London, where his musical talents were nurtured alongside fellow student John Tavener, who would also become a renowned composer. It was at Highgate that Rutter received his first opportunities to compose and conduct, experiences that would shape the course of his life.

After his time at Highgate, Rutter continued his studies at Clare College, Cambridge. There, he immersed himself in the vibrant musical life of the university, singing in the choir and composing prolifically. His earliest published works, including the now-beloved “Shepherd’s Pipe Carol,” emerged during his undergraduate years. The carol’s success brought Rutter to the attention of the broader musical world and set the stage for his future career.

Early Career and Breakthrough

Upon graduating, Rutter began to establish himself as both a composer and a conductor. In 1974, he returned to Clare College, this time as Director of Music, a position he held until 1979. Under his leadership, the choir flourished, developing a reputation for excellence that persists to this day. Works such as the “Gloria” (1974), a strikingly jubilant and accessible piece, and the “Requiem” (1985), with its blend of traditional and contemporary influences, cemented his reputation as a composer of extraordinary communicative power.

Signature Works and Musical Style

Rutter’s catalogue is extensive, and among his most famous pieces are “For the Beauty of the Earth,” “The Lord Bless You and Keep You,” “Requiem,” and “Magnificat,” each notable for their melodies and lush harmonies. His carols, in particular, have become part of the standard Christmas repertoire.

Stylistically, Rutter combines elements of English choral tradition with influences from popular music, jazz, and even light music.

Conductor, Producer, and Publisher

In addition to his composing, Rutter is a respected conductor and record producer. In 1981, he founded the Cambridge Singers, a professional chamber choir created initially to make recordings under his direction. The ensemble quickly became known for its purity of sound and precision, recording both Rutter's own works and a wide variety of choral literature.

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International Influence and Recognition

Although Rutter's music is quintessentially English in its roots, his appeal is global. His compositions are regularly performed and recorded in North America, Europe, Australasia, and beyond. He has received commissions from such diverse sources as the Vatican, the United States, and the city of Dallas; his "Mass of the Children" (2003) was written for a festival in New York.

Rutter's contributions have been recognized with numerous honours and awards. In 2007, he was appointed CBE for services to music, and in 2022, he was knighted, becoming Sir John Rutter.

Personal Life and Outlook

Rutter's personal life has been marked by both joy and tragedy. He is known as a warm and generous teacher, often working closely with school and amateur choirs. He has spoken openly about the challenges he has faced, including the loss of his young son, which deeply affected his outlook and found expression in his music's blend of hope and sorrow.

Despite the pressures of international fame, Rutter remains devoted to the everyday world of choral singing. He is a frequent guest conductor and workshop leader, and his enthusiasm for sharing the joy of music-making is palpable. "Music," he has said, "is a great unifier. Singers come together and create something beautiful that is bigger than themselves."

Legacy and Continuing Work

Sir John Rutter's legacy is already assured. As choirs and audiences continue to embrace his compositions, Sir John Rutter stands as a beacon of creativity and humanity in the musical world - a true maestro whose melodies will echo for generations to come.

Upcoming Events

In **September**, we travel to East London to see (and hear) **ABBA Voyage** at the ABBA Arena. The **October** event is Tchaikovsky's ballet **Sleeping Beauty** at the Yvonne Arnaud theatre in Guildford. **November** sees us at The Theatre Royal, Windsor for the play '**Sherlock Holmes – the Hunt for Moriarty**'.

In **December**, we return to the Royal Albert Hall for the ever-popular '**John Rutter Christmas Celebration**'.

Reminders to Members

Please make sure that you take careful note of events you have booked. Particularly for London theatres, we have to commit to bookings often many month's in advance of the show.

Details of events and Pick-up Times are always available on the RSTC website (www.rosestreettheatreclub.com). In addition, we will include a reminder to the next show when the monthly mailing is distributed.

RSTC AGM

The RSTC AGM will be held on Thursday 16th October 2025 in the Bradbury Centre. Come along and enter a free draw for 2 event tickets of your choice. The guest speaker is Peter Gill and his topic is 'The Wit and Songs of Noel Coward'.

Payment by Cheque

Many thanks to all those members who pay by cheque and have added 50p to cover the newly-leveled bank processing costs. Much appreciated!

Payment by Bank Transfer – a reminder

Members are reminded to include both their **Postcode** and the **Keyword** of the show they are paying for in their Bank Reference information. This helps streamline both the admin and accounting processes. eg. RG409ZZ NILE (booking for Death on the Nile)

Feedback from Members

After many of the events we stage, the Committee receives grateful messages for the services provided. Many thanks to all responders. Feedback can be made via email to one of the Committee or by using the Contact Form on the website.

Members' Afternoon Tea

This was held on **20th August** in the Bradbury Centre, with 60 members attending enjoying sandwiches, cakes and tea served by Committee members. Due to a restriction on numbers attending and many members being disappointed, another event will be put on after Christmas for those not able to attend this time.

RSTC Membership

As you will all know by now, RSTC membership subscription of £10 is due to be paid by 1st September for the coming year. Inevitably, there will be a few people not renewing for a variety of reasons. Their places will be taken up by those currently on the membership waiting list. Currently, our maximum membership stands at 425.

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