

The URC Music Network

Basic Information

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| Contact name and email address | The Revd Ray Adams ray.adams12@btinternet.com |
| Action required | Report |

Summary of Content

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| Main points | Update from The URC Music Network, reporting on good work, and on a recent decision to disband. |
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1. URC Music aims to be a network connecting worship leaders and music makers throughout the United Reformed Church.
2. We publish and distribute a magazine *Making a Joyful Noise* to members and like-minded organisations, but our main activity in recent years has been to organise an Annual Music Day in different parts of the country, so that our far-flung members, and others, can gather to make music together.
 - 2.1 In 2018, at St Columba's URC, York, our leaders for the day were Alex Walker (who enables churches to develop modern yet accessible styles of multi-media worship), Laurence Wareing (a freelance writer and editor of the Methodist website *Singing the Faith Plus*), Anne Sardeson (Thames North Synod's Training Officer – who is a hymn writer and worship-enabler), and Alison Micklem (the host church's minister who spoke about her father Caryl Micklem's hymns and their inspiration).
 - 2.2 In 2019 at Palmers Green URC in North London, we explored the theme 'Music for our well-being'. Our leaders on that occasion were Jennifer Kavanagh (a Quaker retreat leader), David Tims (a practitioner of the 'Singing for the Brain' project – who put us all through our paces!) and Anne Sardeson, who had been involved in editing *Hymns for Healing* (published by Stainer and Bell).
3. The organ advisory service has existed over many years to help churches enhance their worship through the appropriate use of an organ, whether it be a traditional pipe organ or an electronic instrument. A group of regional organ advisers, working with synod property officers, advise on the best course of action to take if a church decides to dispose of its organ, for whatever reason. Thanks are due to John Corrie for coordinating this service for many years.
4. Our website (www.urcmusic.org.uk) has also been developed and maintained by Matthew Prevett, and we thank him for seeking out interesting contributions from different parts of the URC.
5. However, the Network (during the suspension of church activity caused by the coronavirus) has had to live with the uncertainty of planning future face-to-face events, and the Executive Committee reluctantly decided to cancel their plans for a Music Day in 2020.

6. Further serious discussions within the Executive Committee over several years culminated in the proposal put to a special AGM in May 2020 that the URC Music Network in its present form should not continue beyond the end of 2020. The infrastructure of local branches enjoyed in their heyday by the URC Organists' Guild and Musicians' Guild at synod level no longer exists, and it has become increasingly difficult to recruit new members of the Committee as some existing Committee members are having to resign for family or other reasons.
7. The overwhelming majority of supporters reluctantly agreed that it was time to disband the Network, offering thanks to all who have supported it (and its predecessor Guilds) over many years, and in the hope that other ways would be found to promote Church Music throughout the United Reformed Church.
8. Supporters and friends of the Network are invited to contribute articles and reminiscences to a final edition of our magazine 'Making a Joyful Noise' which will be published in the early autumn. It is also hoped that there might be an opportunity to give thanks for the contribution of the Musicians Guild/ URC Music Network at a future General Assembly.