According to Andrew Stewart in *Classic FM* of December 2002, John "Rutter is possibly the most-performed living composer of choral music."

**John Rutter**

John Rutter was born in London in 1945 and received his first musical education as a chorister at Highgate School. He went on to study music at Clare College, Cambridge, where he wrote his first published compositions and conducted his first recording while still a student.

His compositional career has embraced both large and small-scale choral works, orchestral and instrumental pieces, a piano concerto, two children's operas, music for television, and specialist writing for such groups as the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble and the King's Singers. His most recent larger choral works, *Requiem* (1985), *Magnificat* (1990) and *Psalms* (1993) have been performed many times in Britain, North America, and a growing number of other countries. He co-edited four volumes in the Carols for Choirs series with Sir David Willcocks, and, more recently, has edited the first two volumes in the new Oxford Choral Classics series, *Opera Choruses* (1995) and *European Sacred Music* (1996).

From 1975 to 1979 he was Director of Music at Clare College, whose choir he directed in a number of broadcasts and recordings. After giving up the Clare post to allow more time for composition, he formed the Cambridge Singers as a professional chamber choir primarily dedicated to recording, and he now divides his time between composition and conducting. He has guest-conducted or lectured at many concert halls, universities, churches, music festivals, and conferences in Europe, Scandinavia, North America and Australasia. In 1980 he was made an honorary Fellow of Westminster Choir College, Princeton, and in 1988 a Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians. In 1996 the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred a Lambeth Doctorate of Music upon him in recognition of his contribution to church music.

In 1984 Rutter formed his own record label, Collegium, in the hopes of bringing choral music to a wider audience through performances of the highest possible quality. "I just wanted a vehicle for the Cambridge Singers," he says, "and a way of recording the music I wanted, when I wanted, with whom I wanted, in the buildings I wanted, with the engineers and the producers that I wanted." Collegium has achieved great success and wide acclaim over the years. "There was a much larger audience worldwide for the sort of music we were recording than we had ever known. It's really, really heartening, because it shows that choral music is much closer to the center of people's affections than is often suspected." In addition to showcasing Rutter's own work, including his beautiful *Requiem* (1998), Collegium CDs feature a wealth of traditional and sacred music.

A healthy amount of the repertoire released on the Collegium label has to do with Christmas. When asked about his feelings on the holiday, Rutter replies, "For me, first and foremost, Christmas is happy memories of the way it was celebrated when I was a kid. As everyone would probably say, it revolves around the family and gatherings. But it also revolves around my school chapel. I was at a school in north London that happened to have a chapel with a fine choir. And our Christmas carol service was the high point of our singing year. So I actually developed a love of the whole music of Christmas, along with the message of Christmas, from when I was a kid. With music, your Christmas can always be perfect. With real-life Christmas, there's always something that's going to go a bit wrong. You're hoping it's going to snow on Christmas day, but it doesn't. Or your turkey smells absolutely gorgeous, but it turns out that it's a bit burned when you come to eat it. But the music of Christmas is always perfect, and so I love to remember and celebrate Christmas in music and song."

Information supplied by Gary Walton 9/28/04