

Blackburn Cathedral Music & More online Supplement No. 6

December 2012 and January 2013

CHRISTMAS DAY 2012

Our 10.30 a.m. Christmas Day Eucharist was memorable not only for the lovely flower arrangements which graced our cathedral and a lively sermon by the Bishop of Burnley but also, of course, for the singing of the Cathedral Choir.



The setting was Haydn's *Little Organ Mass* which has, as most of us know, one of the shortest settings of the *Gloria* ever written.

Haydn more than made up for this brevity by his setting of the *Benedictus* which is for treble solo. This was sung exquisitely by Head Chorister **William Fielding** who was accompanied by two organs: **Shaun Turnbull** on the 4-manual Walker/Wood organ and **Samuel Hudson** playing the obbligato part on our 4-rank Tickell chamber organ. It was magical.



*William Fielding and Samuel Hudson,
with tenor choirman Philip Hunwick & alto James Twigg*

Renaissance Singers sing at York Minster

Our highly talented Renaissance Singers (founded on 20th May 1965 – that's 48 years ago!) braved the journey from Lancashire to Yorkshire on 4th January to sing Choral Evensong in the glorious Minster.



Samuel Hudson conducted them with **Shaun Turnbull** at the Minster's mighty organ. The Responses were by former Blackburn DoM **David Cooper**, the canticles were Howells' *Gloucester Service*, and the anthem Victoria's *O magnum mysterium*. (*O great mystery of the Incarnation and wonderful sacrament when the animals in the manger saw their newborn Lord.*)

Victoria (1548-1611) was a highly gifted Spanish composer whose music was so spiritual and so very expressive. Indeed, in the first three notes of this exquisite motet, he portrays the animals bowing to Jesus.

Needless to say, the Renaissance Singers sang not only with their voices but also from their hearts. *Rehearsal photo: Terry Givens*

On the first Sunday in January ...

... the 10.30 service was sung by our choirmen only. And what did they sing but the extraordinarily moving setting by Maurice Duruflé.

The music leadership roles were reversed that day, for the choir was conducted by **Shaun Turnbull** and accompanied by **Samuel Hudson**.

Your editor found the singing and playing of this demanding work transcendent – yes, *transcendent!* And even though the men had sung this work before, they sang it that morning after only one brief rehearsal.

The communion anthem was David Briggs' lovely setting of *Ave Maria*, composed for the Gentlemen of our Cathedral Choir for performance specifically alongside the Duruflé Mass.



Briggs & Duruflé – what a happy duo! Full marks all round!