

**Blackburn Cathedral
Music & More
Online Supplement No. 20**

July 6th 2013



What a triumphant evening it was and what an ambitious programme – so thrillingly performed before such an enthusiastic audience!

But first, of course, there was a reception for sponsors and distinguished guests in our hospitable North Transept.



Russell Steele with Julie & Peter Turner



Andrea & James Sanderson (James is Cathedral architect), **Jack & Jane Pickett** (Jack is Project Manager for Blackburn Cathedral Development) with **Judge Jeremy & Jean Duerden**.

Our 2013-14 organ scholar was there: **Karen Au**, former senior organ scholar of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, who has been teaching for two years, but now wants to return to cathedral music.

Welcome, Karen!



With Director of Music **Samuel Hudson** (L) and Dean **Christopher Armstrong** (R), were Samuel's parents, **Christopher & Cheryl Hudson**.



There were more honoured guests with **Janet Stockton** (Dr Stockton is our Canon Chancellor) and YPC member **Callum Shaw**.



Yet more honoured guests, with **Val Edge** (in pink) and far right, **Geraldine Armstrong** and **Karen Brooke**, secretary of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral.

Louisa Stirland, the BBC's Young Chorister of the Year, was handing round delicious canapés. Louisa had enjoyed an amazing year – singing in prestigious places, meeting prestigious people and being broadcast and televised.

Read her fascinating account of her marvellous year in **Music & More online:**

www.blackburncathedral - music





With our 2012-13 organ scholar **James Kealey** and Assistant Director of Music **Shaun Turnbull** (L) were YPC members **Hannah Bode** & **Celine Woodburn**, with **Alizon Elliott** (R), Chairman of the Renaissance Singers, who would be singing that night.



Four French horns added mightily to the orchestral ensemble, and the percussion section was enormous!



Canon **Shannon Ledbetter** welcomed (L-R) **Maureen Knowles** and **Irene Wells**, who had come with patriotic hats, and **Tony Davies** and **Maureen Hartley**. Maureen had been a pupil of former Cathedral choir parent, **Joan Banks MBE**. It's a small world! They were sitting in our historic misericords – which originally came from Whalley Abbey after Henry VIII had dissolved it nearly 500 years ago!

And so, refreshed and feeling thoroughly welcomed, the audience looked forward to a rousing concert – which they got – in spades!



Then followed Poulenc's *Gloria* – an extended work which was fiendishly demanding chorally, but which the combined choirs sang with tremendous confidence and commitment.

The choirs' performance was pristinely neat and so very accurate. Poulenc composed at the piano – it's not easy to play difficult chords on a piano, but it's an entirely a different challenge to pitch those notes when singing. This work demanded a meticulous performance, and it got it!



The choirs of Blackburn Cathedral were joined by the excellent Northern Chamber Orchestra.

The first item was *most* challenging for players and audience alike: it was *Short ride in a fast machine* by the contemporary American composer, John Adams.

There wasn't a tune, but there were a lot of notes which built up to a terrific climax, creating sounds we had never heard before in our cathedral. We were transfixed and lost in admiration, not only by the skilful playing and exciting music, but also by Samuel Hudson's superb direction which was clear, precise and so musical.



Our soprano soloist was **Nicola Howard**, whose lovely voice floated seemingly effortlessly over the choirs and orchestra. Nicola was a winner of the Royal Overseas League International Singing Competition and has sung in major venues throughout the world. It was both a privilege and a delight to welcome her to our Cathedral.

The first half ended with a rousing performance of *Jerusalem* by Parry, which the audience sang with a will!

There were more refreshments in the interval. It was good to welcome former chorister **Danny Adams** and his mother, **Krystyna** who had been a harmony student of JB's at the RNCM when we were both much younger!



On the left is **Charlotte Wells** who had been in charge of our Café in the Crypt for the last year, and who had turned it from making a loss to making a profit – whilst maintaining the highest standards. But as she has a growing family she would be leaving us in the summer. We shall miss her!



It was also very good to see former choral scholar **Dave Young** who had just graduated from Manchester University with a first class honours degree in music! He was singing with us that evening, and would be continuing his studies at Cardiff, specializing in conducting. He is a young man whose career is worth watching!

The second half of the concert began with a most gracious and delicate performance of Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*. No country other than England could have inspired such music, and it received a most moving and translucent performance from choirs, soloist and orchestra alike.

The next item was the *Anvil Chorus* from Verdi's opera *Il trovatore*. The sound of the anvils being struck forcibly by two hammers rang round the cathedral in such a startling manner that they took us all by delighted surprise.



Great was the applause after the last resounding blows!

The concert ended with our greatest favourites: Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* – culminating with the audience singing *Rule Britannia* and waving their Union flags ...



... and then Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* when the audience raised the roof with their singing of *Land of hope and glory*.



Chairman **Phil Wilson** (L) and his colleagues have never looked so patriotic!

This was, of course, encored!

The hats of Maureen Knowles and Irene Wells (see page 2) came fully into their own!



What an evening that was! Enormous thanks and congratulations to all our musicians led so superbly by **Samuel Hudson**, and special thanks to our **Virgers**, and members of the **YPC** and also to **Callum Shaw** who spent the next three hours dismantling the stage and moving all the chairs so that the cathedral would be ready for worship the next day! **THANK YOU!**