

Blackburn Cathedral, Tuesday 11th March 2014

Music & More online Supplement No. 38

Festival of New Hymns & Hymn Tunes

David Smalley is a unique musician: he was head chorister of our cathedral choir last Millennium under **Tom Duerden** and has taught music, Latin and Modern Languages in prestigious halls of learning including Preston Polytechnic, Cockermouth Grammar School and Stonyhurst College.

In March he and his wife **Alison** organised a remarkable evening of hymn-singing – most of the hymns he had composed himself (music *and* some of the texts).

He had invited three choirs to sing them and he also gave them the opportunity to offer their own music-making for our delight.

And not only that, but he had invited a number of Mayors to head up the congregation...



Singing
Mayors



... and also Bishop Geoff of Lancaster and his wife!



The choirs looked splendid in the scaffolding-decorated cathedral!
(The Nave ceiling was being repainted prior to the visit of **HM The Queen** and **HRH the Duke of Edinburgh** a few weeks later.)

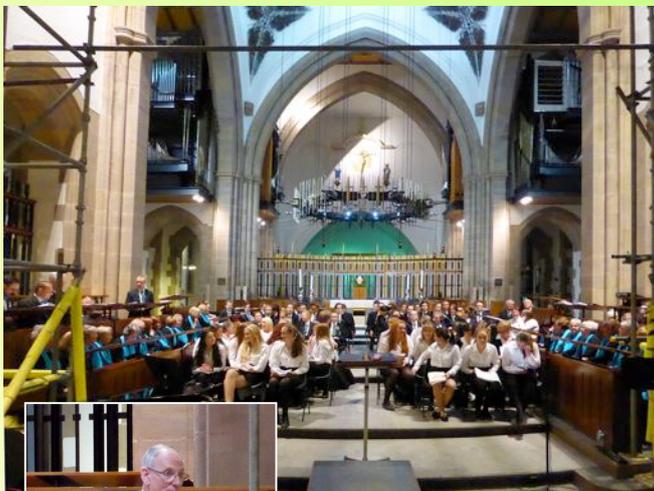
More
singing
Mayors



We all tried our best to sing all David's tunes after hearing just one verse of each hymn sung by the choirs. It wasn't easy, but we had a go, for David can write a good tune!



The **Hyndburn and Conchord Singers** looked most attractive in their blue scarves when they sang *Let the earth resound* by Sally Albrecht.



David introduced the items, the first being the first 4 verses of David's hymn: *I will magnify you*, which has a most catchy tune. David told us to listen to the choirs singing the first verse and then join in.

We did our best – and so did the Mayors!



And **Stonyhurst's Choir** sang two pieces by Elgar with beautiful tone, accompanied on the piano by their director, **Dr. Kevin Morgan**.



St Christopher's Senior Choir from Accrington sang *The Lily and the Rose* by Bob Chilcott directed by **Helen Davies** (who conducted most of David's hymns, too).



Samuel Hudson was the principal accompanist, and for his solo he played Walton's ever-popular *Crown Imperial*, which ran the whole gamut of expression from Soft to All Available Stops!



David Smalley felt that new tunes could be set to some well-known hymns, so we had a go at singing familiar words to unfamiliar tunes:

Lead us, Heavenly Father

At the Name of Jesus

Let all the world

and even *Love Divine* and *Abide with me!*

It takes a brave soul to replace such well-known tunes!



The loudest and longest ovation that evening was given (with prolonged cheers) to Stonyhurst College's **Dr Kevin Morgan**, who played a selection of Fats Waller's melodies on the piano. His brilliant technique was astounding – so much so that he seemed to play with three hands – as this photograph demonstrates!



At the end, **Helen Davies** proposed a vote of thanks to David for organising such a remarkable evening...



...and after we had all sung verses 5-7 of *I will magnify you* ...



... David and Alison presented gifts to all his colleagues – their courtesy was much appreciated.



The concert grossed over £1,000 which, after expenses, was donated to three charities: The East Lancashire Hospice, Derian House Children's Hospice, both of which cater for families in great need, and also to the Cathedral Appeal.

Thank you, David, and well done!