

Blackburn Cathedral
Music & More
Online Supplement No. 42

ASTOUNDING '24'

Samuel Hudson who, two years ago, amazed us with his performance of the first book of Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues, astounded us yet again this year by his performance of the second book of the '48' – on grand piano, harpsichord and cathedral organ.



Every musician who owns a copy of the '48' will tell you that just to play the right notes is **difficult & complex & challenging** (and there are a LOT of notes), but they are even more **demanding** for the **wealth & depth & height** of **musicianship** they require, not only from the performer but also from his audience.

Sam added to the enjoyment of the fugues by including in the programme some of the 'lyrics' which the 19th Century musician, Ebenezer Prout, had written:



Some members of the audience followed the music with their scores

Samuel Hudson had taken nine months to learn these works (in addition to



leading the glorious music programme of the cathedral!)...
 ...and his performance on three keyboard instruments was a *tour de force* which earned him a rousing standing ovation from his audience in the North Transept.

Sam played the '24' in three groups of eight, and introduced each group so that we might understand more easily what we were about to hear.



It was a privilege to be asked to give a vote of thanks after such an evening (the concert took 3 hours 20 minutes, including two intervals for necessary refreshments).

After the standing ovation had died down, JB put into words what we all felt:

'All of us have realised for a long time just what a treasure we have in our Director of Music.'

(This was interrupted by a further outbreak of applause from the audience.)

'He is supreme not only in training choirs but also in conducting orchestras (a rare accomplishment in cathedral musicians).

'And tonight we have relished afresh his consummate musicianship on piano, harpsichord and organ not only playing these demanding masterpieces, but also making them wholly approachable, wholly accessible, and wholly enjoyable through his sheer hard work and boundless talent.

'Surely no other cathedral could offer such rich and precious fare in which we have been privileged to immerse ourselves tonight.



'It was amazing, demanding, astonishing – the fruit of nine months' very hard work. It was a concert in which we, the audience, had to work almost as hard as the soloist.

The quality of our silence after every P&F spoke even louder that our applause at the end of each group, for we were enabled to catch a glimpse into the very mind of J. S. Bach.

'We have been uplifted and enriched in the Spirit tonight, and for this, Sam, we bless you!'

(More sustained applause!)