

Blackburn Cathedral MUSIC & MORE ONLINE SUPPLEMENT NO. 2

December 2012

CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

'It wasn't just spectacular,' commented JB's neighbour after the concert, 'it was *fantastic!*'

It was also fantastic when we first walked into the cathedral that evening, for the whole place had been illuminated with floodlights which continually changed colour. (*Google Lite Alternative Ltd which is an internationally acclaimed lighting company headquartered here in Blackburn!*) What a terrific atmosphere they created!



As ever, before the concert began, there was a lavish reception in our hospitable North Transept for generous patrons and guests, including the Chairman of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music, **Kate Thompson**, seen here with **Canon Andrew Hindley** whose leadership in all things (especially finance and liturgy) tends to make so many things possible.



Talking with **Russell Steele** (L) were **Scott Cooper**, **Peter Turner** (Chairman of Blackburn Cathedral Developments) & **Mrs Julie Turner**.



Former chairman, **Judge James Prowse** was chatting with the Dean's wife, **Gerry Armstrong**,

and (below) we were also honoured to welcome (R) County Councillor **John Shadwick** Chairman of

Lancashire County Council with **Mrs Alison Shadwick**, and friend.



The cathedral was packed – it was a sell-out! On the stage were men, boys and girls from our own cathedral choirs, members of our Renaissance Singers, and choirs from St.

Gabriel's School and Meadowhead School. In front of them were our wonderful friends, the Northern Chamber Orchestra.



The conductor was, of course, our multi-talented Director of Music, **Samuel Hudson**, who not only inspired superb music from his singers and instrumentalists but he also embraced the audience with relaxed friendliness when introducing items. (He was the *emcee*, as our American friends would say!)



The evening got off to a great start with a scintillating performance of *Ding! Dong! Merrily on High!* arranged by Mack Wilberg (b.1955) which demanded (and got!) sparkling playing on the organ by our Assistant Director of Music, **Shaun Turnbull**.



As well as featuring several carols by **John Rutter**, the main work was a beautiful performance of *In Terra Pax* by Gerald Finzi. As well as calling for expressive



singing by our choirs it called for equally beautiful singing by our two soloists, **Nicola Howard** and **Mark Rowlinson**.

And throughout that marvellous evening, the lights continually changed colour to match the mood of the music. It was a feast for the eyes as well as the ears.



There were carols for the audience to sing – including John Rutter's arrangement of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Plus the ever popular *I'm dreaming of a White Christmas*, and JB's contrapuntal arrangement of *Good King Wenceslas*, which had the audience and choir singing in four-part polyphony – to everyone's surprise and delight, thanks to Samuel Hudson's skilful direction!



Shaun Turnbull played an effervescent arrangement by Thomas Trotter of Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride*. Shaun's brilliant performance was enhanced by Renaissance Singer **Helen Davies** wielding of an orchestral whip!



It was a special delight to welcome St. Gabriel's School choir and Meadowhead School choir, who joined with our own Cathedral choirs and Renaissance Singers to give us an evening of happily committed and infectiously joyful singing which most certainly prepared us all for the Feast of Christmas!

