

# Music

## Music Director's Report

### Events supported by the Friends

Last May I heard the cathedral organ in a very different light. David Briggs, the renowned organist, came to the cathedral to improvise a sound track to the silent film *Phantom of the Opera*. It is true to say that, with all visiting organists, they play the organ differently, but in this context I heard sounds that I had not heard before, at least in the combinations that David was using. It was tremendously atmospheric and he said to me that the Chester organ inspired him on this particular occasion to produce a wonderful accompaniment to the film. Later in the same month, the Cathedral Nave Choir and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Concert Orchestra gave an excellent performance of Handel's *Messiah* under the direction of Ian Roberts. I would like to thank again the Friends for their support of these events and their continuing support of the organ recital series.

### Comings and Goings

The Cathedral Choir continues to encourage a tremendous level of commitment and loyalty from its members. Choristers sit their school exams during the summer term, yet many of them, thankfully, do not take any time off choir for study leave. Head Girl Chorister Emily Burnett, who got straight As at A' level and one of our best singers, refused to take time off. We said farewell to her at evensong on the last day of the summer term and her many vocal achievements have already been highlighted in previous articles for this magazine. Organ Scholar Simon Walker left Chester for work in Canada, and we



Cathedral Choir at the High Altar

thank him for his playing and assistance during the last academic year. In September we welcomed Laurence Lyndon-Jones and more can be read about him on page 7.

### Brian Greensill

It was with great sadness in August that we learned of the death of former Senior Lay Clerk and first Lay Succentor, Brian Greensill. I had known Brian since my days as a chorister in the Cathedral Choir and subsequently worked with him when returning to Chester in 2002 when he was still a Lay Clerk. Brian's musicianship, both as a singer and director, were exemplary. His singing and support of the music at the cathedral was greatly valued by my predecessors Roger Fisher and David Poulter. A motet, by Chester-

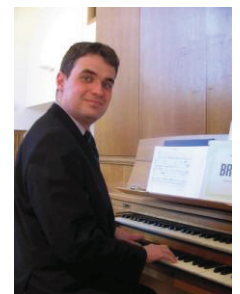
born composer Howard Skempton and commissioned by Liz and Bill Hardman in Brian's memory, was premiered on BBC Radio 3 on 22 December, sung by the Cathedral Choir.

### Choral Scholars

In September we welcomed former choristers Charlie Bertinat and Sebastian Fayle to their new roles as Choral Scholars. We are now lucky to have a full complement of Scholars singing with the Lay Clerks. Charlie, along with fellow Choral Scholar Matthew Andrews sang for a number of years with the Cathedral Nave Choir before rejoining the Cathedral Choir.

### Ian Roberts

I am pleased to inform you that Ian Roberts, our Assistant Director of Music, has been appointed Director of Music at St John's Church, Ranmoor, Sheffield. Ian has



Ian Roberts

served the cathedral with distinction as chorister and, for the last seven and a half years, as Assistant Organist and subsequently Assistant Director of Music. He has been a valued friend and superb colleague and we all wish him and Kate well when they move to Sheffield in March.



Choir Prizegiving in the Song School

**Outreach**

A joint Sung Eucharist was held with the King’s School on 12 September, where the school choir and orchestra led the worship at the 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist. Links with King’s are, arguably, stronger than ever and much praise was leveled at the choir and orchestra. The Cathedral Choir sang evensong (at the invitation of the Reverend Dr Mark Hart, a choir parent) in Plemstall Parish Church on 26 September. Members of the church were delighted that the choir led their worship.

**Requiems**

On 31 October, the choir sang a Requiem for All Saints and All Souls. A capacity congregation attended a moving performance of John Rutter’s sublime setting of the Requiem Mass where cello, oboe and organ accompanied the choir. Two weeks later, the Remembrance Day services took on a particular poignancy with the return of the Mercian Regiment that same week. Maurice Duruflé’s Requiem was heard at the 11.30 Eucharist and it is testament to the dedication of the choir that two major works were sung in the space of two weeks, together with the other daily worship, so soon after the half term holiday.

**Friends Grant for Cassocks**

I am delighted that the Friends have been able to fund the purchase of new choir



At Eaton Hall



At Plemstall

robes. The boys’ and men’s cassocks are twenty-five years old now and, although they have worn well, are beginning to show their age. I am sure a photograph of the choir in their new robes will grace these pages soon.

**Support for Saturday Singing Club**

The Friends have also recently agreed to support our Saturday Singing Club where children of primary school age across Chester and further afield meet and have fun singing and making music. Its popularity and success is flourishing. There are no auditions and all are welcome regardless of background or musical ability. We have also embarked on further work with local primary schools in a new project called *Singing Partnerships*, which will enable yet more children to enjoy and benefit from working with our music department.

**Compline with the Nave Choir**

The Cathedral Nave Choir continues to flourish and develop with a number of new members having started in September. The introduction of regular Sung Compline services at 6.30pm on Sundays has been a great success and they are a beautiful addition to our regular pattern of music and worship.

**Philip Rushforth (Director of Music)**

**Organ Scholar**

Laurence Lyndon-Jones joined the Music Department as Organ Scholar last September. He is a recent graduate of Pembroke College, Oxford, where he read mathematics and was Organ Scholar for four years. He started in cathedral music as a chorister at St. Albans Cathedral and began learning the organ there after leaving the choir. Whilst Organ Scholar at Pembroke, he conducted the chapel choir on tours to Tallinn, Milan and Barcelona and at two evensongs at Westminster Abbey in London. He also organised and conducted a CD recording by the choir in 2008 called *Locus Iste*. Laurence has played organ recitals at Pembroke, St. John’s, Harris Manchester and Exeter Colleges in Oxford, and at St. Albans Cathedral. He was the conductor of the *Arcadian Singers of Oxford* in 2010, and conducted a performance of Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610* in Oxford’s old Sheldonian Theatre.



Laurence Lyndon-Jones

Laurence has really enjoyed his first few months as Organ Scholar at Chester, and has particularly enjoyed accompanying the choirs and playing in the weekly organ recital series.

**2011 Cathedral Organ Recitals**

February	
3	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
10	Colin Walsh (Lincoln Cathedral)
17	Ian Roberts (Chester Cathedral)
24	Roger Fisher (formerly Chester Cathedral)
March	
3	Graham Eccles (St Asaph)
10	Laurence Lyndon-Jones (Chester Cathedral)
17	James Davy (Blackburn Cathedral)
24	Richard Walker (Shrewsbury)
31	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
April	
7	Joseph Wicks (Salisbury)
14	Paul Derrett (Hull)
21	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)
28	Roger Fisher (formerly Chester Cathedral)
May	
5	Paul Hale (Southwell Minster)
12	Marco Lo Muscio (Italy)
19	Laurence Lyndon-Jones (Chester Cathedral)
26	Philip Rushforth (Chester Cathedral)

**Music Dates for your Diary**

**Saturday 29 January at 5.15 pm**

Concert by Roger Fisher (piano) and Philip Rushforth (organ), including Mozart’s *Piano Concerto No 17 in G major* with organ accompaniment and Handel’s *Organ Concerto No 10 in D minor*.

**Saturday 12 February at 7.30 pm.**

Candlelit concert by the Cathedral Nave Choir. Last one directed by Ian Roberts. Music from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries with works by Purcell, Buxtehude, Monteverdi and Lassus. The centre-piece of the programme will be Giacomo Carrissimi’s oratorio *Jephte*. Tickets are available from the Cathedral Box Office.

**Saturday 7 May at 7.30 pm.**

The Cathedral Choristers will be performing with the Chester Music Society conducted by Graham Jordan Ellis. in John Rutter’s *Mass of the Children*. The concert will include Francis Poulenc’s *Gloria* and *Organ Concerto* with soloist Philip Rushforth.