

# Cathedral swings in acoustic accord

SATURDAY night saw crowds filing into Guildford Cathedral, filling its long nave and high gallery for a concert of choral music that promised works by Bob Chilcott, John Rutter and something more novel... *All That Jazz*.

Reserved for the latter half of the evening's programme, the jazziest element was to prove the highlight of the Vivace Chorus' choral showcase.

In Will Todd's *Mass in Blue*, the recently re-branded

Guildford Philharmonic have found a powerful work with which to stake their claim as a choir of stature, maturity and versatility.

The programming was not without its drawbacks: Chilcott's composition *Little Jazz Mass*, although well sung, seemed to lack interest and essential variety; while the wonderful pauses and poise of Rutter's otherwise rousing *Gloria* suffered an excess of amplification.

It was in the second half that

all fundamental elements – choir, composer, band and an extraordinary soloist – converged in one brilliant acoustic accord. Following an introductory set that had us tapping to the tune of Sunday school staple *Give me Oil in my Lamp*, the Will Todd Jazz Band exploded into *Mass in Blue* and set the audience swinging.

The Vivace Chorus sang with obvious enjoyment and dedication to this new work, serving its "Sanctus" and "Benedictus"

with the range of passion, sensitivity and humour they so obviously craved.

Meanwhile, in a superbly assured performance, soprano Bethany Halliday brought to the traditional Latin text something rich and strange: a yearning akin to the darkness of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* that lightened and brightened to a future more holy.

My lamp well lit, it kept me swinging all the way home.

*Madeline Clements*