

## Jazzmouse's Blog

### Review of Will Todd's Te Deum – Saturday 16th May 2009

May 19, 2009 at 11:26 (<https://jazzmouse.wordpress.com/2009/05/19/review-of-will-todds-te-deum-saturday-16th-may-2009/>) | 2 comments (<https://jazzmouse.wordpress.com/2009/05/19/review-of-will-todds-te-deum-saturday-16th-may-2009/#comments>)

#### **Vivace Chorus, Will Todd Trio & Brandenburg Sinfonia – 16<sup>th</sup> May**

On Saturday night at Guildford Cathedral, a full-house was treated to a compelling performance of contemporary vocal music. The ambitious Vivace Chorus commissioned a brand new large-scale work for the occasion – Will Todd's *Te Deum* for chorus, children's choir, soprano soloist and ensemble. The rest of this refreshingly imaginative programme was made up of music by other living composers from America and Britain. While it was good to hear fine performances of some familiar modern classics by John Tavener and John Rutter and to be introduced to works by Morton Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre, Todd's brilliant new piece was the highpoint of the evening.

Todd is very much on home territory in writing large-scale vocal works. His *Mass in Blue* (2003) is much performed and has recently been recorded on Signum Classics to great critical acclaim. Indeed, it was Vivace's recent performance of the *Mass in Blue* that led to this commission. From the bold virtuosic timpani writing in the opening bars of the *Te Deum* it was clear that the audience was in for a treat. Todd's musical language is drawn from a variety of sources which are integrated into a compelling musical cocktail. If there were echoes of Walton and Britten in one movement, there were traces of Sondheim and Duke Ellington in another. Pupils from Holy Trinity School, Tormead School and Holy Trinity Church Choir joined forces in a touching performance of the 4<sup>th</sup> movement; a beautiful setting of *the Lord is my Shepherd*. Elsewhere, soprano Bethany Halliday and saxophonist Paul Fawcus impressed with gripping solo turns.

The Vivace Chorus were excellent throughout the concert, making light work of a challenging programme. Conductor Jeremy Backhouse had the chorus's undivided attention; his hard work on detail in rehearsals paying dividends in a slick, professional performance.

Vivace's bold programming transformed this concert into an event. I eagerly await their next commission.

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Rehearsal



Bethany Halliday



Te Deum Score & Piano

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1. Hilary Minor | May 21, 2009 at 16:09

Having sung in the Te Deum, I have to say that the whole performance was full of thrill and excitement. The singers took to the music like ducks to water and the children's choir was wonderful. The audience erupted at the end with a standing ovation that loosened tiles on the Cathedral roof!

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2. [jazzmouse](#) | May 26, 2009 at 09:09

Yes it was a real honour to play a premier and it is a great piece of music!

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