



Choirs from Holy Trinity Church, Holy Trinity School and Tormead School rehearse for their concert at Guildford Cathedral.

Massed choirs make for a musical delight

MUSIC lovers filled Guildford Cathedral at the weekend to hear the world premier of a specially commissioned contemporary jazz piece.

On Saturday, a large audience listened to the Vivace Chorus and Surrey children performing *Te Deum*, written by Guildford composer Will Todd.

The chorus was made up of children from Tormead School, Holy Trinity School and St Mary's Parish Youth Choir. The piece also involved the Will Todd Jazz Trio and soprano Bethany Halliday.

Vivace Chorus' Hilary Minor said: "It was an exciting and exhilarating event and the cathedral was packed. The children's chorus of 107 singers performed brilliantly well. Parents I spoke to during the

interval were staggered by the excellence of the performance and there was a real atmosphere of excitement in the air. The children I spoke to were also thrilled to have taken part."

She added: "This was a landmark event for Guildford."

At the end of the performance Will Todd, Bethany Halliday, the Jazz Trio and both adult and child choruses were given a standing ovation.

Describing his work the Guildford composer said: "My new *Te Deum* is a work of grandeur and jazzy energy. The Latin *Te Deum* text is interspersed with new words by Ben Dunwell and Psalm texts. The five movement work is at times massive, rhythmic, lyrical and heartfelt."

Other items on the pro-

gramme included works by John Tavener and by lesser-known composers such as Morton Lauridsen.

In a review of the event, Steve Goss called the programme "refreshingly imaginative" and the performances 'compelling'.

He said: "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 high-point of the evening."

"Pupils from Holy Trinity School, Tormead School and Holy Trinity Church Choir joined forces in a touching performance of the 4th movement; a beautiful setting of the *Lord is my Shepherd*.

Elsewhere, soprano Bethany Halliday and saxophonist Paul Fawcus impressed with gripping solo turns."

He added: "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."

Todd's other large-scale vocal works include *Mass in Blue*, also recently performed by the Vivace Chorus, which has recently been recorded on Signum Classics.