

*An Evening of Music  
For All Tastes"*

*in aid of*

**Christian Aid**  
**We believe in life before death**

*presented by*

*John & Angela Evans*

On Saturday evening, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009, there was a splendid concert in aid of Christian Aid at Hamilton Street Methodist Church, Hoole, which raised the excellent total of £616 for this charity, and included a raffle. Over 80 people attended and showed much appreciation of John and Angela Evans' performances throughout the evening. John organises the concerts here and is this Church's organist. His wife, Angela, gives him valuable support and contralto in a wide range of songs.

Brian Harris opened the concert with an introduction about Christian Aid and John and Angela shared the introduction to their pieces, always interesting and often – where appropriate – humorous! Angela provided a striking start with the song "Cabaret" from the musical of that name by Ebb and Kander, with John at the piano, and throughout the concert he provided wonderfully sympathetic, well-prepared accompaniments (on organ as well as on piano) to Angela's fine vocal interpretations, making a most impressive duo partnership. John spoke about the background to Lemare's organ solo "Andantino" ("Moonlight and Roses") before giving a lovely, gentle performance with effective use of quiet registrations.

Angela's sonorous tone in Amanda McBroom's song "The Rose" produced a most moving performance with John at the piano, after which he moved to the organ to accompany Angela in Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina" from "Evita", made specially effective with her standing by the organ. Then followed two more organ solos: John remarked that Justin Hayward was only 19 when he wrote "Nights in White Satin", and then he played Calabrese's "Softly As I Leave You", both notable for his use of quiet registrations, producing a magical atmosphere.

Different styles came in the next two songs, showing Angela's versatility: some clearly articulated rhythms in David & Bacharach's "Anyone Who Had A Heart", after which John moved from piano to organ to accompany her in Willy Russell's "Marilyn Monroe" (from "Blood Brothers"), in which she brought out all the humour, especially with her accent! – along with appropriate hand movements, while John provided an effective variety of organ registrations. He played two more organ

solos to end Part 1 – a magical variety of quiet registrations (a high flute-like stop being specially effective) made Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Music of the Night" (from "Phantom of the Opera") a striking contrast with the excitement and colourful range of registrations in a thrilling performance of Charles Williams' "Devil's Galop" (used as the theme tune to the old radio series "Dick Barton – Special Agent").

Brian Harris started Part 2 with the raffle draw, followed by John's next organ solo. During the concert, he remarked that Part 1 had reflected darkness for Hallowe'en, and that Part 2 reflected lightness and goodness for the next day: All Saints', and his own arrangement of Sousa's "Liberty Bell" March made a particularly bright, rousing and jubilant impact, including the use of some very low, loud pedal notes and the small bells (Zymbelstern) to add a finishing touch! Angela then gave a lovely, lilting performance (with John at the piano) of Green and Wyle's "May Each Day", ending with some most effective quiet tone. John joined Angela to sing two well-contrasted unaccompanied vocal duets, both specially appropriate for a Christian Aid event: Thoro Harris' "Who Can Cheer The Heart Like Jesus" and John's arrangement of "I Just A'Gonna Sing" which was particularly rousing and joyful! He followed these with two contrasted organ solos: Joel Martinson's beautiful "Aria On A Chaconne", in a moving, calm performance, and J S Bach's lively "Organ Concerto No 4 in C Major" (in one movement), BWV 595, actually an arrangement of a piece probably by Johann Ernst; John here showed his versatility in his command of another different style, in an uplifting reading.

Angela brought much humour to her two final songs (with John at the piano in both): Flanders and Swann's "The Hippopotamus Song", before which she introduced three friends and placed them on top of the piano! – three toy, furry hippopotami – one large and two small! – and asked the audience to turn into the "army of hippopotami" in the final chorus – which made a great sound to fill the Church with jollity! Angela brought splendid characterisation and diction to this, and also thanked everyone for coming, and John for his accompaniments and support. Dorothy Fields and Cy Coleman's "Big Spender" (from "Sweet Charity") made a marked contrast, with Angela bringing a striking interpretation to this. John's closing organ solo made a good link to the next concert, to be given by Nigel Ogden (his popular annual visit!) on Friday evening, 4<sup>th</sup> December, since John had chosen Nigel's "Saints On A Spree": variations on "When The Saints Go Marching In" and also includes "For All The Saints" – most appropriate for All Saints' the next day, as well as a brilliant combination of part of Widor's famous Toccata with "When The Saints...." in the pedals near the end. John clearly enjoyed giving a most entertaining performance of this, making a splendid end to the concert, to the great delight of the audience! Brian Harris gave a warm vote of thanks and announced the wonderful total raised for Christian Aid (£610, which was increased to £616 by later donations), which made it a most successful and enjoyable concert for all involved!

Ian Milnes – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009