

## ARTS &amp; CULTURE



PHOTO BY MIKE ELLIS

The Cathedral Choir of Christ Church, Oxford, visited Emmanuel Episcopal Church in La Grange on April 13.

# Oxford choir performs at La Grange church

Mike Ellis

LA GRANGE—Several hundred people were temporarily transported to England when the Cathedral Choir of Christ Church, Oxford, performed sacred choral masterworks at Emmanuel Episcopal Church on April 13.

The university that gave the world Wickliff, Halley, Locke, Whately and a bevy of other bright and distinguished luminaries that added their luster to manifold branches of learning, showcased its cathedral boys' choir under the direction of Dr. Stephen Darlington, also a professor of music in the university.

The choir commenced the evening with a *capella* selections from the Renaissance period by John Sheppard and William Byrd, the latter of whom was one of the foremost composers of his age.

The boys produced transcendent harmonies in singing the Kyrie and Gloria movements of Byrd's *Mass for Four Voices*.

Then, organist Clive Driskill-Smith amazed the audience with a technically precise rendition of Mozart's "Fantasia" for organ in f minor, K. 608, the composer's only work in the professional organist's repertoire.

The choir then closed out the remainder of the first half of its concert with the Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei from Byrd's *Mass for Four Voices*, coupled with a choral work of Baroque composer Henry Purcell, "Thou knowest, Lord."

After the intermission, the boys returned with Handel's resounding choral masterwork, the coronation anthem "Zadok the Priest," with Driskill-Smith playing the accompanying orchestral

parts of the work on the organ, followed by an additional Purcell selection, "Blow up the trumpet."

The spotlight then shifted to Driskill-Smith, who dazzled his listeners with a performance of the final movement of Louis Vierne's third symphony for organ. (Vierne was a composer of the late Romantic period.)

For its final three numbers, the choir returned to the island from the European continent in delivering works by Charles Hubert Hastings Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford, a pair of British composers of the late Romantic era.

The rich harmonies of Stanford's "Justorum animae" and "Te Deum" in B Flat Major rounded out the concert.

The choir's performance at Emmanuel formed part of its 2018 United States tour.