

REVIEWS

London Symphony Orchestra New Theatre

Beethoven could have had no more loving, devoted or musically knowledgeable tribute paid to him in this, the 150th year of his death, than that given by the London Symphony Orchestra and Eugen Jochum at the final Oxford Subscription Concert of the 1976/77 series in the New Theatre last Thursday.

It was, as Claudius observed in less happy circumstances in "Hamlet," "a loving and a fair reply" to the importance of the occasion, the concert being given, in fact, to mark this 150th anniversary.

In his conducting of the Fifth Symphony, Eugen Jochum reminded us that he is a Beethovenian of magisterial stature.

There was nothing of superficial showiness in his conducting yet it had tremendous authority in the re-creation of the driving, dramatic impetus of the finale and, in the best sense of the term, the utmost delicacy in the statement of the many subtler details which sometimes go unheeded in some more cut and dried performances. This latter quality was in radiant evidence, too, in the Andante.

Throughout this much performed work, Mr Jochum drew playing from the LSO, all sections alike, that invested the Fifth with a new radiance and, almost, a new meaning.

The soloist in the Third Piano Concerto was the conductor's daughter, Veronica Jochum, who shone, in particular, in the slow movement which was given beautiful limpidity and clarity of tone and immaculately controlled rhythm, with deftly balanced concerto playing in the true meaning of that sometimes abused definition, by the LSO.

Mr Jochum and the LSO also gave us an arresting and vividly satisfying account of the Egmont Overture.

Members' Exhibition Bampton Arts Centre

The Members' Exhibition of the West Oxfordshire Arts Association, open in the Bampton Arts Centre until March 19, contains, as is inevitable in most shows of professional and semi-professional work, some of very mixed quality, some of it, indeed, being embarrassingly amateurish.

There are, however, some very good things in the show, which is particularly strong in sensitive water-colour work.

Notably attractive among this is the "Esthwaite Water" study by Ann Manly which has very well-handled tone in the sky, and the rushes at the lake-side are so sensitively painted that one feels a gentle draught in the gallery might well rustle them.

T. H. Cooke contributes an invigoratingly bold water-colour, "Mevagissy," and another, "Isleworth," in both of which the handling is very confident, and the "Invergordon Harbour" subject of Alfreda MacKenzie is notable alike for well-organised composition, very good tonal balance and expert brushwork.

Among the other water-colours, J. Martin's dashingly painted "Winter Elms" has an exuberantly animated quality and the invariable sureness of touch of Michael Brockway and A. E. Baylis is epitomised in the former's meltingly beautiful Venetian subject and the latter's well-organised "Distant View of Blakeney."

Among the oils, Anthony Baynes's "Storm" abstract is painted with immense verve and vigour and with the right sort of disciplined looseness in its use of vibrant colour.

From a good deal of other work in various media, Audrey Lintott's two 1920s fashion drawings, wittily redolent of the period, stand out immediately.

Alan Ayckbourn's comic trilogy, "The Norman Conquests," has its last performances in Oxford tonight and tomorrow.

If seats are available, those who have not seen any of the three plays can still catch two of them — "Round and Round The Garden" tonight and tomorrow night, and "Living Together" at tomorrow's 4 p.m. matinee.

"The Norman Conquests" will be succeeded at the Playhouse, on Tuesday, by the Oxford University Opera Club's production of Verdi's "Joan of Arc."

Next week's presentation will be the first staged production of the opera in this country, apart from one performance at the Royal Academy of Music in 1966.

"Joan of Arc" is an early Verdi opera, his seventh, and was first performed at the Teatro Alla Scala, Milan, on February 15, 1845, so that the Opera Club production falls on the 122nd anniversary of the first performance.

Following in the tradition of the late Sir Jack Westrup, one of the founders and, for many years, conductor, of the Opera Club, the conductor will be the present Heather Professor of Music in the University, Denis Arnold.

The producer is Michael Rennison, a staff producer at Covent Garden and a pupil of Gotz Friedrich, whop after "Joan of Arc," is going to Germany to work on a new production of "Mahagonny."

Peter Reynolds, the Oxford baritone who sings Joan's father, Jacques, has had a long association with the Opera Club, his first appearance being in their production of Smetana's "The Secret" in 1956.

The Oxford Camerata Piano Trio (Louis Carus, violin; Michael Edmonds, cello; and Elizabeth McKay, piano) will give a concert in the Maison Francaise (Norham Road), on Tuesday.

The programme will comprise Beethoven's Trio in G major, Op 1 No 2, Rubbra's Trio in One Movement, Op 68, and Brahms's Trio in C major, Op 87.

Tomorrow, in the Town Hall, the Oxford Pro Musica, conducted by Nicholas Cleobury, will play Elgar's Serenade for Strings, in E minor, Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A, K 581, with the virtuoso performer, Gervase de Peyer, as soloist, and Haydn's Symphony No 45 (the "farewell").

ARTS PREVIEW

□□□□□□□□ F.W.D.

At the Oxford Chamber Music Society's Margaret Deneke Memorial Concert at the Maison Francaise, Michael Bochman (violin) and Christopher Wood (piano) will play Schumann's Sonata in A minor, Op 105, Bach's Solo Sonata No 1 in G minor, Wienawski's Scherzotartantella in G minor, Op 16, and Beethoven's Sonata in C minor, Op 30, No 2.

★ Now open at the Bampton Arts Centre is an exhibition of British Contemporary Painting presented by the West Oxfordshire Arts Association.

This is not a touring exhibition but the result of considerable enterprise on the part of WOOA and the most generous of cooperation on the part of the Contemporary Arts Society and its secretary, Pauline Vogelpoel.

Charles Mussett, one of the WOOA's own professional painter members, has selected these paintings from recent acquisitions by the Contemporary Arts Society at the Tate Gallery.

The selection, which includes the work of well-known and recently noticed artists, will be reviewed next week.

This exhibition runs until February 19.

WOOA has, incidentally, several other attractive programmes covering the graphic and performing arts during the next few weeks.

On Saturday, February 19, there is "Photographing Creative People," an illustrated talk by Jorge Lewinski and Mayotte Magnus, a husband and wife team who specialise in photographing artists.

Then, from March 6 to 19, there will be the members' own art exhibition — these exhibitions invariably contain much work of a high standard.

On Thursday, March 10, Raphael Wallfisch will give a cello recital — programme details later — and, from April 3 to April 26, there will be another exhibition, this time of drawings and reliefs by Paul Nicholls.

All these events take place in the Bampton Arts Centre.