

From the Surrey Advertiser-

June 29, 2007

Surrey Mozart Players Concert.

Electric Theatre 23rd June

One of my earliest memories from the days when I first played in a Youth Orchestra is being involved in a performance of Beethoven's Coriolan Overture.....my first Beethoven! It was very thrilling and time has not dulled the impact of this wonderful music.

And so when I heard the Surrey Mozart Players in the Electric Theatre on June 23rd playing this very great music, memories flooded back. It is such a fine piece and I never tire of it. Their powerful attack on those sustained unison chords gave the concert a wonderfully vibrant launch.

The lives of Beethoven and Robert Schumann just overlap, but their worlds were widely different. The toughness and raw power of Beethoven are miles away from the refined romanticism of the 'cello concerto by Schumann.

Saturday's soloist was the remarkable young cellist, Gemma Rosefield. She has a beautiful sound and a fine technique- in short, well equipped to give life to this beautiful concerto. The threatening skies that dominate Coriolan soon broke into the sunshine of the concerto's opening bars.....beguiling, warm, inviting.

Although the concerto falls into three sections, the serene calm that informs so much of this music gives little clue to the terrible mental problems that Schumann was facing. The last section is more passionate by nature but Kenneth Woods, the orchestra and the soloist never allowed roughness to intrude.....the delicacy and warmth remained.

Then a remarkable finale to the evening: Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony op 73a....an arrangement of his 3rd String Quartet. The Surrey Mozart Players produced a very moving performance of this very difficult work. It is also very great music and the sheer quality of it was fully conveyed to us. It has a huge range of moods from the perky to the much more threatening and darker coloured. The cataclysmic nature of the third movement certainly produced an effect I think not experienced by the Electric Theatre ever before.

The last moments of the symphony are most affecting.....the little peasant song of the first movement recurs, slightly changed, perhaps even a little damaged, but the people it seems are resigned to smile through their tears. This performance was a triumph. Citizens of Guildford, applaud this orchestra, it is a most treasured possession, with its inspiring Kenneth Woods, leading them on a daring and exciting journey. We should be very proud to have such an ensemble in our midst.

G F