

## From the **Surrey Advertiser**, December 1, 2006

### Surrey Mozart Players/Kenneth Woods

The small but acoustically favourable Menuhin Hall in Stoke d'Abernon resounded to the music of Mozart and Haydn, as the Surrey Mozart Players under the direction of Kenneth Woods presented another of their enterprising concerts.

The opening item was adventurous- an arrangement for Harmonie (eight-piece wind band) of some of the most famous music from Mozart's Don Giovanni, made shortly after the opera's premiere in Prague by Josef Triebensee. His arrangements brought out the character of the melodies and harmonies, and the gentle humour of the piece. The players brought this over admirably.

Mozart's great A major Piano Concerto (K. 488) is renowned as the concerto with clarinets but no oboes, but the writing for the woodwind is no less adventurous for all that, and provides a wonderful foil for the solo piano. Bobby Chen captured wonderfully the varying moods of a piece at once lively and poignant, and the glorious siciliana central movement was particularly fine. If its tone was soft and round here, it was also vibrant and powerful in the humorous finale, and the opening movement's cadenza was played with consummate skill.

Mozart's older friend Josef Haydn wrote so many symphonies that there does not seem to be time to perform all of them: one casualty is the E flat Symphony, No. 99. It is a remarkable piece, with an imposing slow introduction in which the newly introduced clarinet plays a rich low note, a lively opening movement, a wonderful slow movement, a rumbustious minuet contrasted with a genteel trio, introduced by three striking notes on the oboe and a rollicking, humorous finale.

This music brought the best out of the players, with great vivacity and accuracy. Particularly notable were the little melodies passed between the woodwind and strings in the finale: the sexagenarian Haydn on his second visit to London decided to have a good joke.

Shelagh Godwin