

# Amersham Festival Concert

## Friday 7 February 2014

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In spite of the dreadful weather and flooded roads the final concert of the Amersham Festival winter series was well attended and enjoyed by an enthusiastic audience.

The concert of music for strings, with a horn soloist and a young tenor was, as is usual for these concerts, excellently performed. Iain Ledingham had programmed two of Benjamin Britten's best known orchestral pieces for string orchestra, sandwiched between two suites for strings, the opening one 'An English Suite' by Sir Hubert Parry, and the final piece, the epitome of Norway, Grieg's popular 'Holberg Suite'.

The first of the Britten pieces was the lovely Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings. Britten was superb at setting words to music, and the young tenor, Gwilym Bowen, performed most musically, and with wonderful diction so that every word could be heard from where I was sitting. He has a beautiful light tenor, though with less power in the lower register, however it will hopefully increase as his voice matures further. Richard Wainwright was the horn player, and his opening and closing sequences made the hair stand on end. The two soloists and the orchestra blended together effortlessly in a wonderful performance.

Britten's jolly 'Simple Symphony' opened the second half of the concert, dating from when the composer was a young man. The titles of the movements: Boisterous Bouree, Playful Pizzicato, Sentimental Sarabande and Frolicsome Finale indicate that this is a fun piece, and that was certainly the way that the Amersham Festival Chamber Orchestra played it, and they obviously enjoyed every minute, as did the audience.

The opening English Suite by Sir Hubert Parry was light and refreshing music, and very well performed, and the final Holberg Suite by Grieg was probably the best known piece of the evening, and much enjoyed by all. Altogether a lovely concert.

Lynda Weiss.