

BBC Welsh at finest

By IFAN PAYNE

AS MY colleague rightly pointed out in her review of the previous Echo Pops '85 Concert, the series is an important and entertaining one.

Especially so, when for all its popularity, the music is taken seriously.

And thus it proved during the Beethoven Night at St David's Hall, Cardiff, on Thursday evening.

Erich Bergel conducted the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra in the

REVIEW

Egmont Overture and the *Symphony No 6 (Pastoral)*.

Stephen Bishop-Kovacevich was the soloist in the *Piano Concerto No 4*.

Bergel sees *Egmont* as large-scaled and granitic and this view, allied to weighty string sonorities and rhythmic precision resulted in an impressive opening to the concert.

From Bishop-Kovacevich's opening notes it was evident that this was to be a notable performance of Beethoven's loveliest concerto.

After an opening movement full of nervous musical tension the pianist's dreamy tone in the *adagio* was matched beautifully by Bergel and the strings of the orchestra.

Indeed the orchestra was at its very best in both this movement and the concluding rondos which was full of sensitive tone, phrasing and

balance.

The brook of the *Pastoral Symphony* flowed relentlessly by in full spring flood and it seemed that Bergel's view of the *Sixth Symphony* was a rather severe and unyielding one. Perhaps, for once, the music was being taken a little too seriously.

Nevertheless, the size and response of the audience was a demonstration that this was another popular and entertaining concert in the series.