

Ellis brings colour to a feast of nocturnes

THERE must be something about the harp that attracts so many nocturnes to it.

There were five of them — nocturnes that is — by various composers to be heard during Osian Ellis's recital in Howells School which was given on Sunday evening.

It was surely not correct of Osian Ellis to call Alun Hoddinott's enchanting nocturnes and cadenza of 1969 "concrete music" — for the music is almost tangibly-visual sound-painting.

Surely, few works are more evocative than the second nocturne — the

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adagio of the set — for this is the epitome of Caliban's "noises, sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not."

Ellis's atmospheric, well-characterised playing made the most of the beguiling impressionism of the work.

As he also did of the other two nocturnes, the one from Britten's masterly and magical *Harp Suite* and the equally-lovely and mysterious one in Malcolm Arnold's attractive *Fantasy* of 1976.

These inheritors of Bar-

tok's night music were brought colourfully to life by Ellis's sensitive and character-full playing.

The festival promises one of the, musically, most-exciting programmes of recent times tomorrow when David Wilson-Johnson and David Owen Norris perform Schubert's *Winterreise* song cycle.

These performers have, in recent years, revolutionised what had been our increasingly Brahmsian concept of these songs by returning to the performance tradition of early-19th century Vienna.