

**Bernard d'Ascoli  
1, at Lower  
Machen Festival.**

## Festival ends in French tradition

By IFAN PAYNE

THE series of concerts in this year's Lower Machen Festival concluded on Sunday with a recital by the young French pianist Bernard d'Ascoli.

This concert also marks the retirement as festival committee chairman of P J Hosegood.

Playing upon a beautifully toned Gosendorfer (was this I wonder the same fine instrument used by Bolet in his most recent St David's Hall recital) d'Ascoli performed the music which, otherwise concentrating on French works of the turn of the century, ranged from Mozart to Messiaen.

Mozart's *Sonata No 11 in A K 331* adopted the scale and touch of a forte piano, but far from being over-precious in this small-scaled presentation, the interpretation was a strongly characterised and virile one.

With Messiaen's *Le baiser de L'enfant Jesus*, which is the 15th of the *Vingt regards sur L'enfant Jesus* composed in 1944, presented a beautifully weighted and proportioned performance.

It was difficult to imagine a more persuasive account. For this not only placed the work firmly in the French piano tradition of Ravel and Debussy — as was manifested by the succeeding performances of *Jeux d'eau* and *L'isle Joyeuse* — but also in the finely controlled tonal colouration d'Ascoli displayed the works lineage to Dufle and Alain.