

Winterreise at the Llandaff Festival**Fresh sounds
of Schubert**

By IFAN PAYNE

FROM the moment David Wilson-Johnson started to sing Schubert's *An Die Musik* accompanied by David Owen Norris on an 1824 Broadwood square piano, everything fell into place.

The music sounded so "right," so fresh, as though Schubert himself had just rushed in with the music that very moment.

That performance of *An Die Musik* was by way of illustration of the sound and performing style that Schubert would have known in Vienna in 1827 when he composed his great song cycle *Winterreise*.

It was this poetic winter's journey which constituted the recital given by the baritone Wilson-Johnson and pianist Norris in Howells School on Tuesday evening.

Wilson-Johnson is a stylish and attractive singer with a well produced even tone and a natural ability to project the text of the song.

Norris is a fine and sensitive pianist who I hope we can hear again

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soon in a solo recital on that marvellous Broadwood.

As the poet sets jauntily out in high spirit through the snow, all those present knew that this was an evening of music-making of the very highest order.

From the smiling delight of *Die Post*, perfectly executed by piano and voice, to the heart-breakingly lovely *Fruhlingstraum* with its magical central transition the recital was an unalloyed delight from first to last.

It was not a case of suspending critical judgment but rather one of realising that here was a revelatory performance which got to the heart of Schubert's music, displaying the cycle as glowing and fresh an experience as it must have been a century and a half ago.

Every music student present at the concert must have received an unparalleled education from this performance and every vocal teacher has been stimulated to re-evaluate their approach to the music.