

Union of Welsh talent delights

By IFAN PAYNE
A CONCERT in St David's Hall was part of the celebration for this year's National Urdd Eisteddfod.

The concert consisted of a performance of the *Messiah* by Handel, and was given in the Welsh translation by T H Parry-Williams.

It was fitting that the end of the week Urdd activities be celebrated with the spotlight on Welsh performers and young Welsh singers and instrumentalists in particular.

In the spirit of the celebration, a concert was presented by a massed choir, a large orchestra whose members were culled from a variety of organisations and four young Welsh soloists. Conductor Alun Guy was successful in welding the disparate forces into a

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cohesive musical experience which gave pleasure to many.

Given the difficulty of the task, it is not surprising that the performance was short on continuity and drama, with Handel's last piece being presented as a stately sequence of individual numbers.

Nevertheless, there was much to admire, not least in the singing of the massed choir which consisted of Glantaf School Choir, the Cardiff Philharmonic Chorus, and guest choristers.

Of the young soloists, Verona James (who will be known to many as Buddig James, the sister of the already successful Eirian) displayed a rich, toned and steadily produced contralto voice. As

her understanding of the dramatic content to the text and the emotional content of the music rise, she will surely develop into a notable artist.

Those characteristics of text and music were already evident in the singing of Bryn Terfel who brought a gripping commitment to Handel's bass arias. In Mr Terfel we surely have a future Wotan of considerable promise.

Iona Jones, soprano, also injected her music with spirit and warmth and Huw Evans was the sweet toned tenor.

In an atmosphere of relaxed communal music making, the event was perhaps more important than the execution and the large audience responded with enthusiasm to a celebration of the talents of these peaceful and creative youngsters.