

An entrancing setting

THE historic and characteristic geographical and social divisions of Wales into a multiplicity of small communities centred on the Cwm (valley) contributes strongly to the richness of the musical life of our times.

Thus, as this summer dodges the rain clouds, it seems as if each ardal (area) has its own music festival where audiences can enjoy varied and stimulating music in settings which we may find familiar but which to a visitor would be an unforgettable enchantment.

For example on Friday evening the Gower Festival presented a recital by Harold Lester in the windswept Rhossili

By IFAN PAYNE

church perched high above the expanse of curving beach.

The fascination of the recital lay in Lester's use of an early 18th century Cristofori piano.

Between the work Mr Lester provided an entertaining and informative commentary on the composer and his music. Indeed, Scarlatti's *sonatas* are fascinating and colourful but unfortunately these aspects of his music were only hinted at in Harold Lester's facile but rather bland playing.

This blandness also diminished the impact of Bach's three-part *Ricercare* and also his *French*

Suite No 6 which sounded beautiful but whose rhythms danced not at all.

Thus, the evening belonged to Cristofori's lovely instrument and also to yet another of the entrancing settings which are such an alluring aspect of the many regional Welsh music festivals.

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