

# Feast fit for a saint

By IFAN PAYNE

ST David's Day in St David's Hall: a fitting venue for the capital's celebrations last night.

Bedecked in daffodil-yellow the auditorium framed the setting for a memorable gala concert.

The feast consisted of a smorgasboard of musical hors d'oeuvres presided over by Frank Lincoln, who introduced the programme.

The centrepiece was perhaps a triptych of Welsh compositions, two of which were by major Welsh composers.

Alun Hoddinott's enchanting dances from his *Suite No 1* started the evening off on a suitably joyful note, performed by the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra con-

## REVIEW

ducted by Owain Arwel Hughes.

Weaving webs of nostalgia, Grace Williams in her *Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes* created an attractive tapestry of childhood. The spirited performance of this fantasia set an equally suitable mood of celebration for the second half of the concert.

The third item of particular interest was by a composer whose life was tragically cut too short for her to have attained the status of a Hoddinott or a Grace Williams. Morfudd Owen is largely neglected now except by biographers of her husband,

the psychiatrist Ernest Jones.

Stylistically suspended between late romanticism and impressionism, *Gweddî'r Pechadur* is a moving song. The orchestra produced a delicately-toned accompaniment under Hughes, and Eirian James sang with attractive tone if indistinguishable diction.

The tenor Maldwyn Davies was a model of clarity in his solos, with his singing of *Mae Hiraeth ar y Mor* being particularly affecting.

Christopher Warren-Green uncovered the other work off the beaten track in his impassioned interpretation as violin soloist in Bloch's *Nigun*.

Rhos Male Voice Choir's full-throated singing was a delight with many an old choral favourite.