

Joint singing winners

By IFAN PAYNE

DAVID Gwesyn Smith and Buddug Verona James were declared joint winners of the Eighth Triennial Young Welsh Singers Competition 1985 — the final concert of which was held in St David's Hall last night.

In presenting the adjudication on behalf of his co-judges — James Robertson and Roy Bohana — Sir Thomas Armstrong delivered a fitting critique of the com-

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petition and of the final concert.

"We cannot help wondering whether we hear no voices finer than those we heard in the past and see no greater personalities," he said.

"There is a greater sophistication of musical outlook and a wider choice of music but technical standards in some respects are not as high as they once were."

Seeming to refer to the current competition, Sir Thomas stated, "Some voices show signs of wear and tear at an early age. Singers suffer from attempting in public music for which they are not yet equipped."

In perhaps the most telling part of his adjudication, Sir Thomas forcefully expressed regret at the lack of clarity of the words by the singers and of the poor use of the language they sing. These

words, he said, were not treated with the respect they deserved.

At the end of the concert in which the singers were accompanied by the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jane Glover, the jurors sought to find the singer who had the greatest power to retain the attention of the audience.

But the jury found that it was unable to differentiate between Cardigan-born mezzo-soprano Buddug Verona James and the baritone David Gwesyn Smith who was born in Treorchy.

Miss James charmed the audience with her fine natural vocal ability while Mr Smith grabbed the attention through the conviction of his interpretations.

The winners receive a cash award and 10 concert engagements in Wales. But, if they listened and if they understood, the most valuable of all for those singers were the important words of Sir Thomas