

# A question of modern music

By IFAN PAYNE

**HAS modern classical music in Britain died by collapsing in on itself, stylistically speaking?**

Why is there more exciting and adventurous music to be heard in rock concerts than in concert halls?

These are but two of the many questions that went through my mind during Allan Schiller's piano recital in St Michael's Church on Sunday evening in the Lower Machen Festival.

The organisers of the festival must be thanked for their imaginative programming which provided the opportunity to hear the premiere of Martin Dalby's new piano sonata in tandem with Michael Tippett's *Sonata No 2*.

Tippett composed his sonata 23 years ago but even so it sounded more modern and adventurous than Dalby's new work,

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and it was this contrast which prompted the questioning.

It does not take much reflection to realise that the majority of new music heard these days is composed within relatively narrow stylistic boundaries. There are, of course, occasional exceptions.

So much new British music, like Dalby's sonata, is still firmly based on the stylistic foundations of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg.

Allan Schiller's playing is characterised by a nicely rounded, warm tone combined with impressive dynamic control. These were qualities which were most noticeable during his sensitive and beautifully phrased performance of the Beethoven.