

A good helping of Pavlova

Music

Tea and Cakes series Pavlova Wind Quintet/Ian Brown, at the Old Bluecoat School, Thatcham, on Sunday, July 5

THE word Pavlova conjures up images of a ballerina or a sticky meringue dessert, depending on how your mind works, I suppose.

There was nothing over graceful, sticky or canine about the Pavlova Quintet, however, as they launched into Mozart's *Quintet For Piano and Winds* at the Old Bluecoat School on Sunday afternoon.

Ian Brown was the guest musician on piano with Chris Britton on flute, Carolyn King on oboe, Barbara Stuart, clarinet, Jenny Morgan, horn and Simon Payne growling away on the bassoon. All played with crisp fluidity on the opening largo and moved easily into the faster flowing second movement heralded by sprightly piano lines from Brown. The dancing melody of the third movement needed a lively tempo which the sextet, as it now was, provided with ease.

Mozart's music is so full of melody and free-flowing rhythms that it all sounds simple and easy until you listen closely and realise how much hard work goes into making it sound that way. The woodwind quintet here played with consummate skill and imagination, making the playing look easy which, of course, is only another illusion.

They were well supported by Ian Brown, whose subtle touch at the keyboard was just the right final ingredient for this splendid recital.

Poulenc's *Sextet For Piano and Winds* provided quite a contrast with its bold, staccato opening and subsequent slow tempo. The second movement had even more and varied changes of mood and tempo and all played by the sextet with warmth of expression and considerable agility all round.

Individual solo parts leapt out of the ensemble seamlessly, another tribute to the group performance by each musician.

The next concert in this series will be by pianist Olivia Canolle and violist Rebekah Frost on Sunday, August 2.

DEREK ANSELL

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