

Roger Woodward

DURRANT'S

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HERBAL HILL
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MORNING STAR

75, FARRINGDON ROAD,
LONDON, E.C.1

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Poished craftsmanship

MUSIC

Promenade Concert (Royal Albert Hall).

STRAVINSKY, Cardew, Birtwhistle and Bartok—these were the composers for the late night concert, finishing at midnight.

According to the programme notes they had all four taken up the cudgels in defence of man and music, as against man and machines. Not so unusual an attitude among artists, one would think, but certainly the results of such endeavours might vary considerably. So it was demonstrated here.

Bartok emerged easily at the top of the list with his "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," demanding extreme virtuosity

from the pianists, Noel Lea and Roger Woodward, and from Tristran Fry and James Holland with their array of drums, xylophone and cymbals.

The polished craftsmanship and intelligence involved in every department of this work—in its form, content and success in performance—welded the players and the audience together in an optimistic struggle which would be interpreted and adapted differently in each individual's listening mind.

Stravinsky's "Concerto for Two Pianos" (no orchestra), persistently percussive and lightly entertaining, pursued a personally reflective style as did Birtwhistle's "Nenia on the Death of Orpheus" in which Jane Manning sang and recited a bitterly loving text by Peter Zinovieff.

"The Great Learning, Paragraph One" (title from the works on Confucius) by Cornelius Cardew is a well-meaning adolescent dream, but its prolonged and pretentious exposition far outweighed the slender intelligence.

Jane Corbett

R Woodward (2)

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EVENING STANDARD

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PROMS: Christopher Grier

ON PAPER last night's all-Beethoven Prom in the Royal Albert Hall looked unwieldy but came the moment and the thinking behind it emerged in clear.

Suffering no competition, the Hammerklavier Piano Sonata Op 106 automatically dominates any programme, and is therefore best left on its own as it was yesterday, occupying the first half of the concert. Sufficient unto itself, it acted as a touchstone for what followed. Shaken as well as stirred by the experience of its Olympian aspirations, one turned to the other works with stretched perceptions and fresh ears.

Retrospectively, however, this particular juxtaposition of late, early and middle period Beethoven pointed up the sheer extraordinariness of his genius. By the time he had come to write the Sonata, he was carving his vision in granite. This was something of which its heroic champion, Roger Woodward was very well aware. Though generally associated with the

avant garde, he is also a notable Beethoven exponent, a rare but obviously fruitful combination.

With something of Brendel's interpretative spontaneity, he called on reserves of sustained insight in the luminous adagio and on a hugely impressive intellectual and physical stamina for the concluding fugue.

After the interval, Andrew Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra took over, starting with a dapper, admirably articulated version of the Egmont Overture, followed by Heather Harper, in radiant voice, in what seemed an especially Mozartian account of Ah! Perfido.

Finally the Seventh Symphony in a well-considered, fresh and lively performance which shunned easy effectiveness, sought out many unconsidered nuances and paid even more attention to metre than to rhythm. It suggested that Wagner's "apotheosis of the dance" description of the symphony was too glib by half.