

Vivaldi a crowd-puller

Newbury Baroque, at St John's Church, Newbury, on Saturday, November 12

BILLED as a Vivaldi-thon on some advertising material, Newbury Baroque settled for *Music by Antonio Vivaldi* on their printed programme and welcomed more people into the church than had been seen for any previous concert.

The *Four Seasons*, a perennial favourite with concertgoers, was presented with the novel idea of having a different violin soloist for each concerto.

Spring was played by William Harvey, with support from a sterling group of string players, and he made a lively, confident start to his solo parts. The tempo dipped very slightly at the beginning but overall it was a well-structured performance.

Summer featured Lukas Medlam in the spotlight with the slow, pastoral beginning well handled and he soon settled down to some confident bowing. This was another polished solo performance with the slow section played with great sensitivity by all the strings.

The *Seasons* were then interrupted to complete the first half of this concert with a reading of Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and this time we heard Jacqueline Pischorn and Catherine Rogers providing a delightful soprano duet along with sonorous singing from Newbury Baroque and bright, open string playing, underpinned by some rich bowing by Charles Medlam on cello and Gilly Anwar-Moyne on double bass. Lucie Tibbits was featured briefly with a short oboe solo.

Autumn came, after the break, with James Toll as soloist and although there was another slight variation of tempo, it was, overall, a very clear and scintillating performance.

Winter completed the group and Hannah Medlam's brisk attack was well-handled and her solo work confident and well paced.

Finally, we heard Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, with the two sopranos in good voice again, and Mark Denza as tenor soloist. Newbury Baroque's musical director Edward Lambert conducted a rousing performance that provided a fitting finale to an enjoyable concert in a church where the acoustic was clear, open and bright.

DEREK ANSELL