

Solos ably sung by choir members

GUILDFORD Cathedral's new staging created a theatrical atmosphere for Saturday's all-Beethoven concert given by Guildford Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra.

The discipline of the choir was very much on display, and members ably undertook solos in the choral fantasia, which began the concert.

This is one of Beethoven's lesser known works, but it sits well with what followed, his ninth symphony. Both use theme and variation form and a concluding chorus.

Pianist Lucy Parham ensured the performance commenced confidently and resolutely.

Mirroring this, the conductor, En Shao, took the *scherzo* of the symphony at breath-taking speed, but allowed the expansive melodies of the *adagio* to create moments of repose.

Throughout, the orchestra's playing was assured and accurate. The ever strings recitative

introducing the *Ode to Joy* came through with striking sonorous clarity.

United with the soloists, Juliet Booth, Bridget Budge, John Oakman and Edward Caswell, the choir, with visible enjoyment and enthusiasm, took up in the final apotheosis what is now the European anthem.

Linda Mowat