

St. Michael's at Six
Sinfonia Chamber Ensemble
24th February 2008

The Sinfonia Chamber Ensemble came to St. Michaels to perform two contrasting pieces from the chamber repertoire – Howard Ferguson's *Octet*, and Ludwig van Beethoven's formidable *Septet in E flat Major*.

Ferguson's neoclassical *Octet* was full of character and charm. It is an inventively orchestrated piece and the ensemble coped admirably with its complexities. The final movement – *Allegro Feroce* – was thrilling, and was a highlight of the concert.

Despite occasional uncertainties from the strings, the opening movement of the Beethoven was stately and engaging, and the long clarinet and violin melodies in the following *Andante Cantabile* were beautifully lyrical. The *Scherzo* was spirited and fun and the final *Presto* brought this stylish and polished performance to an exciting climax.

Lewis Forbes.