



Featured soloist at the concert given last week by Banbury Symphony Orchestra was the young violinist, Michael Bochmann (right). He is pictured with the orchestra's leader, Lawrence Farbrother (left) and his brother, Christopher Bochmann, who is resident conductor. Reviewing the concert on page seven our critic writes that Michael Bochmann "could in the future rank among our great concert violinists."

## Skilful playing by young violinist

For their first concert of 1972, Banbury Symphony Orchestra was not deterred by some of the worst weather of the winter so far.

Neither was their audience, for one had to look very hard to see an empty seat. This support was amply rewarded by what must rank as one of the orchestra's most successful concerts yet.

With their resident conductor, Mr Christopher Bochmann, the orchestra gave a programme consisting of two of the greatest works in the concert repertoire, Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Brahms' E Minor Symphony.

Those unfamiliar with the calibre of the orchestra's reserves of talent and musicianship might have been forgiven for regarding such a programme as somewhat ambitious for a group of people whose available time for rehearsals was limited.

However, events were to prove that any fears of this kind were quite unfounded.

### MARRED

The two major works were preceded by the well-known overture "Hansel and Gretel" by Humperdinck. It must be confessed that the opening bars of this work were a little disappointing, being marred chiefly by a lack of co-ordination between string and brass sections.

However, the work clicked

into place at the marcato passages in the later stages, and thereafter it was competently performed.

For the Beethoven Violin Concerto, which followed, the orchestra was joined by Mr Michael Bochmann, younger brother of the conductor. To say that the performance of this young man was outstanding is an understatement.

Immediately he entered the hall one was conscious of an above-average stage presence and these impressions were more than confirmed by his playing.

The masterly bowing and crisp attack in his execution of the first movement cadenza calls for special mention.

And although the third movement cadenza was slightly less perfect than the first, owing to just a suspicion of under-pitching of one or two notes in the higher register, one was left with the unmistakable feeling that Michael Bochmann could in the future rank among our great concert violinists.

The orchestra's part in this concerto was also superbly performed. It was clear that the players were well rehearsed and there was no trace of lack of co-ordination in their enunciation and development of the main theme in the majestic first movement, their sympathetic rendering of the lyrical slow movement and their brisk playing in the rondo.

It is true that there were a few lapses in the brass section as a result partly of a tendency to anticipate the beat, and partly, on the other hand, of a very small number of missed entries.

But these did not mar the general excellence of this memorable performance.

### ARTISTRY

The Brahms E Minor Symphony followed the interval, and in it the orchestra displayed the same skill and artistry as had characterised the Beethoven.

This, the last of Brahms' symphonies, is like all his orchestral compositions extremely demanding, but the orchestra responded magnificently under Christopher Bochmann's expert guidance and the audience were treated to a most enjoyable rendering of this profound work.

One cannot conclude this review without expressing sincere thanks to Christopher Bochmann and the orchestra both for their courage in choosing this exacting programme and for the arduous efforts they have put into making it an outstanding success, as well as to Mr Michael Bochmann for allowing us the privilege of listening to his brilliant talent.

That we in Banbury have been able to hear a concert of this standard reflects great credit on all concerned. — A.J.