

BANBURY MUSICALLY ON THE MAP

BANBURY is certainly on the map in musical activities. During this spring the number of varied concerts that are being offered to an ever widening listening public has reached a maximum. 100 many concerts? No. One is, after all, still free to choose but one can also attend them all.

Another splendid concert was given in St. Mary's on Saturday evening by the Birmingham Bach Society who performed works by Bach, Bruckner and Palestrina, and an interesting setting entitled Sonnet 146 by Sir Adrian Beeccham.

UNIQUE

Sir Adrian's choral style is unique. His fluent writing is throughout coloured by a continually persistent dissonance. Basically diatonic, though with roving formalities, one can hear distinctly the personal idiom and style of the composer in every phrase. The choir performed this work with convincing ease.

GREAT CLARITY

In the first motet "Komm Jesu" the unaccompanied and nicely balanced double choir performed in German with great clarity and conviction.

In a second item the choir quickly showed its skill in tackling the difficult and now polyphonic music of Palestrina, Bruckner's Ave Maria and Christus Factus est gave the choir the opportunity to complete a range of choral colour with music that is passionate and sensuous and whose tremendous flourishes were heard to great effect in the fine setting of St. Mary's Church.

Richard Butt conducted throughout with verve and vitality.

ENVIABLE EXPERTISE

Two favourite organ pieces were also performed by George Miles with enviable expertise.

The Franck Choral in A Minor gave him full scope to explore the tonal range of the fine organ. His was a careful, controlled performance with romantic warmth in the melodic line and the occasional expected outburst on full organ.

ALMOST THROWN AWAY

The first and last moments of the Bach Trio were almost thrown away because the great speed, albeit brilliance of the performance took little account of the acoustics of the church, nor did justice to the clarity of line that a Bach organ trio needs.

Altogether a most happily balanced programme, our thanks again to the Banbury and District Musical Society for introducing us to such a fine choir.
M.B.S.



BANBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA EXCELLED

BANBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, under the baton of Mr. Malcolm Sargent, scored a tremendous success with their concert last night at Stanbridge Hall. Back in Banbury after a lapse of seven or eight years, was concert pianist Valerie Tryon, a former pupil of Banbury Grammar School. She told the "Advertiser": "It is lovely to be back here. The hall does not seem to have changed. It is my first time playing with the orchestra, and I think they are very good. I have every confidence in them, especially in the Liszt which is very difficult."

Playing in the orchestra were former Grammar School headmaster Mr. A. D. Rose and Mrs. Rose and their daughter, Angela. "Advertiser" pictures taken at rehearsal.



BANBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA COVERED A WIDE RANGE ADMIRABLY

ON FIRST impression, the Banbury Symphony Orchestra's concert on Tuesday last week covered a wide range of music. In fact, the Haydn symphony from classical times, is a most forward-looking work, and Michael Tippett's Suite in D, a modern composition, is based on 16th century tunes. The programme, supplemented by a piano encore, proved to be most interesting and enjoyable, and was well received by a capacity audience.

FINE SHADES OF SOUND

Weber's overture to his opera Oberon is a most delightful work. The solo horn and muted strings in the opening display his mastery of orchestral technique not easy to bring off with the required fairy-like delicacy and here I think the brass were a little obtrusive.

But Malcolm Sargent managed to capture for us some of the fine shades of sound in this totally atmospheric music.

ADMIRABLY PLAYED

The piano concerto, the first in E flat by Liszt, was admirably played by Valerie Tryon. The work is dominated by the piano and also by its opening theme. But as a three movement, full scale concerto, it seems to be unsubstantial music, never getting anywhere, its fragmentary ideas broken by frequent cadenzas, admirable to display the composer's consummate piano technique (although he revised it twice) but not satisfying as serious music.

GREAT EXCITEMENT

The orchestra and conductor worked hard to keep it flowing and indeed the finale, with its sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, produced moments of great excitement.

FINE TECHNIQUES

As an encore, Valerie Tryon played us the G minor ballads of Chopin; again a work which displayed the fine technique of the soloist and yet this time with such wonderful musical effect.

MOST SATISFYING

The most satisfying performance of the evening with the orchestra I felt was Haydn's London symphony. From the dramatic opening, Mr. Sargent seemed to be entirely at home with his orchestra. They sustained

our interest in the superb slow movement, (yet it can seem over-long when badly handled) and built up the excitement in the finale, an astonishingly bold and romantic movement for Haydn.

CHARMINGLY ELIZABETHAN

What a pity we only heard two movements from Michael Tippett's Suite in D, written for the birthday of Prince Charles! We would have enjoyed more. The chimes in "Carol" were rather indistinct but the total effect of both pieces was quite charmingly Elizabethan.

BEST RECEIVED

The best received work of the evening was undoubtedly Tony Sagger's Miniature Suite for Orchestra which was given its first performance by the Banbury Symphony Orchestra (Mr. Sagger is the orchestra's percussionist). So well received was it, that the "Dance" was repeated to satisfy the demands of the audience!

BRASSY

The suite is in three parts, the "March" being brassy in the military band tradition and echoes the suites of Holst and Vaughan Williams. A short "Waltz" section follows, with soft lyrical tunes to a lilting percussion accompaniment.

VITALITY

This is followed by "Dance", notable for its vitality rather than its invention, several contrasting themes building up to a great climax in a most original juxtaposition of rhythmic patterns. Altogether a most vibrant work.

The suite made a most fitting end to an enjoyable concert. I hope the hard work of Mr. Sargent and his orchestra will be as enthusiastically received in future concerts.

J.B.