



Members of Banbury Symphony Orchestra tune up before taking the stage for their concert last week in Stanbridge Hall. Pictured here are clarinet players, Mr R. Nicholson and Julie Thomas.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA TO BE CONGRATULATED

Banbury Symphony Orchestra, led by Lawrence Farbrother and conducted by Christopher Bochmann, entertained a capacity audience in their first concert of 1973 at Stanbridge Hall, Banbury School, on Tuesday.

The programme ranged over a wide variety of musical periods and styles from the classical of the late 18th century to the verge of the modern era at the termination of the 19th.

The first item was the well-known overture by Rossini, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. In this work the lead into the Allegro from the slow pizzicato introduction was extremely well managed with the repeated themes from strings and woodwind coming over in a most pleasing manner. The characteristic "racy" tempi and crescendo passages in the final stages of the work were confidently

expressed and this was a most satisfying performance.

The second item in the first half of the concert was Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 3 (K447), which replaced the advertised No. 4, as Mr Bochmann explained, owing to non-arrival of a score.

The soloist, Miss Shirley MacGregor, and the orchestra deserve our sincere congratulations for making the substitution at such short notice that they had time only for two rehearsals before the concert. In these circumstances the signs of lack of confidence in the string support to the soloist in the *Romanza*, though unfortunate, cannot be severely criticised, and the lyrical

touches and intensity of feeling in the final Allegro were well brought out.

After the interval came *The Swan of Tuonela* by Sibelius, in which Miss Jane Marshall, a regular member of the orchestra, who had earlier acquitted herself very commendably in the oboe obligato of the Rossini, now demonstrated convincingly her virtuosity by a most attractive presentation of the cor anglais solo. Although there were some signs of uncertainty of timing and pitch in the string sections, on the whole the ethereal quality of the work, unique to Sibelius, did come over, and the result was most enjoyable.

The final work of the concert

was Beethoven's First Symphony, which is one well illustrating the composer's evolution from his post-Classical beginnings to the newer concepts of the Romantic era. This was well demonstrated by the orchestra's presentation, but some effects were marred by missed notes and lack of precision. However, in the main their performance was very good.

In summary we are again indebted to the orchestra for a fine evening's entertainment. Mr Bochmann is to be congratulated on his choice of programme and, as usual, on his expert conducting, as well as Mr Farbrother for his able leadership.

A.J.