

BITTER SWEET CONCERT

The second concert of the year by Banbury Symphony Orchestra was in one particular respect a sad event, since it marked the departure of the orchestra's talented conductor, Mr Christopher Bochmann.

During the all too short period of two years Mr Bochmann has spent with the orchestra he has fully maintained and indeed much enhanced the standard of its performance, and all Banbury music lovers will be sorry that he is leaving.

Mr Bochmann, who lives at Burford, is taking up a post as musical director at a school in Surrey. He received a cheque from Mr William Spicer on behalf of the orchestra on Tuesday.

The concert programme consisted mainly of works by composers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, during the transition between Classical and Romantic periods. It opened with the overture to Mozart's last completed opera, The Magic Flute. This was an excellent opening choice, and apart from a very short period of slight untidiness in the string sections was extremely well managed.

It was followed by the elegant B flat Bassoon Concerto by the same composer, and this was superbly performed. We were most fortunate to have the services of Mr Felix Warnock, a bassoonist of great experience and sub-principal bassoon of Bournemouth Sinfonietta, as soloist in this work.

MOOD CHANGE

Next came a work requiring a complete change of mood from the orchestra; this was Rimsky-Korsakov's arrangement of Mussorgsky's Night On The Bare Mountain. Nevertheless the players amply succeeded in conveying the sombre atmosphere of the work.

Weber's overture, Euryanthe was well performed and made enjoyable listening. Then came a short introduction and aria written specially for the six clarinets of the orchestra by Mr Bochmann.

Schubert's Unfinished Symphony No 8 was generally finely accomplished by the orchestra, but one could detect a rather uncertain entry in the first movement and some difficulty in sustaining the notes in some of the quieter string passages. The wind and brass showed evidence of lack of intonation at times. These, however, were but small defects in an otherwise excellent piece of work. A.J.