



Banbury Symphony Orchestra pictured during last week's concert.



Soloist and conductor in last week's Banbury Symphony concert. Left, Nigel Taylor ready for a second half with his French Horn after a splendid piano solo and conductor Donald Simpson.

JUST ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS

Banbury Symphony Orchestra's tribute to American composers in their bi-centennial concert last Tuesday evening had its moments, good and bad.

The packed and encouraging audience at Stanbridge Hall toe-tapped happily to the stirring and popular Sousa marches, Washington Post and Liberty Bell (which earned an encore).

There were delightful passages in the Leonard Bernstein classic, West Side Story but the big disappointment was Rhapsody in Blue, George Gershwin's magnificent evergreen work.

It was clear that the orchestra's normal rehearsal difficulties were heightened by the magnitude of this piece and the apparent lack of strong direction.

Nigel Taylor deserves great credit in his piano solo for keeping his nerve when all else seemed to be going wrong and he must have been relieved in the second half of the programme to nestle behind his French horn in the second row of the orchestra. Clarinetist Ralph Whiteman also impressed in the familiar, intricate solo spots.

The programme, let it be said, was terribly ambitious and with so much talent there especially youthful talent, it is es-

day's long faces and worried frowns are dispelled quickly.

The orchestra's obvious feeling for Dvorak's New World Symphony and the reception it received will be a great encouragement no doubt.

COMPELLING

The brass was always precise and gave the piece the authority it needed in parts and the compelling cor anglais theme in the second movement could hardly have been bettered.

Dvorak's emotive symphony also allowed the violins to recover from a singularly unmemorable first half and they sounded cheerfully together in Liberty Bell even though conductor Donald Simpson's breakneck encore taxed them to the full.

It was that sort of night, when the good things prompted a little too much enthusiasm and the not so good horrified orchestra members and left the audience, particularly after Aaron Copeland's rather wierd Rodeo Suite, pointedly unmoved.

The orchestra repeated the concert at Waynflete Hall, Brackley on Wed-