

Viennese delights and some surprises

The House Full signs were up at Stanbridge Hall on Tuesday evening when Banbury Symphony Orchestra celebrated the 15th anniversary of Strauss with a lively Viennese programme.

Not that Strauss the Younger was allowed to dominate the evening completely but it was his work and that of Strauss the Elder that really set the

pleasingly large audience swaying.

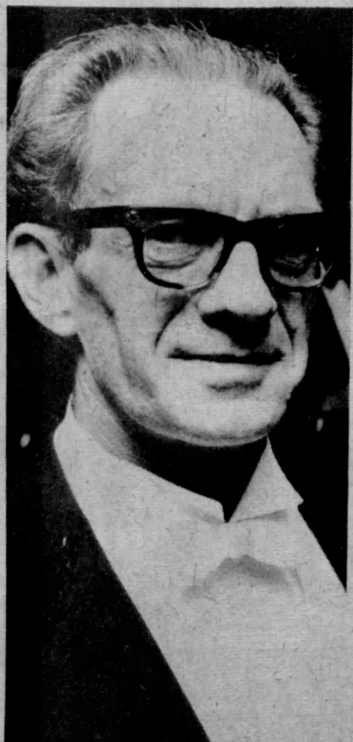
Naturally, there had to be an encore both for the Thunder and Lightning polka and the bold Radetsky March and we forgave the orchestra some little indiscretions occasionally.

Light-hearted enthusiasm swept some members off their seats once or twice but their impetuosity served only to remind us all that here was a hard-working group of local musicians hell-bent on entertaining both the customers and themselves.

New conductor Donald Simpson threw himself into the fray superbly and deserved his ovation.

Soloist for the evening, John Melvin, travelled from Oxford for his second appearance with the orchestra and despite a little difficulty with his instrument in the warm hall, he produced a most accomplished Concerto for Clarinet, the Mozart work.

— JR



DONALD SIMPSON

It was impossible to miss the group of schoolboys, clad smartly in their grey and red uniforms, sitting in the packed audience for Banbury Symphony Orchestra's recent concert.

The boys were from Winchester House School, Brackley, and they were at Stanbridge Hall, Banbury, to lend support for their Director of Music, Mr Donald Simpson.

It was a special night for the craggy Australian. Mr Simpson was taking his first bow as conductor of the orchestra after eight years as a horn player.

The concert was a splendid success and Mr Simpson, who is also joint headmaster at Winchester House School, tackled the intricacies and delights of a Strauss programme with vigour and a ready smile.

Born in 1929, Donald Simpson studied at the North Queensland Conservatorium of Music, at Queensland University, and at Queensland Teachers' College. He has been playing in orchestras and bands from the age of eight.

While at University he became interested in singing and choral conducting, and sang as a lay clerk in Brisbane Cathedral for four years. He formed his first choir in 1947, and has been regularly conducting choirs ever since.

He came to England in 1962, and took up a teaching post in Winchester House School.

He is well-known in the area as both a horn player and a conductor, especially of operatic productions at Winchester House, and his enthusiasm should further stimulate interest in classical music both in Brackley and Banbury. — J.R.