

Spring concert is a success

THE enthusiastic applause accorded to singers, instrumentalists — and particularly to the conductor — at the conclusion of the Nantwich and District Choral Society's Spring concert evening was sustained and well merited. St. Mary's Parish Church was the venue and the audience considerable.

Edward Hewison brings a thoroughly professional and authoritative command to his role of conductor, and the Society has made a marked advance in performance over the past year. It can produce sound of adequate volume, rich in texture and varied in nuance.

I can pay the Society no higher compliment than to say 'they sing as one'. Nantwich

should be proud of these singers.

The programme showed imagination, beginning and ending with Coronation anthems first sung for George II in Westminster Abbey in 1727 and typical of Handel's declamatory and rhythmic choruses.

The octogenarian composer Gordon Jacob has written a great deal of incidental music for films and the ballet and has left his mark as a festival conductor. Among his notable choral works is the infrequently performed 'Highways', featuring some aspects of the history of transport ranging from wheels to flying saucers. It deals with chariots, 'the agility of a leisurely sedan', the stage coach, puffing billy, penny farthing bicycles and a 'streamlined limousine'.

Choir and orchestra took all ten numbers in their stride, and Wayne Turner (baritone) was the pleasing soloist in five of the features. Unfortunately, St. Mary's acoustics did not spring to his aid. We would have heard him to better effect had he been posted in the pulpit with a stone sounding board at his back.

Jean Samuel (soprano), Jack Bayliss (counter-tenor) who, along with Wayne Turner, took the solo roles in Purcell's 'Come Ye Sons of Art Away', suffered from the same disadvantage. St. Mary's is an ideal setting for such events but music making would be enhanced for both performers and audiences if singers and players could be raised above audience level.

One imagines that local orchestral players had been augmented from elsewhere. They gave a notable account of themselves.

The piano contribution by Mrs. M. J. Roberts, Michael Bridger on the harpsichord and the crisp trumpet work of T. Farrer and W. Ramsey in some tricky passages, were memorable. William Boyce's Symphony No. 5 was a pleasant curtain raiser to the second half of a most enjoyable programme.

M.A.S.