

BIRTHDAY F CONCERT

By JOHN HORNER

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The City of Burnside Symphony Orchestra, taking a holiday from symphonies for once, gave a birthday party concert last night for the entertainment of its patrons, who filled the Burnside Town Hall.

The presiding magician was Dr. John Black, who, five years ago, began waving his orchestral baton under the very noses of the ABC and the Conservatorium, until he had brought under his spell a full orchestra of 63 players drawn from the highways and byways of Adelaide.

This is no lumbering leviathan, but a disciplined band of keen players, old and young. Dr. Black's motto is "full employment" and his knowledge of orchestral scores is such as to enable him to pick music that will give every player something to strive for.

His first item, the "Francis Juges" Overture of Berlioz was a kind of march past of the entire orchestra (except the harp).

Splendid

The Burnside brass made a splendid sound and spectacle, with their four trombones (who harmonised sweetly later on in Beethoven's "Egualle"), plus both tenor and bass tubas.

The conductor (and the stage curtains) prevented the brass from obliterating everybody else, and the triple wood-wind had plenty of opportunity to shine.

In Mozart's Masonic Funeral Music, three clarinets, B flat, alto and bass, were substituted for the original bassett horns with interesting effect.

A wind quintet (Hecker, Phillips, Miller, Good) intrigued our ears with sharp contrasts in Lully and Prokofief.

Of special interest was "The Advertiser" prize-winning composition "Still Waters," by Clifford Phillips, written for the orchestra's fifth birthday. Orchestrally conceived and thoroughly effective, it struck me as ideal background music for one of those two-minute gaps in Channel 2's educational programmes — "Lake with Swans." Mr. Phillips was present to acknowledge the general acclamation.

Throughout the programme I found myself enjoying orchestration rather than music. I was reminded of

Junior's "bomb," which, having no bonnet and no great performance, fascinates by its full view of the works, whereas in the family limousine it is the motoring not the motor that I enjoy.

When the orchestration last night was at a minimum, as in a Vivaldi concerto for strings (soloists: Perry, Hirsch, Leak, Davis), we were reminded for the first time that we were listening to an amateur orchestra. But it is an amateur orchestra with a difference, and that difference is to be traced to the mind of one man.