

Triumphant Finale

By Conductor

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By JOHN HORNER

When Dr. John Black laid down his baton at the triumphant conclusion of Schumann's First ("Spring") Symphony last night, he also brought to a triumphant conclusion one of the most fruitful orchestral conductorships Adelaide has enjoyed.

In 1956 he founded what we now know as the City of Burnside Symphony Orchestra with 11 optimistic players.

Its strength for the past few seasons has grown to 60, and for exceptional occasions (such as Berlioz's *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale*) Dr. Black has rounded up as many as 50 wind and brass alone.

His success in attracting so many enthusiasts, old and young, has been due to his personality, his perseverance and his polley.

His pugnacious personality would make him an ideal regimental sergeant-major; like Toscanini, he has the reputation of a martinet.

His perseverance he has applied to everything from the humblest chores to learning the most obscure orchestral scores. His policy has been to fill in the gaps left by our other orchestral bodies.

He harbors some healthy loves and hates. Brahms he won't have a bar of, but he can't get enough of

Berlioz, Liszt, Schumann and Bruckner.

As a result, Adelaide has heard a number of first performances. Last night, for instance, we had the Hamlet Funeral March (Berlioz) and would have had the Liszt "Lorelei" for voice and orchestra if Nancy Thomas's voice had not disappeared at short notice. (Dr. Jack Peters substituted stylishly with a Galuppi sonata for harpsichord solo, another welcome novelty for the Burnside audience).

Dr. Black (born Birmingham 1922) began his musical career as a flautist but always dreamed of conducting. However, fate led him to be an agricultural chemist and it was only when he settled at the Waite Institute that his conducting opportunity came. He seized it with both hands and Adelaide is the richer.

Next week he will leave to take up a professorship in Edinburgh. It is unlikely that we shall ever see his like again.