

Romeo brings out the best in Yansons

REVIEW

By IFAN PAYNE

MARISS Yansons' association with Cardiff is a happy one. His many performances conducting the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra have given much delight.

Yansons' return to St David's Hall last night with the Oslo Philharmonic, of which he is principal conductor, provided a clear illustration of the contrast between a routine run-through and exceptional music-making.

The style of Hoveland's *Fanfare and Chorale*, with which the concert opened, will be familiar in style to those who listen to Shostakovich, and under Yansons it was presented vigorously and sensitively.

A large orchestra — built on eight double basses — gave rise to expectations of Wagnerian Beethoven.

In the event, the performance of that young Viennese composer's *Symphony No 2* was more Brahmsian, the music bathed in inappropriate, subdued, romantic light.

Blemishes of intonation and ensemble marred the *Dawn* of Britten's *Four Sea Interludes* in a performance which, thereafter, was competent rather than inspiring.

On an entirely different plane from all that preceded it, the stunning and vividly realised performance of selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* indicated where the rehearsal time had been spent and finally showed us the exciting conductor we know and admire.

Yansons' fans rightly stood and cheered for more which he, wrongly, provided in the shape of an encore which was not only poor judgement but also completely dissipated the effect of that magnificent *Romeo and Juliet*.