

1986

REVIEW

Busloads
 enjoy
 concert
 for young

By IFAN PAYNE

IF YOU have ever wondered what a typewriter, one of Cardiff's architectural offices and a small boy named Sam have in common, then the answer was to be found in the Music for Young People concert in St David's Hall yesterday.

The architectural firm of Holder and Mathias Partnership sponsored the concert. Sam was the small boy selected from the audience to help conductor Richard McNicol on an important musical point.

Aided by the orchestra of the Welsh National Opera, Mr McNicol explained the difference, with Sam's help, between suggestion, as exemplified by Mendelssohn's overture *The Hebrides* and imitation in the form of the sound of a typewriter.

I took with me to the concert a young person to provide a suitable perspective on the event. This 12-year-old thought the discussion of the difference between imitation and suggestion "stimulating."

On the other hand, my young friend was not so interested in Mr McNicol's explanation of the story of Stravinsky's *Firebird*, finding it "boring and childish," since he thought it got in the way of the music itself which he found "quite interesting."

However, there were clearly many children who enjoyed the way in which the music was interspersed with the conductor's gentle and good-natured explanations.

Mr McNicol clearly has a way of charming his youthful audiences as many teachers in the audience already knew. By all accounts his visits to schools are most successful in inspiring children's involvement in music.

But several teachers at the St David's Hall concert expressed disappointment that the music for young people was not as stimulating for the pupils as it might have been.

This was coupled with the opinion that, at only an hour's length, the brevity of the concert did not justify the effort needed to shepherd classes of children, arrange for buses and all the other demands of organising mass outings of young children.

As for my young friend, his general verdict on the concert was "quite interesting, I suppose."

And, as for this older critic, I also found much of interest in Richard