

Performance lacked glow of intensity

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

IT WAS not for nothing that many years ago Leonard Bernstein in a highly regarded TV series celebrating the symphony in the 20th Century chose Carl Nielsen's Symphony Number Five as one of his examples.

For many, this is Nielsen's most cogently argued work and the juxtaposition of the noble first movement theme and the beserk side drum which runs amock pitting its strength against it is a powerful piece of composition worthy to stand with the very best of Shostakovich.

Guido Ajmone-Marsan conducted the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra in Tuesday's lunchtime concert at St David's Hall in which this Nielsen sym-

phony was the featured work.

The music was as grand as ever but the performance lacked the glowing intensity that has been so much a feature of the BBC WSO's playing of previous instalments in this Nielsen series.

There were wonderful moments, like the vanquished side drum, retreating offstage, combined with the soulful concluding clarinet solo.

Throughout the concert I had the feeling that the conductor had not mastered the hall's acoustics which require woodwind, cellos and bases to project more strongly if they are to be heard in proper balance with the rest of the orchestra.