

Polite rather than rousing

FOR all its glowing tone, the French horn is a cussed instrument. Sometimes it appears to need a jump-start just to get it going.

On top of all the problems of technique and humidity and atmospheric pressure, it seems on occasion as though the instrument just plain got out of bed on the wrong side.

Barry Tuckwell is one of the foremost French horn players of our day — but a little of the intransigence of the instrument seemed to beset him during Tuesday evenings recital in the Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre, Cardiff.

One can travel the concert halls of the world these days and catch not even a hint of the name of Charles Koechlin, let alone hear any of his music.

Born in Paris in 1867,

By IFAN PAYNE

Koechlin was in fact a prolific composer with over 200 compositions to his name, including an opera, three ballets, two symphonies and film music.

The sonata for horn and piano was composed between 1918 and 1925 and comes almost two-thirds the way through his life (he died in 1951) but only a third of the way through his list of compositions.

Hindemith was another prolific composer who wrote one of everything and sometimes more than one.

Composed in 1939, the sonata for horn and piano is a mature work and Tuckwell and Vignoles gave persuasive performances with Barry Tuckwell's golden tone and the pianist's judiciously-weighted chords demanding attention.