

Sparkling and clear

THE RADIO plays strange tricks with our perceptions.

Driving to St David's Hall at noon I listened to a magnificent performance of Elgar's *Cockaigne* conducted during a lunch-time concert from Newcastle by Bryden Thomson.

I became concerned that perhaps this was the wrong day for the final concert in the BBC's Nielsen series. But no, a few minutes and a couple of hundred miles later, there was Bryden Thomson striding on to the stage of St David's Hall to conduct the BBC Welsh Symphony Or-

By IFAN PAYNE

chestra in an alert and sparkling performance of Haydn's *Symphony No 69*.

Nielsen's *Symphony No 6* is titled *Sinfonia Semplice* but it is simple only in a Miesian sense of less being the product of very much more compositional craft and ability.

In this performance of his last symphony Bryden Thomson again showed himself to be an ideal conductor of the Danish composer's music.

Thomson has that judicious combination of interpretive drama and expansiveness, the ability to draw out of the or-

chestra an open sound which has great clarity of detail. He has a fine sense of pacing and of the architecture of the music and the sensitivity to make magic of the autumnal ending to the third movement. Most of all, he is not afraid to let loose the timpani when called for.

Of modern composers Carl Nielsen is second only to Shostakovich in the degree to which he created orchestral music which uplifts the soul and fills the air with the spirit of the dance. For which, and for his old sequence of symphonies which we have now traversed thank you Carl!