

OUR ORCHESTRA

FEW towns have a municipal orchestra. Guildford is one of the exceptions. That it should have an orchestra which is not only fully-professional, but conducted by a man of international repute, probably makes it unique in the country.

At 3 p.m. on Sunday, September 21st, Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra will stage the first concert of the new season at the town's Civic Hall. The annual series of concerts — there are 16 from September to May — are invariably sell-outs. This is considered quite remarkable in professional music circles in view of Guildford's size.

The concerts are sponsored by the borough council with financial support from the South-East Arts Association.

The Guildford Philharmonic has achieved a national reputation for its high standard of playing, stimulating programmes and the atmosphere of excitement created by its performances. Formed just after the last war by the former Guildford Corporation, the orchestra comprises 70-80 of the country's leading

By Ron Toft, Public Relations Officer, Guildford Borough Council.

orchestral musicians.

During the past 12 years, it has gone from strength to strength in technical standard under its internationally-admired conductor, Vernon Handley, who is also Guildford Council's Director of Music.

CONDUCTOR OF THE YEAR

"Tod" Handley, a down-to-earth and immensely likeable person, was voted Conductor of the Year in 1973 by the Composers' Guild of Great Britain. As well as conducting the Guildford series of concerts, "Tod" broadcasts regularly with the B.B.C. regional orchestras and makes frequent guest appearances with the London Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras.

Hugh Bean, probably the best-known orchestral leader in the country, has led the

Guildford Philharmonic since 1971. The orchestra's co-leader, John Ludlow, is also leader of the English National Orchestra and has led, too, the London Mozart Players, the Covent Garden Orchestra and the Bournemouth Sinfonietta.

Closely linked with the Guildford Philharmonic are two choirs — the Philharmonic and Proteus Choirs, the latter catering for young people up to the age of 30. Both are conducted by "Tod" Handley and play an active part in the annual series of concerts, singing many challenging and little-known works in addition to the standard classics of the choral repertoire.

Commercial recordings have been made by both choirs, as well as by the orchestra itself.

MUSIC TRUST

In 1972, the South-East Music Trust was formed to promote the Guildford Philharmonic outside the town. To begin with, concerts were held in Farnham and Woking. Later, the trust provided funds towards the cost of putting on concerts in Aldershot,

Winchester, Canterbury and Broadstairs.

It is the trust's intention that the Guildford Philharmonic should become the orchestra of the South-East. If professional expertise is anything to go by, the orchestra is already more than half-way towards achieving that distinction.

Copies of the orchestra's programme can be obtained from Concert Manager Mrs Kathy Atkins at Guildford House, 155 High Street, Guildford. Tel. Guildford 73800.