

Mystery of attack on music director

GUILDFORD Philharmonic director Vernon Handley is suffering from concussion after being assaulted in Manchester.

Mr. Handley spent last week conducting the city's famous Halle orchestra and the attack came while he was standing outside the Midland Hotel, waiting for a car to take him to rehearsals.

He was reading a musical score when the stranger came up and hit him hard on the side of the jaw without warning.

The conductor fell, but managed to get to his feet and ask the man why he had hit him before making his way back into the hotel and to ask reception to call the police.

His attacker followed him, however, and Mr. Handley believes he would have been struck again if he had not been restrained by two of the hotel's porters.

Speaking from their Gloucestershire home, Mr.

Handley's wife Victoria said her husband was still suffering from the effects of concussion. "He feels the ground moving beneath him and he has jarred one of his vertebrae," she said.

"He has headaches and he is still not feeling well but he is on the mend," she added.

Despite his injuries Mr. Handley carried on working last week. He gave three performances with the Halle but had to conduct the orchestra sitting down because of giddiness.

Doctors have told him to rest this week and he has pulled out of a concert at the University of Surrey tomorrow.

He will be in charge, however, at next Sunday's concert of the Guildford Philharmonic in The Civic Hall.

A man appeared at Manchester Magistrates' Court on Friday in connection with the incident.