

COFFEE SPOONS

by David Schleich

The rate of assimilation by the media of the major themes and interests of the "youthful counter culture" has destroyed the speed with which that counter-culture might have radically altered our ways of living. Slick advertising agencies, for example, have responded by introducing a host of new products for the 'hip' young. As well, these men have assimilated the jargon of that 'young' to sell their wares. Insurance Companies, aware of the immense profits to be generated among our large youth population have countered our cries of "phoney" and "unnecessary" with nauseating advertisements acknowledging the phoniness and extraneousness of insurance plans. However, insurance plan sales continue to increase.

Recently, those who watch the major wire service features may have noticed that a new theme is being harped upon. The theme was expected. The employees of the major mass-distributed magazines, newspapers, radio and television programmes have announced that the "alternatives of the 'counter-culture' are not enduring the test of practical application". Some alternative ways of living, they say, never really surfaced. They conclude, of course, that the present state of affairs is, inevitably, the best of all possible states of affairs. These news service writers exclaim that people who dropped out in the late sixties are now "dropping back in". They have "seen the impracticality of their idealism" says one regular feature writer. Meanwhile, so as not to alarm the political ambivalence of the new voters, Ministers of Youth and Culture go on about the "energy and intelligence" of modern youth. These journalists and politicians know that the major imperatives of the youth culture have been vaneer. But these journalists and politicians are not taking any chances.

It is clumsy reasoning and half-truth to look to the noisiest of the youth culture advocates for some statement of where the youth culture has been and is going. But these listened-to journalists and politicians find their information among the din, sensationalism and fanaticism of fads. As always the judgments of those who hold authority over the government and the media are incomplete.

Out of the noise of the sixties, referred to by at least one technocrat as an "aberration", a large counter-culture, generally accepted and lived has not emerged. Ultimately, a very few of the young have the energy or patience or courage to fashion a truly alternative life style. They are so overwhelmed by what is around them and by a consuming fear of not being able to "make a living" that they sell out too soon. For example, which of those young men shuffling nervously through M.B.A.'s or B. Comm's will, when hired, denounce food companies for manufacturing pre-sweetened cereals which rot children's teeth and clog their bowels? Which of those young men who are preparing to be business executives will press for the institution of a truly honest advertising council to police media messages? Which of those young men meandering around the law school's waiting rooms to the upper income brackets will challenge a legal system which allows property rights to dominate human rights? And which of those young lawyers will challenge that disgusting disparity all through their careers? Which of those squeaky clean dental and medical students plodding through the labyrinth of professional programmes will denounce the disgusting extortion of practices of their future colleagues? Will those potential doctors and dentists refuse, in their own practices, to take more money from their patients than they reasonably require to feed, clothe, house, educate and entertain their own families? Which of those graduate students timidly jumping hurdles in doctorate programmes will avoid the tenure-ridden in-fighting of university departments? Which of those future university teachers will be teachers? And not teachers-by-default whose supercilious whining often has too little to do with life.

Some of us will do these things. There are more of us than in the last generation who will do these things. Slowly, what Charles Reich (in *The Greening of America*) calls "Consciousness II" will disappear. The revolution, then, is not on the campus. The revolution most assuredly is not in any political chamber pot. The revolution is in the minds of those young people who reflected suspiciously all during the fauvist noises of the sixties and who today are absolutely not aiming at anything farther away than this afternoon, who wish to live simply and happily, who see no sense in wanting to be famous among their contemporaries, who recognize the fikleness of reputations, who abhor the growing rift between the haves and the have-nots, who deplore the indulgent consumption of the established, who want to live starting every morning. I suppose there is some optimism for these quiet revolutionaries because guaranteed annual incomes are inevitable, they know, and inevitable especially since the have-nots in recent times have learned well how to articulate and to re-articulate their demands.

EYO concert no concessions

A multitude of musicians literally overflowing an overcrowded stage, dominated by a concert grand piano, and too many people in an overcrowded hall at an oversold concert. This was how the Edmonton Youth Orchestra's Sunday concert began amid a great human crush; the pianist and conductor having to weeve through seats of musicians merely to reach the piano and the podium. It was unfortunate that there was such a crush for it perhaps dampened some of the playing that followed.

Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.3 (Opus 37)* is no bagatelle, it is not a sweet nothing, or something to be dashed for either pianist or orchestra. Though not a piece of substanceless virtuosity like a Paganinni study, it is a piece requiring virtuosity, and the tension of this effort seemed to be reflected in its performance. From the first notes of the powerful orchestral opening there seemed to be a tremendous consciousness of each note and beat; the orchestra was on razors edge, pulling and playing through the difficult passages, attempting notes dynamics and tone. The pianist also on his entry came forth with a boldly precise ringing tone, but with some slight blurrings; again there seemed almost too much tension. From the first movement of this piece there seemed a lack of sensitivity, it was as though the effort of conquering the piece itself had left no energy for its interpretation. For example, in the cadenza at the end of the first movement, while the arpeggio's were pretty much all there, there seemed slight blurrings, and less than total tonal control.

In the second movement, even though the muted strings achieved some subtle tonal

moods, what seemed to be the least effective playing of the concert occurred. Perhaps it was in ambiguity of the interpretation for there seemed in the piano solos rubatos that were unconvincing, sounding almost like stumbling pauses, and the lyrical tenderness that the music suggested did not seem fully developed, except perhaps in a few of the woodwind passages which wafted through the crowded auditorium like gentle breezes.

It was in the third movement that the concerto showed its greatest strength. For here in passages less firey than the first movement, but more determined than in the second, the piano seemed to find itself and achieved dominance over the music and the audience, carrying every mind over its tortuous course. Though the playing was less than perfect the technical faults were generally minor, there may have been a french horn stutter on one entry, some of the orchestral entries may have been slightly unco-ordinated, and in a few of the fast passages the piano may have blurred slightly, but it was impressive to see such a piece merely played by local young musicians. And the pianist, Joachim Segger, is no small talent, it is surprising to see such a modest looking young man walk on the stage, and then to see and hear him play with such mastery and vigor.

There was however a marked contrast in the playing between the first and second half of the concert. From the start of the Mozart *Magic Flute Overture* the chamber orchestra seemed to play and play with the music, it was mastered and rather than seeming an effort as the piano concerto had it seemed a joy, flowing and bubbling in stringed precision, a tribute to the musical abilities of both the

conductor and orchestra.

Similarly the Dvorak *New World Symphony* was spirited and colorful. Where the piano concerto had seemed limited in tessitura, the orchestra broke forth and swept through mood and colour, so that at the end of the second movement in the dying softness you could feel the silence and intensity of the audience around you. And the lively fourth movement though not the epitome of the musicians music was so brightly played that the tunes still whistled in your head after the concert. If this concert was any indication, the EYO should do very well in Switzerland, where they have been invited to represent Canada at the International Festival of Youth Orchestra's.

A change has occurred since last year. The Edmonton Youth Orchestra is maturing; its tone is becoming more controlled, its stylistic gestures more certain. It is attempting fullblown pieces; no longer playing pieces prefaced by "for Young Orchestra" like Aaron Copland's piece *Outdoor Overture* or Shaeffer's *Threnody* of last year's November concert. It is now into a world where no concessions are made for inexperience.

Merely arriving at the plateau of orchestral excellence required to attempt these pieces is no mean feat for a group whose players are all under 21. However perhaps something has been lost in the process of musical growth, a little of the musical enthusiasm and spontaneity that was so overwhelming in *Threnody* seems to have been spent in transition from "young orchestra" to orchestra.

by Daniel Kenway

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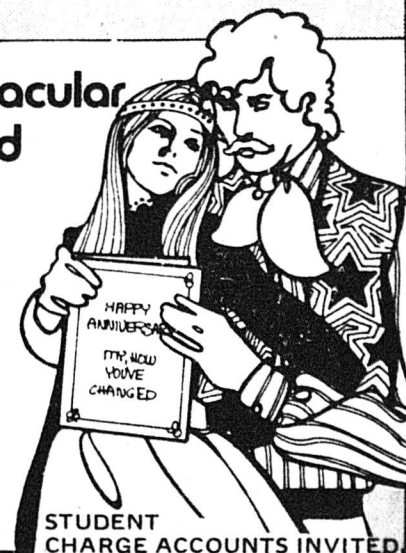
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