

music

'melodies of wonder'

bruce cockburn

Cockburn walked on to the stage, unannounced. After sitting down, waiting for the applause to stop, and settling his guitar on his knee, he began to play. For the next two hours he played for us as he would play for himself, honestly and without pretention.

Not only is he a great writer (his songs having captured a poetic quality) but his performing ability is exceptional; he plays guitar, piano, mandolin and dulcimer.

Perhaps the best way to describe what went on last

Wednesday evening at the Jubilee Auditorium, would be to relate a few specific incidents: Halfway through a quiet optimistic song about birth and renewal ('Spring Song'), a baby began to cry. The sound seemed to generate a stronger awareness of the eternal nature of life. Later in the concert, Cockburn described the process of guitar tuning. He explained that it transcended simple mechanics and described the tuning pegs as antennae receiving the 'vibrations, the flow of the universe'. After the audience had a little laugh about this, he said

solemnly that he thought it was 'very far out'.

Of course he played all of our favorite Cockburn songs: 'Goin' Down Slow', 'Today I Walk', etc. As well, he sang several new, unrecorded songs, including two funny-sad pieces 'When the Sun Goes Nova' and 'The Blues Got the World by the Balls'. Cockburn described the first as an 'apocalyptic love song' and the second, well it speaks for itself.

I left the auditorium in a wonderful frame of mind. Thank you Bruce Cockburn.

T. Taylor

cool reception for jablonski



Contrary to my expectations, Marek Jablonski's performance of Chopin's Piano Concerto No.1 at last Friday night's opening concert of the Edmonton Symphony Society did not turn out to be for me the high point of the concert. It was, as the high society ladies in the foyer at intermission pointed out, 'flawlessly performed and brilliantly interpreted' with an 'enviable technique' but I must confess that Chopin, even played well, simply does not speak to me. I suspect that the Chopin was chosen as a technical showpiece rather than for its popularity. I was apparently not the only philistine present however for Jablonski did not receive a standing ovation, which I am sure he would have if he had played for example, Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1.

Nor was Elgar's Introduction and Allegro for String Orchestra very exciting. It was played with gusto if not perfection but it left me feeling dissatisfied. The entire piece was a cacophony interspersed with promising but brief plateaus of contemplative melody, as if Elgar was searching for a tune he could not quite remember and which unfortunately he never found.

The crowd pleaser on the program was Beethoven's

Pastoral Symphony, played with the energy and observance of dynamics that it requires. It's always a bold undertaking for an orchestra to perform a work that is well known since mistakes and imperfections will be easily recognized, but the Edmonton Symphony performed excellently on the whole with only a few of the usual French horn mistakes.

Happily, the Edmonton Symphony has more such popular works for up-coming concerts, works such as Handel's Royal Water Music, Beethoven's Leonore Overture, and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1. Happily also, Lawrence Leonard will continue to animate the performances with his energetic conducting. If any other conductor tried to match the profusely elegant and appropriately dignified style of Leonard, he would only succeed in appearing as if his belt were broken and he was trying to hold his pants up with his stomach.

I think that it is important for the Edmonton Symphony to appeal to a wider audience for financial reasons if not for any others. If the symphony is to surmount it's present financial problems, if it is to justify the expense of large federal grants and private donations, then it must do more than satisfy the elitist desire to

"keep culture alive", it must be more than a frivolous luxury for Edmonton's rich, it must provide valuable entertainment for more Edmontonians.

The choice of very popular music for this year's program was a wise step in this direction but an appeal to popular taste may be made elsewhere as well. If live symphony is going to provide something that the flick of a stereo set switch cannot, it must make a visual as well as an auditory appeal. The Edmonton Symphony could vastly improve their visual performance by such obvious changes as introducing a backdrop that doesn't look makeshift, by introducing coloured dress for the musicians instead of the customary black and white, and by varying the intensity and colour of stage lighting. As an experiment, a modest "light show" might even be tried with an appropriate piece of music. I hope that it is not iconoclastic to suggest that works such as Beethoven's Pastoral symphony, which are obvious tone poems, might benefit by the presentation of some visually related material. Why not for example, at least dim the house lights when the thunderstorm breaks in the fourth movement of the Pastoral?

Arthur Savage



films

junior bonner

Sam Peckinpah's JUNIOR BONNER is perhaps his finest, certainly his most human and humane, cinematic elegy for a way of life nearly lost forever in today's America. Unlike Peckinpah's recent STRAW DOGS, which hit you like a fist full of quarters, and which, for all its cinematic excellence, left a very bad taste because the values it espoused so ardently emerged in their violence as extremely dangerous to any humane culture, JR. BONNER, although it does promote many of the same values, especially an old-fashioned, and what would now be called sexist, view of men and women, does so in a context of elegaic humour which continually wins the audience to the side of the characters which uphold the old, lost ways, despite (or maybe precisely because of) the fact that they will lose, will finally be wiped out by the new, plastic culture that is replacing them with mobile homes where ranches once existed. Thus we side with Ace Bonner (beautifully played by Robert Preston) and Jr. Bonner against the other son, Curly, who is on his way to his first million while Jr. is still trying for 8 seconds.

There are some superb moments of pure cinema in this film: Peckinpah is one of the better directors around and he knows how to shape a scene till it nearly lifts you out of your seat. The early scene of the destruction of the old Bonner ranch house is one such scene; an incredibly visceral rendering of technology as inhuman destruction of things human. There are other, interpersonal scenes, such as a wonderfully tense dinner with Jr., his mother, Curly, his wife, and their children or the final scene between Ace and his wife, that are genuinely moving, and beautifully played.

Finally there is the fact that though JR. BONNER is an elegy, it is not really sad. There's too much life in Jr. and the others like him for them to go out easily, rather they obey Dylan Thomas' dictum, and, in their own fashion, 'Rage, rage, against the dying of' their own particular 'light'. As a result, we emerge from this film filled with a sense of human accomplishment and personal freedom, rather than a sense of irreparable loss. The knowledge of loss is there, all right, to be

thought about later, but the basic impression is of man's refusal to give up what he most desires, even when it's being taken away from him, bit by bloody bit. A very fine movie. D. Barbour

poets

poets galore!

Unknown poets! Come and view your potential colleagues. From October 6 through 8, Edmonton will be hosting the third general meeting of the League of Poets. This league was established in 1968 with the major intent of providing writing contacts between Canadian poets. Also, through this organization, writers are able to make their view known to both the government and the public.

The fact that the meeting will be held in the West is a move toward making the league representative of all of Canada, rather than being centred around Ontario, as it has in the past. The next meeting will be held in Fredericton, N.B.

On Saturday, Oct. 7, a series of symposiums will be featured in TLB-I. At 9:30 a.m., Chris Levenson will be speaking on 'The Poet in the Changing World', at 2:00 p.m., Glen Siebrasse and Victor Coleman will introduce the topic of 'Independent Publishing in Canada', and to complete the series, Gerald Lampert will discuss the 'League Poetry Readings'.

The poetry readings will certainly be one of the highlights of the gathering. Some poets to watch for: (Saturday, 8 p.m. TLB-I) F. R. Scott, Stephen Scobie, Ralph Gustafson, P. K. Page, Robert Gibbs, et. al.; (Sunday, 2:30 p.m. TLB-I) Miriam Waddington, Douglas Barbour, Michael Ondaatje, Elizabeth Brewster, Peter Stevens, et. al.; (Sunday, 7 p.m. TLB-I) Earle Birney, Bill Bissett, Lionel Kearns, Sharon Stevenson, Stephanie Nynych et. al.

The events are open to the public, especially the readings; the proceedings are being sponsored by the Canada Council.

C o m e a n d b e, (enlightened) (inspired) (informed).

