

# Atlantic Symphony noteworthy

by John Gray

Despite my skepticism, The Atlantic Symphony Orchestra pulled off one heck of a good concert on the night of Monday, March 12. The first work presented on the program was the three pieces from "Sacrae Symphoniae" for wind instruments, by Gabrieli. The composer was the music master at St. Mark's Cathedral, in Venice, and was one of the (if not THE) greatest of renaissance composers. The

composition is written for two separate groups of players, much in the fashion of the later Baroque concerto grosso. We assume that the sections played from separate galleries, a feat possible with the tremendous acoustics of St. Marks.

The actual work, as I heard it, was a bit disappointing to my musically bigoted ears. I felt that the musicians, though they worked hard, just weren't quite together, and I must place the criticism on the conductor,

particularly in a piece for double ensemble such as this one.

The second item on the program was the Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss (the one who wrote the original 'Also Sprach Zarathustra, used in 2001, he's no relation to the waltzing Stausses of Vienna). This was well done, and in the performance I can neither damn nor laud the orchestra. It was, in fact, enlarged with quite a few extra players, including Dal's own Leslie Allt and Ken Bingham contributing some of their professional talent.

The guest soloist, Veronica Tyler, won over the approval of all with her confident, well sung performance. This woman has a great voice, as well as an excellent sense for her music. This, coupled with the experiential training of extensive tours to world centres, all points to the fact that she has nowhere

to go but up. I wish her the best of luck.

On the final segment of the concert, they decided to tackle Mahler's 4th Symphony in G. Of all Mahler's Symphonies, the fourth is his lightest and least serious, but in comparison to the usual Halifax symphony program, this baby is a super-heavy.

I started listening unenthusiastically, because Mahler is my favourite composer, and I assumed the ASO would bungle such a vast undertaking. Not having heard any of the rehearsals, I was caught unprepared. They must have been rehearsing that thing for months, because it came off beautifully.

It was obvious that it was too much for the audience, who have been too long lulled by Tchaikovsky, Haydn, Brahms, Opera Buffa, and other such

schmalz. I may say that during the tutti in the 1st movement, most of the admission-paying socialities were knocked over like so many bowling pins.

Miss Tyler sang the soprano solo in the last movement, taken from the poem Des Knaben Wunderhorn. She sang even better with Mahler than with her Strauss performance earlier in the evening.

I enjoyed the orchestra's fine rendering, though it was not without error. Nonetheless a good concert.

I came late for the Sunday afternoon performance of the Czech Nonet, and I subsequently fell asleep during Beethoven's Septet, op. 20. The applause woke me up in time to hear the encore, a piece by Dvorak. It was well done, but not particularly impressive. Fine group of musicians.

That's all for this issue.

## Special Introductory Offer

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Orientation and further information: Haliburton Room, UK-C, 12:00 March 27

It is our hope that members of these species will attend and either consign themselves to a museum, (voluntarily before the professional curators come to capture us) or demonstrate themselves to be a force of the Present as Future (rather than the Present as Past).

## Animal crackers

If rumours have anything to do with anything, it would appear that the Halifax Housing Authority has little to do with its time other than rob senior citizens of their goldfish, budgies and such other minor companions.

Apparently the guardians of public housing had considered passing an ordinance that would

have prohibited citizens in the high-rises of public housing dwellings in Halifax from having pets in their parlments.

Senior citizens, whose only companions at times are their household pets, became very upset at the proposal. One elderly woman apparently picked up her French poodle and headed for Montreal with it, rather than leaving the dog with friends and risking having it kid (pup?) -napped in her absence.

A recent monthly meeting held by the Authority to deal with the problems of the tenants found itself in hot water with would-be pet lovers, instead of the normal dull crowd protesting such mundane problems as clogged sinks, dirty premises and forced evictions. The Authority

promised that no such ordinance would ever be put into operation.

Apparently, the regulation was to have applied to everything from bear cubs to freshwater salmon and goldfish.

One tenant told us that, although she wasn't considering buying a pet of her own, a group of people in one high-rise were considering purchasing a giraffe, in defiance of the order. The giraffe was to be used as a fire escape. Tenants have been complaining that the high-rises are not particularly well fire-guarded, and have been asking the Authority to install sprinkler systems in the apartments. As yet, the Housing Authority has not acted on that request.

## "Look Back in Anger" starts at Pier 1

John Osborne's *Look Back In Anger* opened at Pier 1 Theatre on Wednesday, March 21st, directed by Michael Ardenne, Drama Advisor with the Provincial Continuing Education Program.

Now something of a modern classic, the initial production of *Look Back In Anger*, in 1956, was incendiary. Sharply and unyieldingly, *Look Back In Anger* reflected the "rebel without a cause" dilemma of the 50's. Jimmy Porter, the protagonist, is the original "angry young man." His brand of dissatisfaction with the 'Establishment' became fashionable in the 60's and 70's yet although today's rebels have found many a cause, there still abides Jimmy Porter's essential fear that life is passing us by — "our youth is slipping away" — and perhaps we're missing something.

In 1956, the well-known British critic Kenneth Tynan said of the play "It was as if in the tiptoe hush of a polite assembly, someone had deafeningly burped... I doubt if I could love anyone who did not wish to see *Look Back In Anger*. It's the best young play of its decade." See it at Pier 1, March 21-April 1. Call 423-7720 for reservations.

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