

Entertainment

Swan and Hodge

Two musicians show style

By STUART SHEPHERD

In the course of the past two weeks, York students have had the opportunity to experience greatly differing approaches to concerts involving young featured solo performers.

Wednesday, March 16, the York Music Department brought Saskatchewan pianist prodigy, David Swan, to campus to play a number of pieces composed by Europeans and Canadians since 1900.

The same evening, Sylvester's presented performances by clarinetist Paul Hodge, and friends of traditional and contemporary serious composed works and a group improvisation.

Swan is an eighteen year old pianist from Saskatoon of frightening technical capabilities. He has mastered his instrument completely, as he has the stylistic nuances of its repertoire, and is consequently a confident performer of the most demanding pieces.

AESTHETIC UNITY

Though Swan has not as yet decided to confine himself to the performance of works from a single style and period, the concert he presented at York for reasons of aesthetic unity consisted solely of works by twentieth century composers. Another characteristic common to all pieces was a high degree of technical difficulty; features such as rapid fire hand position shifts, fast octaves or other intervals in a single hand, and difficult pedaling subtleties were present in abundance and executed without effort.

It is somewhat unusual for a young performer to have extensive experience with works by twentieth century composers, especially Canadian ones. Fortunately, Swan's early teachers introduced him to the Second Viennese composers, and he has more recently extended this familiarity to include derivative Canadian writers. Even at his age, Swan has achieved a maturity in the appreciation of stylistic performance considerations that almost equals his technical control.

STYLISTICALLY DIFFUSE

The content of the program was undeniably uneven in quality, though Swan was aware of this fact. The Sonata of S. C. Eckhardt-Gramatté, though giving the performer plenty of opportunity to display his athletic abilities in different respects was stylistically diffuse, and without redeeming passages illuminated by a clear cut original composing style. Nevertheless, as with all the pieces, Swan was able to produce exciting music

from the available raw material.

If the well earned bows that Swan took at the end of his performance seemed slightly out of place in York's informal musical performance environment, clarinetist Paul Hodges's concert emphasized the best characteristics of the type of music making for which this institution has a reputation.

Though technically not at the level of Swan on his instrument, Hodge nonetheless performed some very demanding works by composers of serious music, but managed to do so in a way that stripped performance of calcified concert ritual and allowed audience to meet music in a more or less direct manner.

LOW-KEY BANTER

After some organizational activities and low-key banter with the audience, Hodge began the evening assisted by some friends, with portions of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, K.581 and Beethoven's Duo (Clarinet and Bassoon) in B Major. This music though hardly the profoundest by these composers, was pleasant and well performed.

After a brief interval the concert resumed with the much more intense and in places highly energetic music for clarinet and piano of French composer Francis Poulenc (Sonata, 1962) and former Torontonian Bill Douglas (Flower, Playtime). These pieces, starting

with the Romanza of the Poulenc work built nicely to a high point in the second Douglas number. Hodge was obviously in tune with, and in control of the increasing speed, and rhythmic complexity called for in the unfolding ostinato of the latter piece and the pitch of emotional intensity generated by difficult unison jazz-like melodies between piano and clarinet earned the performers an audience ovation at the end of the piece.

BALLOON IN THE PIANO

The improvisation which concluded the performance, built nicely on the atmosphere created by the preceding pieces. The synthesizer playing, and sounds produced with a balloon inside a piano were especially interesting. Unfortunately, one was left with the feeling that the performers were unable to feel a common ending point for the piece, and from two thirds the way through, it seemed to drag on.

In a sense, Hodge's concert was more adventurous, attempting as it did, to include such widely divergent sorts of music. By and large, especially in view of the ordering of the program, the risk paid off. Swan knew his strong suits and played them and suffered only in proportion to the weaknesses of the musical material to which he so rigidly attached himself.

Drama evokes laughter, Black Sunday fails

By CATHY BARRIE

Paramount Pictures has just released a new movie "Black Sunday" based on the widely acclaimed book of the same name. In an attempt to show both sides of the story, the movie loses the emotional impact it might have had.

It begins well, creating an uneasiness in the audience by the use of a jerky, hand-held camera that follows the beautiful Dahlia Iyad (Marthe Keller) through the crowded streets of Beirut to a villa that is a home and a meeting place for members of the Black September terrorist group.

From there on the movie starts to falter. The villa is raided by a squad of Israeli commandos and all occupants, except Dahlia and a couple of others, are brutally murdered. Why Dahlia was spared from being shot seems to be explained by the softening of the commandos leader's eyes, but why he left her there when he knew that bombs they

had planted would destroy the building was never really explained.

Many "serious" parts of the movie brought laughter from the audience. One part was Kabakov's (the Israeli commando major) method of interrogating Muzi, the importer who made possible the smuggling of 1000 pounds of high explosives into the U.S. Kabakov shoved a gun into Muzi's mouth and expected intelligible answers.

Another was the emotionally unbalanced Vietnam veteran, Lander, and his reaction to the results of his test bomb. It was tested in an old, broken down airplane hanger, somewhere in the desert and the pattern it created on the walls was perfectly symmetrical. The joyful reaction seemed overplayed and over-acted.

In many places the dialogue was stilted and unnatural. Also in many places the acting was overdone. The film failed to give information and reasons for characters' behaviour.

Lander, played by Bruce Cern, was to be an emotionally disturbed Vietnam war veteran. Due to the fact that he did not portray the character well, Lander came across more schizophrenic than emotionally disturbed. He had his highs and lows in temperament and would, at one minute, be in a distressed emotional state and in the next moment, be in an exuberant state with no trace (not even the trickle of a tear from his crying) of what emotion preceded.

Dahlia Iyad, the young woman whose drive came from her burning hatred for the Israeli government, who caused the death of most of her family and the rape of her only living relation, was played excellently by Marthe Keller. Keller's talents gave Dahlia depth and character. She gave Dahlia her emotions, drive, ruthlessness and sensuality. She gave the character of Dahlia life.

Billed as a "spellbinding thriller", *Black Sunday* should have a further billing of "mediocre".

Two stars become ill Glendon play postponed

By BELINDA SILBERMAN

It's definitely a nuisance when one has to travel across town to see a show. Even worse is finding out upon arrival that it's been cancelled.

Theatre Glendon had to sack four performances of *King Lear* last week due to illnesses in the cast. Both the leading actor, Michael Gregory, who plays *King Lear*, and Ron Sarosiak, who portrays "Edgar", came down with bad doses of the flu. Gregory's case in particular, resulted in laryngitis.

Publicity director Paul Summerville said there were no understudies to take the two actor's places. The Shakespearean production is apparently so large that there simply aren't enough "bodies" to go around.

To make up for the four lost performances, the theatre will extend its run until March 29. There will be no performance on Saturday, March 26.

Summerville is optimistic that *Glendon* won't be more than \$450 in the red because of the production break. He indicated that the show had been doing very well before the problems started, attracting audiences of 80 to 90 people per night.



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