

# Trio warms up

by Steven Trussoni

Dalhousie Cultural Activities Chamber Music Series began October 6th with our own Dalart Trio.

The Haydn Trio in C Major found the players in what was to be their best form of the evening. The Andante of this work particularly displayed the sudden harmonic changes typical of Haydn, and included

a Coda in which William Tritt illustrated its free, improvisatory spirit.

The Contant Trio No. 1 (1907) is a late Romantic work using an exchange of lush melodies between violin and cello, all with a rich chordal piano background. What sounded like a villains' entrance in a gay '90's play changed to a galloping scherzo

in the 3rd Movement, with Phillip Djokic skitting about with an innocuous violin part to the end of this Canadian composer's work.

Whereas the two preceding works are relatively light weight, the Schubert Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 99 is a giant work, with a demand on all performers to communicate in creating an epic tale of heroic and melancholy elements. Here I found a lack of coordination as well as spirit in the performance, illustrating William Tritt's seeming in-

ability to blend and respond to his fellow performers.

The 1st movement, Allegro Moderato, lacked a drive towards crucial build-up points, letting the music bubble over instead of peaking dramatically.

William Valeau played the lullaby theme of the Second movement, and the interplay with this melody between the cello and violin was beautiful, though again a feeling of "Piano accompaniment" pervaded this movement.

The Scherzo moved along piano dissonance, having been composed on old dance-hall stand-ups that were never in tune. The dissonant jangle became a characteristic of the art. But it never prevented it from being cheerful.

Probably the happiest sound of the night was the classical standard "Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey". Spiced with the gravelly vocal accompaniment of drummer John Robichaux, this master-

nically until the Trio, or middle section, where the feeling of care and plodding, prevailed. Phillip Djokic carried us into the fourth movement where there was still a need for more conversation concluding with a smooth ending together.

This piece has so much more to say than was said by the Dalart Trio. It will be interesting to hear their next concert, hoping for the type of strength and spiritual unity that comes with time and practice for these recently re-acquainted musicians.

piece brought down the house, with a rhythm challenging every idle limb:

In an evening as such, one recognizes an evolutionary aspect of music; how the genre of Ragtime has injected its spirit into jazz, blues, country, and even rock.

Ragtime lives, and is well, and sometimes tours, and will tour again if we're lucky enough. That's what's important.

# Ragtime sting

by Brent Bambury

The New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra were due to perform at 8:30. It was 8:25. Outside, a cold and wet October night diluted the spirits. Inside, the Cohn's outrageous purple plains and beaming coloured light did their best to accomplish the same. I could not imagine an evening less conducive to a presentation of a genre of music that had faded with the foolery of the 1920's. I was impatient.

Shortly after 8:30, the sextet trouped onto the stage. They had come from New Orleans, and had much work to do to take us back. They worked.

The opening number was a typical rag selection, executed in fine style with practised deliberateness. After a few numbers designed to illustrate some of the by-products of the genre, (notably blues and jazz), the band took off, and

the mood was never the same.

Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" was magical.

Joplin was probably the most prolific and well known writer of rags. On each of his creations, he left the warning, "Do not play this piece fast. It

is never right to play Ragtime fast." Ragtime music was designed with a steady, moderate tempo and percussive piano syncopation. These characteristics allow the tunes to be enveloping and contagious in spirit. It's mechanical, but never boring, relying on all instruments to carry the general melody, with no single instrument clutching every note. In fact, many pieces were written with deliberate



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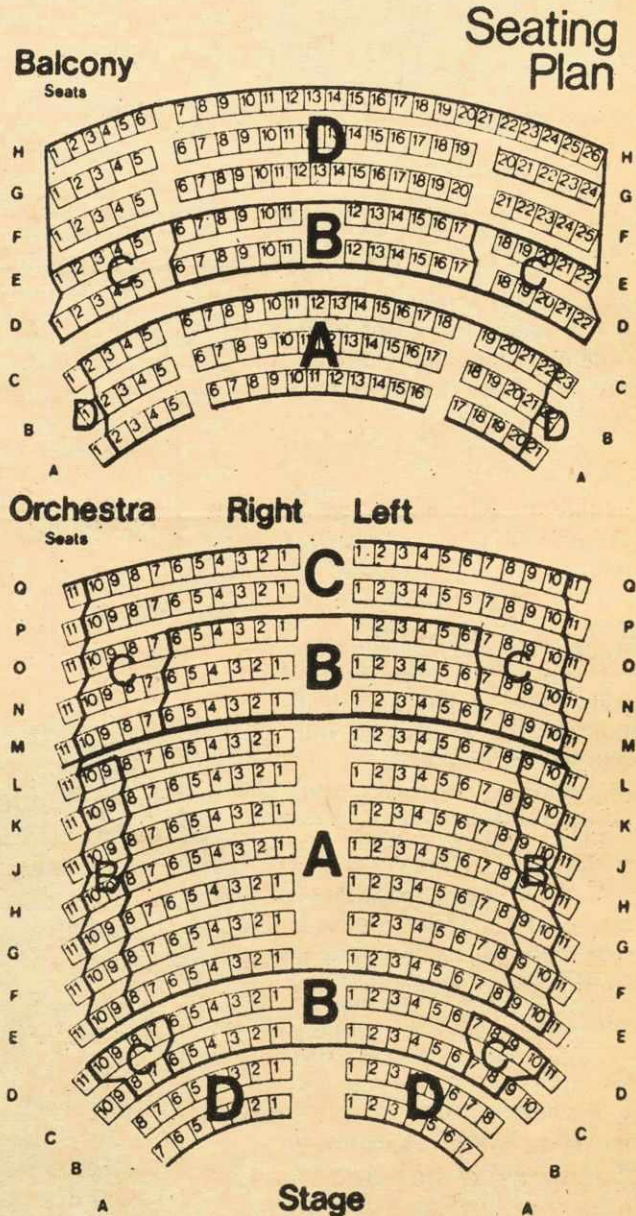
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