

A Touch of Class

by Ehme

I used to think that classical music was some sort of punishment. Everyone knew that all the cool kids listened to Abba, so why would anyone listen to something as square as Beethoven? So when I got told, as a seven year old, that I was being taken to an open air concert I thought that I had been naughty. I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was I had done, but it must have been pretty bad. Yet when I actually got to the concert, it wasn't nearly as bad as I thought it was going to be. In fact, it was rather good - they did some Beatles songs (which really confused me as I also thought that rock 'n' roll and classical didn't mix) and also the 1812 Overture using real cannons and fireworks too. That's when it suddenly hit me - how could anything with guns be uncool, let alone a punishment? Nope, I was really sold on this classical music lark.

So I started to attend concerts; indoor concerts in nice warm halls and theatres. I went through the usual pieces - The Young Person's Guide To The Orchestra, Peter And The Wolf, Danse Macabre. And the more 'classical' classical stuff too via Mozart, Haydn, Vivaldi and the other usual suspects. I really loved the power of hearing this music being performed live; watching the expressions of the musicians, the movement of the conductor. And the best part of all was trying to remember which Bugs Bunny cartoon I had heard the music in before. Its kinda of funny

how most people's first exposure to classical music comes thanks to Loony Tunes - Wagner and "Kill the wabbit" will always be inexplicably linked.

Classical music was no longer a punishment - instead it was a joy and after that shaky start, I still enjoy going to hear an orchestra going through the motions. So when Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony came to town on Sunday night as part of the *Onstage* series, I was more than happy to attend.

They worked through a varied programme featuring music by Smetana, Lalo, Dvořák and Rossini and all were rather enjoyable (although a contemporary piece by Koprowski did verge upon dirgy in places). The orchestra worked well together - the string section were particularly strong under the direction of Eduard Minevich who was wonderfully animated while he played. On *Symphonie espagnole*, leading violin honours were taken by Martin Beaver who gave an emotional performance. This piece demanded great athletics as the melody bounded from string to string, from fierce bow-strokes to gentle plucking of the strings. A wonderful piece. Equally rewarding were Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* and the crowd-pleasing *William Tell Overture* which ended the evening on a very lively note.

Another very enjoyable evening thanks to *Onstage*, and a very timely reminder of why classical music should be brought to the masses, and not just on Saturday mornings.

FUNNY, MUSICAL WORMS!

by Maria Paisley

The Vancouver based three piece musical comedy group the Arrogant Worms provided an enjoyable evening of comedy, both musical and theatrical.

The show began with a song entitled "Don't go into Politics" from their self-titled debut album. They added a first verse about Captain Vancouver to help the audience on the area identify where they are based. This song explains why one should not go into various occupations because "you'll be dead, dead, very dead."

The Arrogant Worms sang a "country song" simply because it is easy to write, in addition they entertained the crowd with their version of line dancing - which was quite humorous to say the least.

For those students with a car especially if you are a proud owner of a "student economy special" the song "Car Full of Pain" was one which you could relate to. The car owner speaks of the problems with the car, takes it to the garage and is satisfied until they see the bill for the repairs and like any student seeing a large bill isn't very happy about it.

The lead singer Trevor asked the audience if they were comfortable and the response was affirmative. Trevor then stated that he was "as comfortable as a pair of homemade shoes."

The Arrogant Worms stated that since they were from Vancouver - an area in which "everyone has a protest song" they therefore they felt compelled to write one of their own. Of course, being a comedy group they would naturally write a song which was rather humorous. Their song was about vegetables and how the vegetables scream. "Have you ever thought how an onion feels when its skin is

peeled."

The first set was ended with "Goin' Huntin'", a song about "killin' somethin' I don't care what it is, it may be a racoon, may be a gopher, it may be the neighbour's kids."

The Arrogant Worms began their second set describing life on the road and a song about a "big, fat road manager."

The band believed that money was to be made in children's music rather than musical comedy or pop music as the chil-

dren's parents would buy the music. As a result they wrote a song about Ricky the Gator who ended children's lives.

The Arrogant Worms ended the show with "The Last Saskatchewan Pirate". This song is about a farmer who lost his farm and since he couldn't find a job he decided to become a buccaneer sailing the River Saskatchewan.

The crowd responded with enthusiasm and the Arrogant Worms came back for two encores.

A Good Evening Of "Bad" Entertainment

by Shantell Powell

In theatre, they say that a bad dress rehearsal is a good omen. Well, even Nostradamus would have a hard time foretelling the futures of "Nobody Sleeps", "Stalag 69" and "This Is A Test", English 2170 and 3170's first performances of the year. You see, Theatre UNB is presenting an evening of farce, and farce, by definition, is bad if not dreadful!

"Nobody Sleeps" is a decidedly cute and silly story about a bunch of skinny women, and a would-be crook. This one-act play is the weakest piece of the evening. Although the acting is commendable, the lines are rife with clichés and out-dated colloquialisms. Playwright, Guernsey LePelley, has inadvertently cursed Derek Winchester (Spike the burlgar) with the worst lines in the play. Although Derek has a strong voice and excellent projection, his characterization seems a bit confused. Perhaps this is what is so farcical about this piece. In what else but a farce would a

"hardened criminal" frequently utter such epithets as "golly", "ye gods" or "gee"? Characters such as Orphan Annie or Beaver Cleaver ever said "gosh", "golly" or "gee whiz". Nadia Stevens (Mrs. Busby, the mystery writer) fares little better. The best lines in the play, are the chatty-babbings of Lisa Ott (Daisy), Erin Fellows (Ada) and Hilary Stephenson (Glory). These three people play well off each other, and the action and delivery of the lines are completely believable.

The next play, "Stalag 69", is an exercise in the art of being truly and intentionally terrible. Written by Michael Green, "Stalag 69" is campiness at its best. With unabashedly two dimensional cartoonish characters, "Stalag 69" is a Pirandello piece for the *Scooby Doo* generation. The set is beautifully flimsy and cheap-looking, the sound effects are horrendously wonderful and the story is pure Cheese Whiz. Matt Collins plays the courageous British Air Squad leader, with all the grandeur of Rocket Robin Hood. Jethelo Cabilette is terrific as the

dastardly fashionable Nazi Interrogator, and Katherine Atkinson is the wonderfully flustered Kermit-the-Froggish director. This play, in the words of the inestimable *Monty Python*, is "toosillee".

The last play of the evening, "This Is A Test", is the strongest piece of the evening. Set in a high school classroom, the play is a story of the midterm from hell. John Hansen played the poor tortured, pathetic soul with the strength of a true martyr. Tony LePage played the teacher with a wonderful Walt-Disney-nature-flick-narrator voice. He was very scary. Holly Ward, Rebecca Emlaw and Syreeta Roberts were superb as the chorus, or the modern-day witches from *Macbeth*.

Although none of these three plays are cerebral in any sense of the word, they are certainly worth the price of admission. Give them a shot! They're so bad, they're great. Performances continue in Memorial Hall tonight (Friday) and tomorrow night at 8:00. Tickets are available at the door.

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