

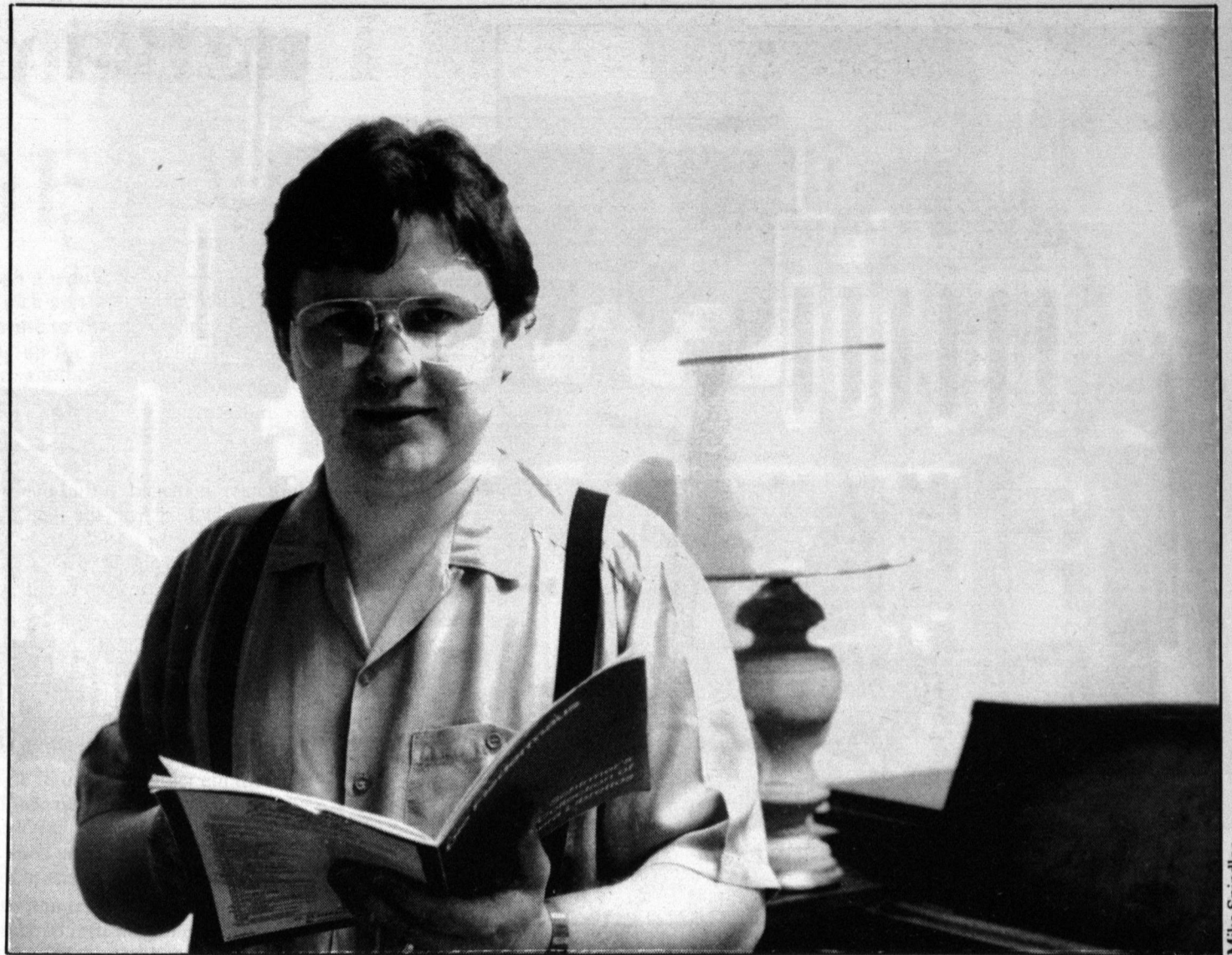
Murray sings in Die Fledermaus

interview by Mike Spindloe

In the course of an average term, the U of A Department of Music presents a staggering variety of concerts, but none more elaborately produced than an opera. This Wednesday and Friday, the Department is putting on Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, a comic operetta in three acts, at Convocation Hall.

Opera comes to U of A!

John Murray sings and plays a womanizing convict in *Die Fledermaus*.



Mike Spindloe

Subtitled *The Revenge of the Bat*, *Die Fledermaus* is the story of Baron Gabriel von Eisenstein, who becomes the victim of a practical joke played by his friend Dr. Falke in return for one previously played by Eisenstein. Dr. Falke arranges for Eisenstein's wife to disguise herself as an Hungarian countess, who is then wooed by Eisenstein, who is ignorant of the deception.

Eisenstein is played by John ("Jack") Murray, a fourth year honours voice major in the Department of Music. Murray is

enjoying the role for its experiential aspects, but brings a fair amount of experience to it himself. He debuted with the Richard Eaton Singers and the ESO in January and has performed Mozart's Coronation Mass with the U of A Academy Strings and the Concert Choir.

Murray became interested in singing after hearing the Saskatoon Boys Choir; he later joined that same group. He has also been musical director of his church, a position he may reassume after graduating this April. He is also considering doing a

Masters degree and will return next year to take more music courses.

Even though his is the lead male role in *Die Fledermaus*, Murray confesses that opera is not his main interest: "I'm mostly interested in Mozart, but I'm also interested in developing other musical things in this city, like lieder and oratorio."

He continues, "I'm trying to maintain a good musical balance. A singer needs to work towards developing the different emotional colours in the voice by doing various kinds of music."

In the realm of opera, Murray prefers *opera seria*, "with the romantic tenor roles," to *opera buffa*, or comic opera. On the other hand, he feels that "operetta is good experience because it exposes you to different aspects of the art. There's everything from real ballerinas to an orchestra. There are even some pop music numbers, so even though it's a very light form, there's plenty of things to pick up on."

Tickets to *Die Fledermaus* are available at the Department of music office and are going fast, so pick yours up soon.

ESO guests amaze audience

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, with Louis Lane, guest conductor and Jean-Jacques Kantorow, violin Jubilee Auditorium Saturday, February 4

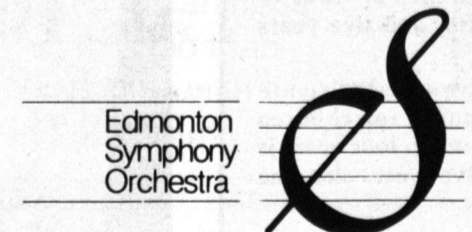
review by Mike Spindloe

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra put on what should be remembered as one of its finest programs of the season last weekend. The program itself was not unusual, featuring Beethoven's "Pastorale" symphony, an instalment of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (appropriately, it was "Winter"), an early Hadyn symphony and, less commonly, Stravinsky's Violin Concerto.

What was unusual was the presence of two guests: conductor Louis Lane and violin soloist Jean-Jacques Kantorow. Both made their presence very strongly felt; Lane coaxing some enthusiastic playing from the ESO and Kantorow giving an unintentional master class on how a good soloist can lead an entire orchestra.

He did so right from the start, taking the solo role in the Vivaldi. One got the impression that he was always ready to leave the ESO half a beat behind, especially in the many melismatic passages of the fast movement's of Vivaldi's celebrated concerto, but somehow it all held together.

Credit for this must also go to conductor Louis Lane, whose style contrasts directly with that of the ESO's full-time conductor, Uri Mayer. While Mayer's sweeping gestures often seem to baffle the orchestra,



Edmonton Symphony Orchestra

Lane's light but authoritative touch, which emphasizes a strong beat, drew some unusually strong playing from the ensemble. At times Lane seemed unsatisfied with the volume of sound; he frequently gestured for more, especially to the violins, but at the same time somehow maintained a reserved demeanour which was incongruous with his easily read directions.

Haydn's Symphony #30, the "Alleluja",

second on the program, was gracefully done. It is a three movement work, with the dance section incorporated into the finale. Like the Vivaldi, this piece featured harpsichord accompaniment from Michael Massey.

The Stravinsky Violin Concerto closed out the first half of the program and the soloist's appearances for the evening. Here was the real display of Kantorow's talents, as he attacked the work, which features all the idiosyncracies one would expect from later-period Stravinsky, with enthusiasm and confidence. Once again, it was Kantorow not merely playing the solo part, but bringing the orchestra along with him. His performance highlighted the musical aspects of a work that features a large number of melodic leaps and requires

nothing short of virtuoso violin technique.

Following the interval was Beethoven's Symphony #6, his ode to nature which, along with Vivaldi, gave the evening something of a study in contrasting themes. The symphony's title, "Pastorale", is a completely accurate description of its musical content, and suffice to say that the ESO, onstage *en masse* for the first time in the evening, did it justice, perhaps inspired by the incendiary playing they had witnessed just shortly before.

All in all, the evening was an artistic success for the ESO. The vagaries of the weather resulted in a last minute rush for tickets and a few too many empty seats for a performance of this caliber, but the effort was well worth it for those who did venture out.

The Gateway 1989 Literary Contest

\$1050 total prizes in three categories

Contest information: The three categories are: 1) Short poem (25 lines or less), 2) Long poem (200 lines maximum) and 3) Short story (3000 words maximum). You must include your name, student I.D. number and phone number on a separate sheet. **Do not** put your name directly on your submission. If you wish your work returned, you must include an SASE. One entry per person please in the Short Story and Long Poem categories and two entries per person in the Short Poem category.

Address entries to: Gateway Literary Contest, c/o Mike Spindloe, The Gateway, Room 282 SUB, T6G 2J7.

Deadline for entries: Tuesday, February 28, 4:00 pm