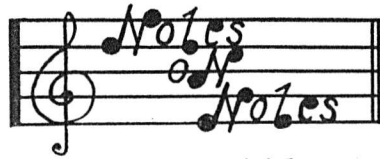




FINE ARTS



by Ross Rudolph

Tenor Richard Lewis demonstrated conclusively, for his case at least, that a beautiful vocal sound does not demand that the resonating chamber be absolutely hollow. Lewis performed the not inconsiderable feat of singing a varied and generally interesting programme, without once referring to the German song or operatic domain. His ability in the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*, Brahms' *Lieblieder Walzer*, and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* shows that he does not avoid this repertory because he cannot sing it.

What he does sing, he does intelligently; there is no distorting of phrases, or distortion of rhythms, as is the case with lesser artists. Mr. Lewis is primarily a musician, and only secondly a tenor.

The first selection after the phantom performance of the national anthem was a demanding elegy by Purcell, by turns dramatic and poignant. The singing, without regard to its reception, was powerfully appropriate.

The two Handel works that followed were exceptional, both as music and as performance. I sorely regret being born too late to enjoy live the mellifluous beauties of such a voice as John McCormack's which showed to best advantage in the long Handel line. Yet it is difficult to conceive of a more musicianly shaping of the ineffably beautiful *Waft her, Angels*.

The Duparc oeuvres were evidence of Anna Russell's contention that whereas German *lieder* are execrable poems set to superb music, French *chansons* are, on the other hand, examples of superb lyrics set to mediocre music. While this grossly overstates the case, there is some kernel of truth about it. Given this disposition of values, it was particularly welcome to be able to hear every word of the three songs by Henri Duparc. This is an atmosphere genre, and apart from a slight dryness in the delivery of *L'Invitation au Voyage* the performances were evocative.

When Benjamin Britten sets to composing, the results are rarely disappointing, often engrossing, and sometimes inspired. The song cycle *On this Island struck me as falling into the second category.*

For some inexplicable reason, Lewis' voice after the intermission seemed to lack the support at its extremes that it had showed before the break. The Britten arrangement of the folk song "Plough Boy" that ended the programme thankfully avoided Britten's tendency to contrived effects, smothering

the innocuous tunes in bitonality and other gimmicks.

The Kingston Trio never sounds like Dorumsgaard, nor for that matter does any folk singer of my acquaintance sound like Lewis. More's the pity for folk singers.

EDMONTON SYMPHONY

The Sunday concert of the Edmonton Symphony featured the Orchestra's Association Conductor, Thomas Rolston, as director. The well chosen and rounded programme made the round from Purcell to Purcell. The idea to open with the *Abdelazer Suite* which features the majestic theme which Britten so cleverly varied seemed to me a coup, and in light of the general excellence of the playing Rolston elicited from his string colleagues the choice was vindicated.

Miss Violet Archer, resident composer on the Music Department faculty is in the middle of a series of lectures for the extension department on the subject of modern music. I do not imagine that any of her comments could be as convincing as her effective *Three Sketches for Orchestra*, perfectly suited for the student orchestra which commissioned them, ideal as the intermezzo in an orchestral concert, and rich enough in material and its manipulation to convince the impressionable student and the conservative symphony patron.

The performance of the Mozart double concerto were better forgotten. The invitation to two such prominent and gifted local musicians to perform with the orchestra was, and remains, an inspiration. For whatever reasons, M. Vetter seemed uncomfortable with his part, the ensemble of the partners was, to revive the Koussevitsky aphorism, not together, and Mr. Rolston was least in control of the elements. If the writer could only muster the eloquence of a Churchill about the woodwinds' knifing the conductor in the back during the *Andante!* The Rondo started too quickly and settled down to a spirited conclusion.

The theatrical presentation of *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* might have blinded the players, and it may have detracted from the appreciation of the musicality of the performance, which was hardly so well-received as it should have been. One man's *Allegro molto* needn't be another's, the fugue was almost certainly taken more quickly than the music, or this orchestra's virtuosity dictate.

Mr. Rolston's comments, as well as the music, made their point. There is no necessary reason why the Edmonton Symphony need be classed with the Ponoka Symphony as a community orchestra. At least a cadre should be professionalized and the orchestra needs a permanent conductor. On the basis of the re-seating of the orchestra, the refined execution generally, Mr. Rolston deserves a vote of thanks.

University Symphony

The 1963 Concert of the University Symphony will be presented during the activities of Varsity Guest Weekend, on Thursday and Friday, Feb. 21 and 22, at 8:15 in Convocation Hall.

The 65-member student orchestra has been conducted for the past 14 years by Professor Arthur Crighton. It presents two concerts each year, one in December and one in February.

The program for this weekend's concert includes Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture*; (in commemoration of Varsity Guest Weekend?), Haydn's *Military Symphony*, the

Paganini-Kreisler Concerto in D Major, the *Il Signor Bruschino Overture* by Rossini and Chabrier's *Espana* will also be played. A *Toy Symphony* by Malcolm Arnold, reminiscent of last year's vacuum cleaners, and Copland's *Waltz and Hoe-Down* from "Rodeo" complete the program.

Robert Klose, a second year music student at U of A will be the soloist in the Paganini concerto. Bob recently won 2nd prize in the CBC Talent Festival, and is considered one of Canada's outstanding young violinists. He hopes for a concert career after graduation.

more hurrah than hallelujah

by Mary Lou McDowall

On the evening of Valentine's Day the University Male Chorus opened their second annual concert in the Convocation Hall. The program was again carried through with an atmosphere of relaxed informality that will probably become permanently associated with the Male Chorus. It was with the songs that matched this atmosphere that the "boys" were obviously most at home and successful, and would I think, do best to concentrate on.

A really energetic conductor, Mr. David Peterkin from the Glasgow University conducts the chorus, is Supervisor of Music for the province, and conducts the David Peterkin Chorale. Mr. Peterkin was assisted both throughout the year and during the concert by Garth Worthington, a U of A graduate and Gold Medal baritone of the 1961-62 Western Board competitions. As is all too often the case of groups singing with their copies, much of the benefit of good leadership is lost to downcast eyes.

Much to Mr. Peterkin's relief and the audience's enjoyment, Jocelyn Pritchard did arrive to accompany soloist Mr. Garth Worthington who spotlighted the evening's concert. A. E. Houseman's "Three Songs from a Shropshire Lad" were not easy to sing, and although they showed Mr. Worthington's excellent voice control, they did not give him the opportunity to use the skill and strength of voice that his last group of three did—particularly the two poems—"Trade Winds" and "Duna." After a short explanation to the audience of the "rights of encores" Mr. Worthington ended with "When I think Upon Maiden," with as much good expression as made each of his pieces really alive.

The songs of the Chorus left me with one general impression: Their programs should be suited to the songs that make them sing with the vitality and enthusiasm of "What Shall We Do With a Drunken Sailor?" and "I've Got No Use For Women" (where they expressed themselves very well!)



THE SOUND OF MUSIC from Male Chorus last Thursday in Convocation Hall.

photo by Jens Tabur

Their opening "Hallelujah, Amen" by Handel lacked the hallelujah! that they later proved they had the volume for. The "Pilgrim Chorus" was again disappointing, I think for the same absence of confidence.

Two of the nicest pieces were those arranged by Mr. Peterkin "Were you There?" and "Aura Lee." How good to really hear the bass!

Garth Worthington conducted during part of the last section of six, and their last year's "My Lord What a Mornin'" was again well done. Although the tenors were showing signs of wear by the finale, it was good to hear "The Sound of Music" from male voices.

The concert came to a close with one thing missing—and I think it was a piano solo from the accompanist David Puzey—who last year charmed both his Chorus and its audience with his completely modest skill. Ah well, once missed, twice enjoyed!

ELI MANDEL: Honesty in Verse

by Marie da' Garno

Honesty in verse is difficult to achieve. Once achieved it often suffers due to the pleasure of the society it aims at, thus losing its precision and becoming dishonest or mediocre. Any artist who does not submit to this prostitution, who chooses to focus his poetry above the greater part of society, hazards to limited communication and eventually obscurantism. The best poets maintain honesty and precision, yet are able to communicate widely.

Eli Mandel read selections of his poetry at the Edmonton Art Gallery Saturday evening, and it is evident that there is something of the best about this poet. He is no shrieking anarchist, but a disciplined, conscious artist who creates his images for his theme rather than for his own sake. This is literary honesty; it is, in the words of Ezra Pound, "saying the word, not taking about." One does not need to probe to apprehend "a turnip-coloured sun," yet the meaning is not simply obvious. It is lucid, exact, careful.

There were poems about poetry. Some of them were cries from the heart; some were honest questions; some were gentle laughter. Of the *Anarchist Poets* (the Beats) he asks "How do you know?" And to You, Raymond Souster, "don't you know they'll get you, don't you know they will break your mouth?" And he saw a black figure hung up in the halls of McMaster University

Too weak, too tired, too undone
To do what can be done
About his nakedness . . .

But what has Eli Mandel done about his nakedness?

He has "forgiven the poets for lying about God." He has "forgiven God for tomorrow." And from there he has striven for the exact, not abandoning himself to wild words but enforcing strictness, not limiting his goals with theories of metaphor but laughing at "a Quaker on a box of Quaker Oats holding a box . . ."

Eli Mandel is a craftsman; an honest poet whose work, happily, has suffered little contamination by the prying and pressures of the hundreds of graduate students busily sharpening their pencils for theses.

ARTS CALENDAR

The Writer and his Audience

Lecture by Leslie Fiedler
Humanities Association and Philosophical Society.

Thurs., Feb. 21, 8:15 p.m.
Room 2104, Medical Building

A Friendly Game of Russian Roulette

Varsity Varieties Show
Feb. 21, 22, 23, 8:30 p.m.
Jubilee Auditorium

University Symphony Concert

Prof. A. B. Crighton conducting
Feb. 21, 22, 8:15 p.m.
Convocation Hall

University Musical Club Concert

Sunday, Feb. 24, 3:00 p.m.
Convocation Hall

J. B., by Archibald McLeich

Directed by Betty Mitchell
Friday, Saturday, Feb. 22, 23, March 1, 2.
Studio Theatre, Education Building