

# The Gateway fine arts

## the mixed chorus victorious

Well, delightful day! At least for once that fabled combination, a worthy audience and a worthy performance was realized.

It might of course have been the mild weather, but I prefer to think that the professional rendering and varied program were the factors that proved the trusty maxim, "give 'em something worth hearing and they'll hear it" (author unknown).

At any rate, so it was, a good crowd (by Edmonton standards) and a truly delightful concert by the University Mixed Chorus.

The evening began with Three Psalms by Heinrich Schutz and these probably best illustrated the Choir's clarity of diction and purity of voices.

By the latter I mean the well defined division of Soprano to Alto to Tenor, etc. While the blending of these voices was complete, one could nevertheless at all times discern the individual groups of voices.

There was no fuzziness or overlapping but like an orchestra a one-ness (which does not lose sight of the individual groups of instruments) was obtained.

"Jubilate Deo" by Giovanni Gabrieli on the other hand did not fare as well. If a clarity, yet a blending is part of a choir's aim, the "Jubilate" fell somewhat short.

The Organ and Brass ensemble while good in itself, never managed the proper balance with the chorus and since the equal and interchangeable use of voices and instruments was the composer's desired effect, some sort of dynamic balance of voice-instrument should have been attained.

Instead the instruments were able to drown out the chorus, and thus in the choral parts the audience suddenly realized the chorus as one isolated voice, producing an effect of discontinuity.

The idea of the brass as accompaniment (which of course is not new) is a valid one. If well done it adds wonderfully to the effect of the voices and produces in fact

a musical form of its own; however, if the product is a massive blast of sound without the distinctive episode phrasing it is hardly worth-while.

Likewise the organ should be a prime instrument for choral accompaniment.

However when a decrepit and voiceless instrument like the one in the Jubilee is all one has, perhaps the piano should serve as well. (A pity some of the crystal accessories in the hallways couldn't be traded for a decent organ).

A series of short choral works were next on the program and quite delightful. The chorus has some very fine voices, and extensive preparation and work produced an effect one just couldn't criticize.

Two French Canadian Folk-songs, "The Uist Tramping Song", "Jigs For Voices", and "The Swazi Warrior" were particularly notable.

The "Jig For Voices" by Alec Rowley is just that, a trick in which the individual voices are displaced, mingled and mashed. There was only a minor lacking of the required strict time and an occasional loss of clarity.

"The Swazi Warrior" by Thomas Wood, a product it seems of the Zulu war (the piece, No Wood), was a lively marching song and an obvious favorite of the audience. It illustrates the variety of the program.

The second half opened with Handel's "L'Allegro". To say that this represents a pastoral scene would not be completely wrong, and as a product of Romanticism (the musical and literary movement) the effect was fresh and colorful.

The soloists, while displaying fine individual voices were at times not loud or clear enough and indeed when they were so, sometimes showed a lack of control which marred the finish.

The University Chamber Orchestra contributed a great deal, although we might have done without the (at one stage embarrassingly so) off-key violin and the not-seldom rasping of the Double Basses.

This of course again illustrates that while accompaniment of this kind if well done is a blessing, but with even the slightest flaw it proves distracting.

The last work on the program was "La Belle Helene" by Jacques Offenbach.

The choruses of this Operetta à la Greek Myth give any choir the opportunity to show to the fullest its abilities. Solos, single voices, the Chorus in *grante forté* are all here: what a marvellous way to finish!

Except for moments of stumbling and lost time by the piano and the flat tone of some of the soloists it proved a flourishing end to the performance.

The best accompaniment of the night, by the way, was the piano accompaniment provided by pianists Linda Zwicker and Brian Harris. They have a light touch which added much.

Thus in the end, I really have only praise for the Chorus. Professor Eaton, the Conductor, demands of his singers a diligence and dedication which is rare in non-professional groups and the results show.

The last song of the evening was the "Varsity Song" and through gusty tears and violent snuffings the grand old dame behind me sang patriotically along (Grad class of '13?). It was a fine evening.

—N. Riebeck



—E. Borsky photo

## excessive sir laurence marrs moor

The characterization of Othello presents a great challenge to even the best actors. Sir Laurence Olivier has met the challenge with an interpretation of the roll which, in twentieth-century theatre at least, possesses a certain novelty and a great deal of daring.

The paucity of textual evidence makes it impossible to disprove the validity of his interpretation. But such evidence does not guarantee a successful performance.

Olivier's performance is frequently both painful and unconvincing.

The production begins on an unpromising note. However, one can easily overlook the modern critic's preoccupation with sexual perversions in Shakespeare's characters (manifested in the exchanges between Iago and Roderigo).

Indeed one does overlook this as soon as Olivier begins to speak. He has complete mastery over his exceptionally flexible voice and the controlled power of his delivery infuses Othello's first lines with a compelling beauty.

Olivier has decided to present an almost grossly sensual Othello. Well and good. But the interpretation must be presented consistently throughout the play. Olivier does not do this. Consequently, many of his sensual gestures are either startling or annoying.

For example, although his laughter could be made very effective, all too often it seems to spout in a rather unbelievable manner from an Othello who only moments before was restrained and haughty.

The walk that Olivier employs for this role is evidently chosen to convey the impression of sensuality. Instead, it destroys the characterization, for it is far more mechanical than sensual. An Othello who walks with the precision of a robot is not convincing.

Olivier's ranting completed the ruination of this performance. To hear the usually-well-controlled voice delivering lines with unre-

strained shrieks makes the listener wince. These shrieks accompanied by huge, air-flaying gestures can leave one so overcome with physical repugnance at the screenful of thrashing Olivier that the action loses all significance. They certainly left me with a wistful desire for the preservation of some aesthetic distance. In some ways the production was rewarding. Olivier's performance broadens the viewer's insight into the play, I think, and the roles of Desdemona and Iago were exceptionally well-played. But the performance was undoubtedly marred by Olivier's excesses.

—Shirley Neuman

## the sincere the city and the dead

Chamber Music Society members should note that tonight the Stockholm String Quartet will be appearing at Con Hall.

Non-members should note that next year they should make sure to get memberships.

Student Cinema presents the all-student feature film "Winter Kept Us Warm", produced and directed by David Sector, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at 8:00 p.m. in mp 126.

The film has been described as a sort of an authentic "Nobody Waved Goodbye," less slick and more sincere. Since NWG itself wowed 'em in New York with its sincerity, the super-sincerity of Sector's film must be out-of-the-ordinary.

It concerns the relationship between two young men at univer-

sity, one assertive, talkative, brash, the other withdrawn, unsure, shy.

Since effective and truthful portrayals of university students are extremely rare, and the failure to achieve such a portrayal often incredibly excruciating (witness the students on last summer's TV serialization of "Fasting Friar") it should be fascinating to see Sector's already-much-acclaimed attempt to provide us all with an uncracked mirror.

Besides all this, Sector is said to have made an interesting film, purely as film.

Tickets cost students \$1.50, and non-students \$2.00. After all, one should be prepared to pay a bit more to see to what extent the student ethos has degenerated since one's own time.

At the Edmonton Art Gallery a series of films on art, compiled by Sir Kenneth Clark (author of "The Nude", holder of a great number of distinguished positions in the British Art Establishment, gentleman, scholar and wit) is being shown at noon on Mondays and Tuesdays and at 8:00 p.m. Tuesday nights.

At the Yardbird Suite this weekend, a dramatization of one Tony Cashman's Edmonton Stories is being presented. The Yardbird Suite never tires in its ceaseless quest to make over Edmonton into a mythology; since something rather obviously has to be done about Edmonton, this tactic should be given all possible support.

The Suite is at the corner of 102 St. and 81 Ave. Show starts at 9:30 p.m.

Last week saw the deaths of two notable figures on the artistic scene.

Pierre Mecure, one of Canada's most brilliant younger composers, was killed in a car crash. He was 39.

Buster Keaton, the matchless master of silent-film comedy who had become active again in the last few years, died at 70 of lung cancer.

And no doubt the usual number died in Vietnam; but that, of course, has nothing to do with Art.