

Loner lulls audience

Gordon Bok
South Side Folk Club
Saturday, Nov. 5

Review by Christine Koch

Introducing himself as a man who spent much of his youth in solitude, and who favours songs about people alone by choice or by chance, Gordon Bok presents an alternative to the gregarious crowd-pleasing entertainers so often seen on concert stages. Performing at the South Side Folk Club Saturday evening, this soft-spoken sing/songwriter from Maine - titled "Band of the Southern Provinces" by a New Brunswick artist - gave a concert unified in subject and in restrained, sometimes almost melancholic deliverance.

Drawing on his background and experience at sea, Bok's songs all deal with some aspect of Maritime life, songs told from the point of view of the sailor on stormy or too-calm water, or from those left on shore. His repertoire includes works traditional and contemporary of others' composition and his own, of international origin or specifically of Maine. His set opened with his musical version of Rudyard Kipling's "The Sea Wife". This was followed by at least three songs from Australia, one from Newfoundland, a modern version of the Border ballad "Sir Patrick Spens" (titled Patrick Spenser), and several dealing with Bok's own experience as a sailor.

Bok's voice is arresting - a full, fine bass which adds richness and depth to his melodies and soulful lyrics. And his skill on the guitar - both classical and twelve-string - is dazzling. Two highlights of the concert

were the original instrumentals "Thumpy", a virtuosic composition imitating ragtime piano, and "Calambra", a very lovely work inspired by a Caribbean isle, incorporating both calypso and Polynesian rhythms and motives.

The performance as a whole was very pleasant, but it failed to rouse the audience from politeness to enthusiasm. The material was perhaps too undiversified, and presented often too soulfully, to sustain interest for two hours. Bok's failure to establish rapport with the audience also greatly contributed to their luke-warm reception of his songs. Bok would do well to shed some of his native reserve. Instead he sat down on the stage, closed his eyes, and shut us off, it seemed. He appears to have lost the essential solitude of his youth.

In Bok's words, there could hardly be two more different performers than himself and warm-up musician Steve Cormier. Hailing from "Alma, Kansas, cultural capital of the U.S.A.", Cormier is a brash, whiskery cowboy who breaks horses when he's not on tour. His specialties are dirty jokes and the western counterpart to the fisherman's yarn - the tall tale - and he entertained the audience with several from these genres. His performance also featured traditional western songs, including the cowboy classic "Strawberry Roan," "Silver Heels," about the archetypal whore with a heart of gold, a ballad about outlaws, and a piece which Cormier deservedly introduced as "the worst cowboy song in the world, "The Feed Lot Blues." It was with frank relief that his set ended after half an hour and Gordon Bok appeared.

Guest conductor injects life

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Sidney Harth, guest conductor
Yuval Yaron, violin
Friday Nov. 4
Jubilee Auditorium

Review by K. Arthur

Sometimes the arrival of a guest conductor can inject life into the routine of a symphony orchestra, his own individual style becoming a breath of fresh air. This happy occasion took place during the concerts this past weekend, with the resulting sound rising far above the routine.

Sidney Harth came to Edmonton with impressive credentials. He has extensively recorded on English and American record labels, and is currently professor of conducting at the Mannes College of Music. As he stepped onto the podium and began conducting his knowledge and mastery became readily apparent. He conducted the first work on the program, Dvorak's Symphony No. 8 in G Major, without the benefit of a score.

Right from the opening *allegro con brio* the strings played with fine articulation producing a pristine sound, yet with a solid impact. The character of the movement is one of joyous exuberance, a quality that Mr. Harth himself seems to enjoy and conveys in his performance.

The performance of the second work on the program, Scottish Fantasy by Max Bruch, was not quite as successful as the Dvorak, due in large part to the lacklustre playing of the soloist, Yuval Yaron. The music itself is kind of a rhapsody on Scottish folk tunes. As a piece of music, it is not particularly substantial, but with sensitive playing it can sound quite lovely. Such was not the case with Mr. Yaron. He ran into intonation problems in the first movement, sliding into the notes, rather than hitting them dead on. The rest of his performance seemed totally uncommitted and detached. One immediately got the feeling that this was not one of his favourite pieces of music. The orchestral contribution was both expressive and elegant.

The best playing of the evening came in the final work on the program, Tchaikovsky's Capriccio Italien. The music needs both

panache and control. If it is overlaid the effect is greatly cheapened. Mr. Harth firmly led the orchestra by the hand, something this orchestra frequently needs. The balance he achieved throughout the orchestra was very meticulous, the winds and bass never overpowering the strings.



REPERCUSSION

This Canadian percussion ensemble brings their lively stage show and diverse repertoire to SUB Theatre Nov. 17 at 8 pm.

CABARETS

Absolutely no minors admitted.

DINWOODIE
 2nd Floor SUB

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd Floor SUB) and various club members.

NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests.

U of A Electrical Engineers & MLS

present

Thursday, November 10, 8 PM.

Central America
 Campus Committee
 present

Rational Youth

Friday, November 18,
 8 PM



& guests NEO A⁴

Kappa Sigma Fraternity

presents



Saturday, November 19, 8 PM

UP & COMING:

• November 25
 Sound FX

• November 26
 Darkroom

• December 2
 20 Feet

• December 9
 Slash & the Bleeding Hearts