

## winchester:

On Saturday, February 24, Edmontonians will have the rare opportunity of seeing Jesse Winchester perform with his own back-up band, the Wallbangers.

Winchester does not follow a rigorous schedule of performances in hopes of capitalizing on what could be a short-lived popularity. His attitude in this respect is reminiscent of that of The Band, who were instrumental in Winchester's rise to his present status.

In fact, on Winchester's first album, Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm of the Band take part as back-up musicians. The album was produced by Robertson.

Winchester was born in Louisiana, lived most of his life in Memphis, and came to Canada in 1967 to avoid the draft. Since then he has lived in Montreal.

Both of the albums which he has done have been put out since he arrived in Montreal. The first has been around since the

fall of 1970, while the second was done in 1972.

When he first came on the musical scene in Montreal, he had to earn a living singing his own inimitably American songs in a predominantly French-speaking city.

The music on the first album was not influenced much by Montreal, aside from a song which Winchester wrote in collaboration with Robbie Robertson, which indicates little besides the fact that he don't dig the cold weather.

The second album, entitled "Third Down, 110 To Go", is very much an album of Montreal. Even the back-up musicians are funky French Canadians.

Winchester's music is fine, but his lyrics are very important to the total effect which he creates.

Bob Carpenter will also be playing.

Tickets are available for the performance at SUB information desk and at Mike's for \$2.50, or at the door for \$3.00.

## two for three

BY THE SEA, written by James Osborne, and guest directed by Ben Tarver, is a powerful story of bigotry and misunderstanding. The story takes place on a deserted stretch of polluted coastline, where Harry, a 40 year old factory worker, and his wife Mildred encounter a young Japanese student. Harry is unable to relate to the boy and cannot comprehend Mildred's sympathetic reaction to him. The play ends in tragedy. The cast for BY THE SEA is: Philip Baker Hall as Harry, Lee Royce as Mildred, and Dusty Hornby as Jun, the young Japanese boy.

THE GUARDIAN, written by Mark Schoenberg, and guest directed by John Terfloth, appears in sharp contrast to BY THE SEA. THE GUARDIAN is a tension filled, essentially quiet

and tightly focused examination of the bonds, both real and imagined, which hold us where we are. In the cast for THE GUARDIAN are Philip Baker Hall as the Man and Judith Mabey as the Woman. Both BY THE SEA and THE GUARDIAN are being designed by THEATRE 3's resident designer, Richard Roberts.

Throughout the run, THEATRE 3's regular schedule will be in effect. On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday there are performances at 8:30 p.m. Friday features 'dinner-hour' theatre, with performances at 7:00 and 10:30 p.m. On Saturday and Sunday there are matinees at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are available from The Box Office in McCauley Plaza, 422-4411, or from the THEATRE 3 box office, 424-3488.

The concert presented by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra this past weekend was sheer delight to the senses. Guest conductor Pierre Hetu, originally of Montreal and currently the associate conductor of the Detroit Symphony, led the orchestra through three masterworks of the Baroque and Romantic periods.

The program opened with the Concerto Grosso in F Major, Op. 6, No. 9 of Arcangelo Corelli, a violinist and teacher who more than any other man helped elevate the violin to its current status as king of the orchestra. One of twelve works in a form evolved and developed by Corelli (the Baroque Concerta Grosso), the composition is essentially a series of slow and fast dance movements contrasted one to another and further contrasted by pitting a concertato section of two violins and cello against the remaining strings of the orchestra and continuo--in this case the harpsichord played by M. Hetu.

It was indeed pleasant to hear a rich and virile quality of sound from the strings, which until quite recently tended to be anemic and rather inhibited in their playing. The cello and bass sections especially were vibrant and sounded substantially augmented--if not in numbers then certainly in the volume produced. In the solo passages, the three instruments maintained a good aural balance even though second violinist was sometimes overpowered by the remainder of the trio when he played in the lower register of the instrument.

Mr. Hetu indeed asserted his authority by directing from the keyboard which is no mean feat in itself. The harpsichord continuo unfortunately was overpowered by the orchestra. I would have liked to have heard this same work performed with a much smaller compliment of strings--more in the manner of the chamber orchestra which Corelli would have had to work with.

The second work on the program was the Double Concerto in A Minor for Violin, Cello and Orchestra, Op. 102 by Johannes Brahms, the last work he ever composed of symphonic proportions. Featured soloists were James Keene and Ryan Selberg, Concertmaster and Principal Cellist respectively--members of our own orchestra after having been transplanted from both ends of the United States.

The opening Allegro, a richly harmonic and musically powerful and dramatic movement begins with solo statements by first the cello and then the violin, following short orchestral tuttis. Never have I ever heard such a beautiful blend of woodwind sound as came during the first large orchestral passage and the balance with the brasses and strings which followed was simply delightful. The passagework carried on by the orchestra was crystal clear throughout. There was no pretention to sloughing over any notes at all. The orchestra was alert and confident. What was even more impressive was the precise and vigorously vibrant pizzicato playing by the strings in the coda.

The interpretation of the Adagio was exquisitely tasteful music, despite the rather shaky opening from the horns. One could say little else about such beautiful solo and orchestral playing.

The Vivace finale on the other hand seemed to be just a bit too disjointed in the phrasing--with a bit more effort it might have been just a little more lyrical than it was.

Now reserving comment for the two fine soloists, I can only say that their playing was first-rate. James Keene appears to be musically superior to Ryan Selberg (perhaps on the basis of his early concert exposure and his experience as Assistant Concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony under the direction of William Steinberg), but there is no mistaking the fact that the technical capabilities of both men are above any question. Their empathy was especially apparent in the unison solo passages and displayed a lot of careful ensemble rehearsal. Both of the men perform without all or most of the mannerisms of the well-known concert artists which tend to be nothing more than visual distractions.

There were moments, though gratefully very few, where the intonation was

noticeably insecure, but these were far outweighed by the excellent musical taste which manifested itself in the total performance.

Following the interval the orchestra presented a reading of Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 56 which was nothing short of incredible. The introduction of the opening movement (Andante con moto--Allegro un poco agitato) begins very dramatically, in fact much like the opening of the First Symphony of Brahms. However, what impressed me the most were the vast dynamic contrasts which were clearly audible; encompassing a range from shimmering pianissimos to overwhelming fortes and containing every subtlety of

musicality  
to  
seduce  
the  
aural taste buds

sound in between. Yet Mr. Hetu was able to maintain the inner voices and textures in the contrapuntal passages in a form of musical bas-relief even in the louder passages. Such is to his artistic credit.

The Scherzo, a light and airy Vivace non troppo with a distinctly Scottish flavor, opened with a gorgeous clarinet solo which was all but seductive. The sharply contrasted sections which followed retained a texture in the voicings much like crystal spring water--clear yet mysteriously shimmering in mood. The movement closed with a gradually fading theme dying away finally to a magnificently alive yet barely audible pianissimo at the end.

What more can be said about the songful Adagio than tres espressi; superbe?

The undoubtedly Scottish-like finale (Allegro maestoso assai) featured woodwind playing which was absolutely first-rate above all else. The delicate counterpoints which weaved in and out, and around themselves displayed real clarity and the tempo must have been exactly right because both ladies on either side of me were tapping their feet to the music. The conclusion built up to a glorious climax before fading into the distance.

As a conductor, Pierre Hetu obviously not only knows what he wants musically, but he knows how to get it as well. He is precise in his conducting and coaxes the musical qualities which he nurtures from the orchestra. His beats are not pretentious--there are no extraneous gestures or unnecessary nuances. Moreover, his conducting is graceful to the eye, unhurried, and very relaxing. One is never tired out from watching him. Probably, he may be best described as a presence rather than a fixture.

This concert concluded the "Mini-series" featuring guest conductors vying for the coveted prize of Music Director of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra for the 1973-74 season. In retrospect, concert-goers had until Tuesday afternoon to make known their preference to the society, choosing between James Yannatos, Dietfried Bernet and Pierre Hetu. My vote goes to the latter candidate. Monsieur Hetu, bienvenu a Edmonton!

Jerry Ozipko

