



by Ross Rudolph

Having sung out the old year and sung in the new, The Gateway musical staff has settled down to such serious fare as the Bach "Musical Offering", while the reportorial staff of Edmonton's other newspaper has reverted to its old habits of misrepresenting the news. I refer, of course, to "l'affaire Stanger".

The local tabloid when there seemed a lull in the news featured an item juxtaposing the offer of the permanent musical direction of the Edmonton Symphony to Russell Stanger with the resignation of highly regarded Thomas Rolston as Associate Conductor. The combination of events was clearly to inspire the impression of Mr. Rolston's opposition to the move to retain this permanent conductor. Subsequent events have shown that Mr. Rolston's withdrawal was a certainty from the season's opening, and was due to the pressure of his University and chamber performing regime.

A further release on the subject reported the adverse (unsolicited) expressions of opinion from those musicians who should be in the best position to judge Stanger's capabilities, and here I refer to the men in the orchestra, themselves. There remains one chafing rub. The grounds for the objections were never expressed. I am prepared to admit that in its present estate, the orchestra depends on the good will of its individual members. I will acknowledge further that I did not attend one rehearsal and am in no position to gauge Stanger's methods. I would further not ask anyone to accept any proposition from this department on authority.

It seems axiomatic to me, however, that as orchestras go, the New York Philharmonic is a more highly regarded ensemble than the local aggregation. I would further recall to the reader's mind the old musical aphorism that there are no great orchestras, only great conductors. Need I remind the reader, if he has followed the tortuous prose thus far, that Mr. S. as the symphony's own blurb proudly proclaimed served with distinction as an assistant to Lenny? Though I cannot conclude from the foregoing that Mr. Stanger is a great conductor, I would suggest that he is a more capable director than Edmonton is accustomed to hear.

I apologize for giving the Stanger concerts such short shrift when they were performed (I was not able to hear the final concert) but in retrospect they were not uniformly evidence of the promise of the conductor's first engagement last season. In the manner of many contemporary conductors who profess (and obviously act upon) a love for the classical masters, the manner of the performance often smothers the beloved's delicate beauty (as in the rendering with William Ayd of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25). The rendering of familiar works was always idiosyncratic, not always pleasingly so. But increasingly during his stay Mr. Stanger was able to subjugate a recalcitrant orchestra to his individual ideas. This was an accomplishment by itself.

For myself, two things are certain. In the first place, Mr. Stanger is an estimable conductor (Those who remember a broadcast performance with the N.Y. Philharmonic under Stanger of Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and the Stravinsky *Firebird Suite* can readily attest to this.), as fine a permanent conductor as Edmonton can expect to lure. The second point which has been repeated to the point of poor taste in this corner is that the Edmonton Symphony desperately needs a permanent conductor if it is ever to emancipate itself from its present station of respectable mediocrity.



THE MEDIUM

photo by Wm. C. Stenton

## Opera At Studio Theatre

by Peter Kirchmeir

Studio Theatre, never averse to innovations, entered a new field of drama last weekend: the opera. The choice of operas is to be commended: not a grand opera a la Wagner, but two short contemporary pieces by Menotti, an Italian-American.

The two pieces, *The Telephone*, a farce, and *The Medium*, a tragedy, presented a nice contrast in operatic style. The former makes light of that necessary machine, the telephone, whilst the latter exposes the gullibility of people.

When a man has to turn to a machine to get into communication with a woman, then our society has failed, even in the resulting confusion is humorous. Armand Baril, in the role of Ben, sang well, with just enough sobriety to substantiate the theme. Once or twice the stage business he went through seemed a little too much, as it distracted me from Dorothy Harpell, singing the role of Lucy. It was very difficult to sing with a telephone constantly at your ear, and she is to be praised in carrying off the role with aplomb. Only once she lost her notes and this was during the laughs, whilst talking on the phone.

The supernatural has always fascinated man, but woe to him who uses it for his own ends. Madam Flora, sung by Donna Gail Feldberg, initiates the tragedy, by losing contact with reality. An excellent characterization combined with extremely competent singing created an aura of fright. Phil Silvers, as the Mute Boy, had a difficult role, because his reactions had always to be mimed. It does him credit that he did not go overboard and use all the melodramatic stereotypes of emotion. Instead, he managed to stay within the dramatic meaning of the opera, and contribute to the theme. *The Medium* was well performed and kept me and most of the audience in its grip.

The music was played by Sandra Munn and Robert Picard. Dual playing on the piano is difficult enough, but on top of this to lead and accompany an operatic cast, and do it well, deserves much praise.

A new venture by a theatre is always of note in any community, and when the venture is a success, it is to be hoped that it will not be forgotten in a file but will be repeated. Studio Theatre is never loth to lead the way.

## ARTS CALENDAR

San Francisco Opera Quartet  
Celebrity Series  
Friday, Jan. 25, 8 p.m.  
Jubilee Auditorium

Students' Musical Club Concert  
Sunday, Jan. 27, 3 p.m.  
Convocation Hall

University Mixed Chorus Concert  
Richard Eaton directing  
Feb. 4, 5, 6, 8:30 p.m.  
Convocation Hall

## Marienbad first and last . . .

by Bob Pounder

Last Year at Marienbad, which came gliding into the Edmonton Film Society's showing recently, is a picture so strange and demanding of one's complete co-operation that it apparently failed to capture even the remotest interest of many, judging by the number who walked out. This is probably as it should be, however, for all great art seems to engender controversy. After all, Beethoven was panned in Vienna in the early 1800's. But those who left should perhaps have tried a little harder to open their minds.

Exceeding praise is in order for Alain Resnais, the director, and for Alain Robbe-Grillet, the writer. They have broken the cinematic mold and have forced us to disregard all preconceived notions about what to expect in a motion picture. We have been spoon-fed by the nurseries of Hollywood for many years, and it is difficult to change thought patterns suddenly, but "Marienbad" makes us. Old ideas of past, present and future are thrown away, character relationships are tenuous and motive is the epitome of obscurity.

The movie plunges us into the corridors and salons of a grandiose hotel in the heart of Europe where icy sophisticates in impeccable dress, about who we know nothing, talk, wander and dance with haughty boredom amidst marble columns and gilt mirrors. There is a pervasive anonymity about the place; no one seems to know anybody except the people with whom he is talking.

The heroine, who remains nameless, is a beautiful woman accompanied by an austere gentleman who may or may not be her husband. She is confronted by a stranger (or is he well known to her?) who suggests that they met last year and

made a pact to be reunited. She pleads ignorance of this, but is troubled by it, and the man's suggestions mingle past and present in her, and the audience's mind. She becomes frightened, he more insistent, until finally, having appealed in vain to her companion, she yields and goes off with the persuader to a fate which is left to the viewer. She has been given some sort of identity, finally, and is no longer isolated. Perhaps this is why she gives in.

By the use of skilful cutting, weird organ and string music for background and a most agile camera, Resnais mingles past, present and the imaginary in an often dazzling manner. The solemn narrative of the stranger holds the picture together and provides a central support upon which we lean when the images tend to confuse. The actors are exceptionally intense in the execution of their tasks.

Sacha Pitoeff plays the maybe husband, Giorgio Albertazzi the persistent stranger and Delphine Seyrig the woman. I think Mme. Seyrig in "Marienbad" can best be described as ravishing. She has a mobile, untamed face, and her large eyes often say more than her vocal cords. She has been dressed "fit to kill" by Chanel. Hers is the most difficult task, for she must combine longing, fear, anger, amusement, boredom and melancholy in a single portrayal and somehow carries it off beautifully.

It is doubtful that there will be a flock of imitators of "Marienbad". Only tremendous skill could make a second attempt at this technique anything more than a tired imitation. And this intensifies the importance of its makers' contribution to the heritage of the motion picture. They have done something for the first and last time.

but then . . .



THE FIN AGAIN WAKES!

Ad nauseatorium pro marrying Goodorbad. Sum reflections for factions or fractions of fictions.

They herin revolved in zest. The man, elder bury tree in garden. Re chance of times per dues? Foregretting passed thymes clove and other clinging spies of life, or slies of lice.

The muvy gan con fusion et con salvants. Was this before the unmaid Marian bade Robin hood the knight? Or was this Frederick great or bad? No nose.

The skull tour Z "Ox tongue, nicht weitergehen." Or did it say, "Mane, Bach!" or balk or Balkan ybekon and gefallen zee downen.

The doors-v-down the shy lent hauls, ye rushing fools. Fair well. Two arms. Mona fleur-de-lis a paw Dharma.

Cylopic, encyclopic pedant, the laps of silent talls for tarr babies. Equushipped with Ana Joe Conda smile and gawdy apes and aping Gaudy. Blotto godoh. Godot. Goad.

Lashed ear the proof of putting was in the Rock. And Royal kant bare to mush resnaicity. Exhume it, rob et grill it, or in cartesian well it, swell it, welt it or wilt. Shake spears at it, Bayer it butt do knot des pear of it.

Dish hear at marring Baden-Guden was fuzz, but I'll ached it.