



by Ross Rudolph

The afternoon concert of the Edmonton Symphony on Sunday, March 3 was a disaster. It has been suggested elsewhere that matters improved in the evening; they hardly could have deteriorated. Whether the result of under-rehearsing, of wilful conducting, or capricious programme making, the whole affair was certainly a retrogression in the series this year.

Whose brainchild was it to follow the *Liebestod* with excerpts from Manuel de Falla's colorful, but irreverent, ballet "The Three-cornered Hat?" To present a well rounded program was one thing; to pick four plums from the repertoire, Jack Horner-like, apparently at random, with no thought to balance, cohesion, or order is quite another.

Writing programme notes must be almost as unrewarding a pastime as pecking out ex post facto reviews. In both occupations there must be degrees of accomplishment. The Sunday job must have been an education for those who thought they knew something of the music being performed. The author seems to have done a better job of transposing portions than did Brangäne. It is interesting to note that *Mild und leise* is actually a second act duet. Imagine Wagner's tricking us all this time into believing that it is Isolde's pronouncement at expiring!

Mister John Canarina filled in for an unnamed Soviet conductor who was supposed to have guested with the orchestra. While the Russians are not celerated for the calibre of their contemporary conductors (with the possible exceptions of Mravinsky and Barshai, the violinist, it is doubtful whether their other big name conductors can compare with the western leviathans of the baton), the metamorphosis wrought in the Calgary Philharmonic last year held out high promise for our own achievement this year. I cannot judge of his technical knowledge, but quoting from his American citation, I should say that "outstanding leadership and sound judgment" were conspicuously absent on this occasion from Canarina's direction. It is tenuous to gauge the conductor's attitude to the music conducted but this approach seemed singularly unsympathetic to every work performed. The Berlioz was unnecessarily frenetic, the Dvorak humorless, the Wagner singularly unerotic, and the Falla completely undanceable.

Specifically, balances were either misjudged or misguided. I assure you that the *Overture to Benvenuto Cellini* is not such a pot boiler as it was made out to be. The close became something of a concerted work for bass drum and orchestra. String lines (whenever they were lines, and not fragmented beyond recognition) were buried under grandiloquent, and often ancillary, brass parts. It would be interesting to compare this performance with the more artistic and sensitive one of Berlioz's *Roman Carnival* given by the orchestra by no means as proficient as it now is under the direction of the sensitive young Alexander Gibson. CKUA might profitably look into a survey of the orchestra's progress on the basis of its recorded material.

The D minor Symphony of Dvorak was the second casualty of the afternoon. The first movement, very beautiful even when very derivative, might have suffered most from the shaky ensemble and painful intonation. The orchestra has played this symphony recently (under Sir Ernest MacMillan, if memory serves), and in so infectiously joyous a piece which is not nearly so demanding as other works the group has been presumptuous enough to play, besides a minimum of technical skill, the men need only show a conviction in the piece's good spirit for it to captivate its audience. Self-conscious playing in such a work should be unheard.

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Democracy Is No Longer Possible because It Presupposes A Rational Electorate

Ray Archer, a 4th year philosophy student won 2nd prize in the MacEachran Essay Contest for the following essay, (here abridged). The first prize essay, by Judith Rendle, will be published in March, the U of A literary magazine. The essays were written in three hours under examination conditions, without prior preparation, from a choice of 15 topics.

I have chosen this topic on which to write not because I expect to be able to say anything which finds popular acceptance, but because what I have to say is true. Democracy has always been an ideal, beyond the grasp of men, yet thought by them to be a cherished possession safely locked within the imposing language of some constitutional document. At

Confessions Of Felix Krull-- Fitfull Amusement

by Bob Pounder

A comedy is just what this season of the Edmonton Film Society needed. Too bad it got a mediocre one. It is called "The Confessions of Felix Krull," and was adapted from Thomas Mann's novel of the same name.

The theme of the picture is set forth by the hero at the beginning: "Love the world and the world will love you." This, you must admit, is hardly the most original or provocative thought on which to base a motion picture, and it is employed here with a heavy hand indeed. Granted, the clumsy subtitles, which translate idioms literally ("I'll hold my thumbs for you") are often an annoyance to the viewer who does not know German.

The young hero, Felix Krull, is the son of a champagne manufacturer on the Rhine. After slipping through the German draft, he reaches Paris and gets a job as an elevator operator in a plush hotel. Here he becomes involved with a well-heeled woman whose husband holds the dubious distinction of owning "the biggest pâté-de-foie-gras factory in Strasbourg." This, by the way, is one of the better lines of the film. After Krull has had but one whirl in her boudoir, however, she goes back to the paté, and more adventures are dreamed up for the ingenious young fellow. There is an insipid and boring episode involving a kindly old gentleman from Scotland who wants to take the charming young man back home to his castle and adopt him. This sort of thing could very well have been omitted. Next, through a tangled set of circumstances far too complicated for description here, or anywhere, Felix finds himself in Lisbon impersonating a marquis and making love to both the wife and daughter of a jolly old professor whose passion is dinosaurs. Sound ridiculous?

Well, it is, and even though being ridiculous is often the saving virtue of many a comedy, and even though it is evident that everybody involved here had admirable intentions—Horst Buchholz is especially engaging as Krull—the picture is far too wordy and protracted to amuse more than fitfully.

first the prized possession was something of a trophy, hard won in the bloodshed of revolutions and civil wars, and it was displayed to the gaze of all as something new and shining; today it has lost both novelty and sheen for us, and is mentioned comfortably, as is something which has been in the family for many years. Both attitudes have been mistaken, for it is not that democracy is no longer possible, but that it never has been possible as men have envisioned it. It cannot be possessed, but only pursued.

Perhaps your first reaction will be that I must be mistaken about the meaning of the term, for technically and historically "democracy" can be defined in a way which points to the emergence of certain governmental forms in history, and it is always possible to say that these are what is meant by the word "democracy." But I will counter that if this is an adequate definition of the term then the topic offered is not right or wrong, but witless. On the contrary, although there are practical ways in which the democratic state is said to exist, the essay topic must intend us to probe beneath the mere technical and historic manifestations of "democracy" on this superficial level.

What then, will be the sense which I am to give the term both to support my opening remarks and to make the given topic meaningful? This sense, that the word "democracy" has always meant more to men than governmental machinery, and rather stands as a symbol for the cherished notion that by some self-controlled system man might realize his greater good. Thus the content of the term has varied according to the highest ideals of the speaker, so that when "Everyman" learned to use the word

it came to represent the greatest good for the greatest number.

If the first attempts to attain the greater good drove to despair one of the finest minds of all time, that of Plato, we should long since have recognized that merely to set up "democratic" institutions is insufficient to assure the greater good to Everyman, but obviously we have not learned this lesson. The epigram, "All that we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history" is no better illustrated than in the sorry fiasco in the Congo, a travesty which I am sure I need not explicate more than to point out that we simply did not learn "through bones and marrow" what Plato told us, that the rationally ordered state does not just happen, but must be cultivated, by "philosopher kings" of some sort, if you will.

To this point in the essay I have not said anything worthy of my opening contention that my opinions would turn out to be true rather than popular, for if the need of the democratic institutions is simply a rational populace, then surely education will turn out to be the panacea of all the ills. Surely this has been a widely accepted thesis, and the burgeoning of extensive systems of education, and the spread of various communications media, have been inspired by a confidence that understanding could be applied to the citizen by exposure to a didactic process. I think that popularly the notion is still accepted, and, if so, then it is here that I will transgress the sacred ground of popular ideology. The truth is that people are not being rendered, in the mass, into rational human beings. Information of a factual nature can readily be taught, but understanding,

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Gordon Carnegie and Christine Scofield, in *Le Mariage Forcé*, a play by Molière to be presented at Studio Theatre Friday and Saturday, March 7th and 8th. Also being staged is *Die Treppe*, in German.