



by Ross Rudolph

Either feast or famine, or to mix the metaphor, it never snows, it blizzards. Next week's column will be devoted entirely to the art of piano-playing as recently presented to Edmonton audiences.

It is a pleasure this week to have to report some genuine news to all who profess themselves music-lovers. The debut recital of the University of Alberta String Quartet on the series of the Edmonton Chamber Music Society was a landmark in local music making. For the brave uninitiated who ventured to the auspicious concert, I hope that the first encounter with what Joseph Wechsberg has called "the music of friends" (Horizon, Nov. 1962) was a pleasurable introduction. For myself, the atmosphere might have been too "friendly".

Olin Downes, late great critic of the New York Times, once defined a critic's business as "the judicial, pontifical, pragmatic estimation of compositions and performances." At concerts such as these, your writer is in serious danger of enjoying himself.

First to dispense with all the trivia. The formal evening dress of the performers was hardly consonant either with the character of most of the music, or with the scene which required only an insistent telephone and a howling hound to mark it as unmistakably domestic. This writer has attended concerts by both the Budapest and Amadeus Quartet where the performers were clad in dinner jackets, and both groups have been known to give recitals in business suits.

Second, Mr. Talmon Herz shares a characteristic of many of his former compatriots and present co-cellists, namely, an assertiveness that may be most unwanted. Of the man's musicality there can be no doubt, but one would have relished the opportunity better to judge the qualities of Mr. Doolittle, the violist, whose reticent sounds were sometimes buried under his colleagues' scrapings. Berlioz' injunction to the viola soloist in "Harold en Italie" to stand out nearer the public may be sound advice for all of Harold's beleaguered brethren.

The program opened with a quartet by the paragon of the style, Haydn. This one carries the subtitle "The Joke", which may well refer to the "false closes" at the end of the final presto. About this effect itself, there was a premeditation that bordered on precosity, but other than this and a slightly driven finale, the performance was unexceptionable.

The Beethoven first quartet is a prophetic work. We have evidence of the pains the composer spent on perfecting the first movement's seminal motif. The slow movement outdoes in its profundity all comparable preceding efforts by this composer (even the sublime Largo of the Piano Sonata in D, op. 10, No. 3). The performance in many ways was awesome. The unanimity of attacks and releases bore incontrovertible evidence to the degree of rehearsal involved. A rewarding performance for all involved: quartet, audience, and Beethoven.

The programming of the last work left something to be desired. The Chausson Sextet for Piano and Strings sounds suspiciously like a concerto for violin, piano and string quartet which I once heard at Banff, and is, whether or not this identification is correct, a rather pretentious work. If a work of a larger character including piano were required, why not the generally lauded quartets of Mozart, Brahms, or Schumann or the excellent quintets

of Schumann, Franck, Dvorak, or the incomparable Brahms op. 34? Mrs. Rolston's realization had real gusto and overshadowed the occasional ensemble lapses. Only one serious question arose from the concert: When are we to hear the U.A.S.Q. again? I suggest that if the demand were to be met, the players would certainly tire before the audience.

Finally, I hope that I may be excused by sartorial comment if my guest may be pardoned his artistic ones. (One geographical question: Where is City No. 2, of "Hot Day in City No. 2"?)

FROZEN FERVOR

Last Sunday some brave souls endured the twenty mile an hour winds and freezing temperatures in Convocation Hall to hear the second concert of the University Musical Club. Arthur Querengesser sang a Bach aria, a group of Schubert lieder, and two English songs with mellifluous tone, aplomb, and real musicality. Miss Dutka, his accompanist, is obviously a fine listener, which is an indispensable quality in song literature.

It is quite surprising that Vicky Harvie and Robin Higham were not frozen to their instruments by performances' end, and not all all surprising that intonation was a slight problem. The dulcet sounds of the dual fluting were especially enjoyed in the fine Handel sonata. About Mrs. Kowalik's phenomenal piano-playing, more next issue. For more fine pianism, hear the Concerto No. 25 in C Major, Mozart's Emperor, at the Edmonton Symphony concert, Sunday, Nov. 25.



No Life, Boy

by Marie dal Garno

We have got rid the soap in our bathroom. For we have been to the prof talks at SCM House. Professor Sheila Watson talked about James Joyce—whose books were banned—and Professor Rose talked about Henry Miller—whose books were banned. Pound and Lawrence and Faulkner and Huxley came to mind.

It is important to realize that language is not an ethereal thing. It has come from the pits of the stomachs of men and men and men. A tale told. Joyce left Ireland, and Miller left the United States, for there is an impetus that drives such men on the road to search for "the somewhere" at the edge of society where they can live.

Professor Watson suggested that the same force which drives the artist from the masses drove man to achieve the Sputnik, his first real step toward escape from the "prison of the world." "What bird has done, man can do." Flight from earth.

And another way is non-recognition. Dr. Rose spoke of Thoreau's influence on Gandhi and of the back-again influence of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy on the American artist. The audience listened to "Song of Myself" read à la beat.

Tropic of Cancer is, like Ulysses,

not simply pornographic, but obscene. Yet, to quote Dr. Rose, "If one wants to say anything, it is hard not to be obscene." This is so, of course, because language is a vehicle, a means to the end of communication. And life is not all white (nor all black). It is black-white, good-bad. Thus, then, must be the language that tells it.

Thought of black-white, joy-sorrow, ugly-beautiful. That these are the only-all things. And I, I, I.

To achieve enough perspective to comprehend the black-white of life, one cannot remain in the middle of a society that censors the black (or the white). The artist must flee the goose-step sterility of the social climate to a state of mind above emotional paralysis, to a rebirth of pain and joy.

This perhaps by becoming a Dharma bum, or repeating the Jesus prayer, or sinking into the sky. Or no Lifebuoy. So we go on the road, we get rid of soap. Some are put into asylums for twelve years. All to say somehow that humanity has a bloody SOUL, that "Kilroy was here."

We have been attending prof talks at the SCM House. Spoke of Nietzsche, Picasso, Emerson, Yeats. And that is what they said.



Russel Stanger, who will be conducting the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra this Sunday.

Illicit Interlude

by Dilettare

Hardly illicit—thanks to Alberta censorship—but pure delight. Such was the interlude spent watching the latest Ingmar Bergman production to play at the Varscona.

The word delight is probably a slap in the face to the usual Bergman film. Yet Illicit Interlude comes as a refreshing complement to the sombre Bergman Edmonton has seen in the past. Gone is the oppressive symbolism that dominated *The Seventh Seal*. The despair is still there. But now the strong warp of tragedy that weaves through the boy-girl romance serves only to accent the dominant pattern of poignant joy, of an appreciation for the value of living that triumphs over despair.

The plot is simple; the characters few. Most impressive is the portrayal of the young Marie. In retrospect, one sees her as the very essence of vibrant living-loving. But death, by claiming her lover, also destroys the young Marie. A new woman—tired and disillusioned—takes her place. The main action of the film is concerned with how she finds her way one afternoon back to the island-Utopia of her youth.

The uniqueness of Bergman is still there, although in smaller doses. The humped, black crone who halts her slow progress up the rocky shore in order to stare wordlessly at Marie; the weird sound that frightens the young heroine at the beach-house; the ominous utterances of the moustached, cancerous aunt at her chessboard: all these predict impending doom.

Is Bergman's hope as powerful as his despair? Perhaps this question is best answered by another. Is an every-night dream as memorable as a nightmare? Bergman would probably never have become famous solely on the merits of *Illicit Interlude*.

Yet even though it may lack the epic scope and religious grandeur of some of his previous productions, the universally applicable *Liebesfreud* and *Weltschmerz* remain, no less profound in real life than on doomsday.

Arts Calendar

- Marionette Theatre of Peter Arnott**
Oedipus—Fri., Nov. 23
The Birds—Sat., Nov. 24
Studio Theatre, Education Building
- Boris Roubakine, lecture-recital**
The Composer's Piano
Fri., Nov. 23, 8:30 p.m.
Convocation Hall
- Rey de la Torre, guitarist**
Fri., Nov. 23, 8:15 p.m.
Victoria Composite High School
- John Reeve**
Fundamentals of Good Design
Sat., Nov. 24
Edmonton Art Gallery
- Symphony Concert**
Russel Stanger, conductor
Sun., Nov. 25, 3:00 and 9:00 p.m.
Jubilee Auditorium
- The Knife (Holland, 1961)**
Edmonton Film Society
Mon., Nov. 26, 8:15 p.m.
Jubilee Auditorium
- The Music Man**
Edmonton Civic Opera Society
Wed., Nov. 28 through Dec. 1st, 8:30 p.m.
Jubilee Auditorium.

Poet To Visit

George Johnston, poet, and author of the volume *The Cruising Auk* will be in Edmonton on November 30 to give a public reading of his work.

This was announced by the president of Focus Gallery, Douglas Haynes, who reported that the reading, sponsored by Focus Gallery and the University of Alberta Department of English will be held at 8:15 p.m. in room 2104 of the Medical Building, University of Alberta. Admission price is 25 cents for students, 50 cents for others.

George Johnston teaches English at Carleton University in Ottawa.

His visit to Edmonton has been made possible by a Canada Council grant to Focus Gallery for the purpose of expanding and supplementing its contemporary reading series.

Last reader to visit Edmonton in the series was Irving Layton, who read in late October to an audience of more than three hundred in Convocation Hall. After Christmas two more readers will appear in the series, from Vancouver. They are Phyllis Webb, who recently published a volume of poems called, *The Sea is Also a Garden*, and Maria Fiamengo, author of a book of poetry entitled, *The Quality of Halves*.