

Chamber music

Jonathan Mann

Last Tuesday night, as I worked my way to Burton Auditorium, I wasn't feeling particularly positive. Nuclear city is at its most desolate on winter nights, and the wind surrounded me, throwing its most bitter insults...taunting me like the children had in my first years of school.

I pushed on in the face of that wind, for that night Burton was featuring the York Community Chamber Orchestra under the able baton of Jim McKay. With his opening remarks, the tensions within me started to melt away.

The first selection was Peter Warlock's 'Capriol,' a charming suite for string orchestra. Its light, friendly feel was due to a sympathetic rendition by the orchestra. It was an appropriate introduction to the group. Though not a flawless rendition, it suited the work. Here was a group which managed to communicate a real affection for the music. Heart-warming.

The group is composed largely of grown-ups—doctors, lawyers, parents. Scattered among them, the odd student, and one professional musician. The turnout was regrettably small. In one-to-one combat, my bet would go to the orchestra.

The second offering was Mozart's 'Clarinet Concerto in A Major,' a piece which I'm sure you've heard, even if its name isn't familiar. The soloist was Barry Craig, a civil engineer by day, and as it turned out, a fine clarinetist by night. His tone was gentle and clear, giving the piece

an added delicacy. He seemed like a nice enough fellow, and (as I learned from the programme notes) has a wife and three children. The occasional squeak hardly marred an otherwise touching performance.

During intermission, as I waited my turn at the coffee machine, two women in from of me were discussing their children. Later, as the second half of the program progressed, a small boy in the row in front of mine got restless, and finally sleepy.

Charles Gounod's 'Petite Symphonie in B Flat' was the next item on the evening's programme. An octet for winds, it was well received and deservedly was not the sort of thing to challenge the listener. Just a comfortable piece.

Perhaps this is a personal bias, but music should startle the listener. 'The Gounod' (like the other works that evening) didn't quite do that, so it should be so. But it was not the sort of thing to challenge the listener. Just a last selection—Beethoven's First.

Many of us remember old Ludwig Van from our days at the Korova Milk Bar as a driven man, one who pushed his nephew to insanity and then suicide. But this was not the Beethoven we heard. He sounded just a bit too friendly, a bit too nice.

All in all, a fine night out for some lovely music by a very able and talented group of musicians. If one could ask anything of the groups, perhaps it should be a trifle less polite, a tap less friendly in its style and choice of material.



Excalibur's Entertainment Editors, Stuart Ross and Elliott Lefko, wish their readers happiness and good will in the festive season.

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Stuart Ross

Music

You've seen him in the back row of Merv Griffin's band. You've heard his amazing wit and enjoyed his silver tongue. Now see that fantastic trumpeter Jack Sheldon. Our hero returns to Bourbon St., 180 Yonge St., from Dec. 26 to Jan. 6., for his annual New Year's spot. If you can catch Jack in a dry moment ask him to play his version of "Under My Thumb."

Dr. Rat



Bryon Johnson

Balls

Never mind the bollocks, here's Major-General Richard Rohmer, CMM, DFC, OStJ, CD, QC, BA, LLD. He was at the York bookstore recently for a signing of his *Balls*. Thanks, Dick.

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