

GOOD-TIME JAZZ

Last Friday night about 2000 people showed up at the Jubilee Auditorium to listen to four old men plus two youngsters of about 30 and 35 play some very old fashioned music. During the first set the people did what they came to do. They listened, dutifully applauding at appropriate intervals. But more than listening is required if music is to be understood at all. It has to be experienced. By the end of the show I think almost everyone there had actually experienced New Orleans jazz. The audience was dancing in the aisles and on the stage, singing and clapping to "The Saints Go Marching In." The Preservation Hall Jazz Band got us off our asses with some of the most

genuine and personal music I have heard anywhere. There was nothing artificial or plastic about those old men. They were real.

It must have been the simple, insistent rhythms that got trumpet and it wasn't cliché anymore, it was real and genuine. I remembered that De De normally toured with his wife on piano, that she wasn't with him this time, and I wondered. And there was a new man on trombone. It seemed everyone going at first. It was just kind of hard to keep still. I found that if I closed my eyes the sterile environment of the Jubilee disappeared, replaced by a dark and dingy bar, and I was sipping a glass of beer, watching the hookers try to score. Until about half way through the

second set the band had been playing happy, fast Dixieland-like music. Then, unexpectedly, the saddest, most forlorn of all trombones came on with "Just a Closer Walk with Thee." It was so sad, so forlorn, that at first I was sure that it was meant to be humorous. But then De De Pierce took over with his that I was really getting sad, really getting into this new side the band was showing us the old drummer suddenly picked up the beat and they turned the song into a jumping, moving, joyous affirmation of life. I thought it was beautiful.

And everyone seemed to get caught up in it. It just didn't seem like Edmonton, with all the smiling un-upright faces. It wasn't because the musicians



The saints were marching. photo by Erich Seemann

were some kind of tremendous virtuosos. Every time blind, skinny, ancient De De Pierce stood up to do a solo I feared for his life. But they weren't just playing some songs. I think they were saying things to us about

their lives and the things they had learned and endured. They were communicating with us in a way no "professional" entertainer ever could.

—Barry Brummet

Anda plays to 'perfection'

There is a disturbing tendency among many orchestras and soloists to ignore the fact that Mozart, especially earlier Mozart, was definitely a part of the rococo tradition that has somehow slipped out of favour with many symphony goers.

The trend is towards playing earlier Mozart most commonly as if it were baroque, but in the extreme case, as if it were in the classical Beethovenian vein. This is disastrous. It should be avoided at all cost because, in such interpretations, the essential subtlety and exactness of the music is lost.

Thus I am very pleased to say the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and its great soloist, Swiss pianist Geza Anda did a stunning admirable job of presenting the music of Mozart's *Concerto in C Major for Piano and Orchestra (K. 467)* exactly as it should be played.

Throughout the piece both the strings and the winds showed admirable constraint in playing this most delicate of musics. The phrases were very well shaped and rounded to perfection. The winds especially seemed to be having a veritable field day with their music.

And Anda's piano playing was without flaw. It is obvious that this man is intimately

familiar with and truly loves the music that he was playing. It is futile for me to try to convey the perfection of his playing. It was as whole and complete as I feel it is possible to get in a solo-based concerto.

And it is to the ESO's credit that they were able to maintain themselves on the same level as that established by the soloist. In fact, the orchestra that I hear playing the Mozart on Saturday night was not the third best in Canada: It was undoubtedly the best.

The only unfortunate by-product of this excellent rendition of the Mozart was that the orchestra seemed to have difficulty getting out of their superbly realized rococo style into the styles demanded by the other pieces.

The first number on the program, the Handel *Concerto Grosso in B Flat (opus 6 no.7)*, was, I felt, a little too romantic in orientation. It flowed just a little too much to be comfortable; there were no breaks or interruptions or definite ending and beginning points. It was almost as if Handel had attempted to be 75 years ahead of his time in style and failed in a vaguely uncomfortable way.

The Stavinsky *Concerto in E Flat ("Dunbarton Oaks")* was

tight and sure and had nice phrasing and all that but again, it suffered from a confusion on styles. The good 'ol Uncle Igor savagery was missing. Passages that could have been rough and brusque were just a little too smooth. But it was still nice.

Finally the Kodaly. It wasn't bad or anything like that, but, I don't know, I would have been just as glad if they'd left it out as they chose to do with the Pentland *Symphony in Ten Parts*. The *Dances of Galanta* is typical kodaly which means it's nice and well orchestrated with comfortable juxtapositions; but, well, it didn't fit into the realm of compact precision that characterized the rest of the performance.

From what I have written so far you may get the impression that I didn't like the concert. This is incorrect. In fact, I thought that it was one of the best concerts I have ever heard the ESO play and the Mozart was without peer. But I had to write something, didn't I? How else could I justify getting in free?

Anyway, it was a truly fine show and indications are that the coming ones are going to be just as good. Looks like a fine season.

—Ross Harvey

Art for art's sake?

If it's true that where energy exists, then the possibility of communication exists also, then the WEST '71 exhibition at the Edmonton Art Gallery should say a whole lot.

From the time you enter you are confronted with synapse-searing might. A Red Trinity crawls out of the floor and roars up the wall. A painting hangs suspended, buzzing, crackling and humming. You are drawn upstairs to a great bacchanalian sensory-feast (isn't that the shjts) on the floor above, transcending all earthly fetters. Discarded bodies are lying to the left and right. The transporting character of a sculpture catapults you beyond the realm of time and space. "What is real and what is fancy?" you scream. "Is the cosmos itself but a flickering ember of imagination - ignited by random thought - only to be snuffed out at art's whim? When all is said and done, who is the dreamer and which is the dream?" Can this continue without irreparable damage to your mirror?

But, luckily you and your battered psyche reach a lull in the storm, a calm in the convulsion, and eddy in the great maelstrom of life (merely while forces regroup).

Shortly, a few tentative recon missions are flown, and the dogs of war are unleashed, barking and yapping. A chrome and plastic spine horror rises in phoenix-like splendour to disarm your exhausted frontlines while an innocent visionary landscape beckons. Its soothing and annealing balm floods your razed defences and yes, it feels good and yes, you are sleepy and yes, you are drifting away and away and... but immediately the orange and yellow hordes from Winnipeg envelop and encrust your mind, gorged and lying bloated in your skull. When the building finally exhales you into the dismal environs of downtown Edmonton, you are forced to say in your usual inimitable fashion, I didn't know that Canadian art drawn from the four Western provinces could be so fine. I think everybody should see it."

But art work is essentially the kind of statement that needs first-hand witness to be worthwhile. Do yourself a favour and wander down there before Oct. 31. Incidentally, there's also a bunch of photographs entitled "Eye on Edmonton" by a guy named Harvey Spak.

—David Bird

Sponsored by the Students' Union

Friday, Oct. 22

3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Dinwoodie Lounge

Live entertainment

Proof of age must be presented at the door

Friday

Afternoon

Social