

Well worth listening to Sunday concerts free

On Sunday evenings at 8:30 recitals of chamber-music works are given by students and the music-teaching staff in Convocation Hall.

The concerts feature the work of J. S. Bach, who, 250 years ago this year, moved to the position of Kappelmeister at the Anhalt-Köthen. The significance of this is that in the Calvinist chapel there, nothing as sinful and worldly as joyful music (or any other kind) was permitted to reach the ears of God—it was in fact an early form of censorship.

Prevented from playing or composing for the Church, Bach spent his time writing what are considered to be among his finest secular compositions—his Brandenburg Concerti, his Violin Concerti, and Part I of the "Well-Tempered Clavier". Some of these works will be performed in the the recitals—though "recitals" is really the wrong word, as many of the concerts will involve a string orchestra.

Not all the words, however, will be by Bach, and not all the concerts are to be given by U of A members. Next Sunday, November 5, the Mount Allison University Trio (viola, clarinet, and piano) are performing an unannounced programme, and in December the University of Western Ontario String Quartet will be playing on campus.

One of the more interesting programmes might be that for December 3rd, when works for unaccompanied cello and unaccompanied violin are to be followed by the E Major Violin Concerto and a Harp Concerto by Handel. For the unaccompanied violin works, which contrast with the cello

works in that they tend to be more contrapuntal than the simply lyrical cello sonatas, the Dept. of Music has arranged to project slides of the scores, so that those who read music can obtain a greater perception of what is happening.

(Those without much knowledge of music should not be deterred by this; while it would be foolish to assure anyone that he will properly appreciate Bach's counterpoint on, say, the first hearing, most people would discern enough to enrich their future acquaintance a good deal.)

However, pamphlets giving the programme for the Fall Concert Series can be obtained from the Dept. of Music (Room 348, Convocation Hall) or seen pinned up on noticeboards. It will be seen that there are a few concerts on evenings other than Sundays.

It might be worthwhile to correct any impression the reader may have that the performers will be scratchers and scrapers. The performers are students who are being trained to achieve a professional standard, and for the most part it requires fair concentration to detect any lapses—where there are any.

At worst, once or twice in a piece, an inexperienced player may reach a note awkwardly on a stringed instrument: there are those whose job it may be to let the music go by them while their attention is on the alert for such slips in technique—but anyone who is listening to the music for its own sake will find his enjoyment unimpaired. The pieces are played with enthusiasm, quite a measure of sensitivity, always with competence and seldom with less than skill.

If this sounds like a plug—it is. The concerts would be worth paying money for; as things are, they are free, and for anyone fond of music the evenings are too good to miss.

—Kevin Lees



VIVE LA DIFFERENCE—and quelle difference between these two gorgeous young females and their companions. But they're good entertainers all, and make up a group called Les Chansonniers. They'll be singing here on November 10 in the SUB theatre.

Humorist or novelist? Cameron confused in critical appraisal of Stephen Leacock

FACES OF LEACOCK, by Donald CAMERON. Ryerson, 176 pp., \$6.50.

There exists, as far as I know, no very cogent way of talking about purely funny writing.

Let the humorist be a humorist-plus, as Mark Twain and James Thurber in their various ways were, then all's well: the critic can analyze that "plus" to his heart's content.

Let the humorist be a distinctive stylist, like S. J. Perelman, then too the critic has something he can get his post-doctoral teeth into.

But the closer one comes to the purely comic, the less it seems possible to say. So Robert Benchley will probably remain a critically-neglected master to the end of time.

And our own Stephen Leacock, whom alas we can't afford to critically-neglect because we just don't have enough masterpieces to go around for all the Can. Lit. specialists, will probably suffer a worse fate: critics looking for some "plus" to talk about will fabricate large claims which don't stand up even to their own scrutiny, and then blame Leacock indignantly for their collapse.

Donald Cameron's book about Leacock is at least unpretentious. Yet how strangely beside the point it seems to split Leacock, as Cameron does, into Critic, Theorist, Essayist, Traveller, Satirist, Ironist, Novelist (complete with interrogation-mark, as we shall see) and A Man To Thank God For (the gushiness of which is

typical of Cameron's disarming naive side)!

Very neat; but who cares about Leacock as any of these?

The point about Leacock—not perhaps the only point, but so much the central point that if it be shirked any discussion of Leacock reduces itself to the trivial memorializing of a not particularly interesting or even likeable man—is that he was among those very few writers who make us laugh aloud.

How is this done? Mr. Cameron doesn't know, and apparently isn't interested in finding out. He'd rather hobnob with, in his own words, "the greatest phantom that stalks through discussions of Leacock's work . . . that of Leacock the stillborn novelist".

I wish this phantom would go off and stalk somewhere else. What sort of moral imperative is there that requires of a laugh-raiser that he turn to writing novels? There have been twenty good novelists to very good laugh-raiser. Leacock was on to a good thing, and presumably not much interested in writing the Great Canadian Novel. So what?

Sunshine Sketches and Arcadian Adventures aren't novels, but neither are they near-novels which the flawed genius of Leacock couldn't carry that last big step forward.

They're something entirely different—collections of *contes* skilfully held together by tone and a few thematic preoccupations—in discussing both of which Mr. Cameron tends to be heavy-handed—very much like, say, Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*.

Indeed, if Mr. Cameron would stop invoking Mark Twain for a moment he might come up with some other, more interesting parallels with Leacock's structural methods, small-scale and large. Chesterton is only one contemporary who comes to mind.

Leaving aside then Cameron's fondness for setting up fake critical "problems" which he can then urbanely pretend to solve, what of positive value does he offer us?

Mainly his book is a leisurely trot through a lot of Leacockiana

we shan't get around to reading for ourselves in all likelihood, from *The Hohenzollerns in America* (strange post-WWI anti-German satire) to *M. Discovery of the West* (with its sympathetic treatment of the Aberhart Social Credit movement).

As such it suffers slightly from Cameron's orthodox liberal responses (he doesn't think it's very nice to make fun of the German royal family; he's right, of course, but need we bring the ruler down across Leacock's knuckles this late in the day?), but in general is pleasant and occasionally perceptive.

—John Thompson

Funny girl, funny play

The Broadway musical comedy *Funny Girl* is coming to campus, under the auspices of the Civic Musical Theatre.

The comedy deals with the life and times of Fanny Brice, a show-girl who rose to stardom in the Ziegfeld Follies. It portrays the successes and heartbreaks which accompanied her meteoric rise to fame.

Susan Woywitka will play the lead role, backed by Rosalie Hancock as Fanny's mother and by Al Osten, who will play the part of the gambler to whom Fanny lost her heart. The play will be directed by Jack Unwin.

And of course there will be all the great Barbra Streisand songs: "People", "Who are you now?", and so on.

The show remains a comedy, however, and there will be a great many comedy numbers in the style that Fanny Brice made famous.

The play will be staged in the SUB theatre on November 14 through 18. Tickets are available at the Allied Arts Box Office in The Bay. Phone 433-4342 for reservations.

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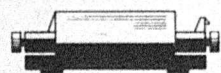
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