

# Paul Helmer

by Bill Pierce

The Playhouse last Wednesday night was the scene of a command performance by Paul Helmer, former resident musician at UNB. Mr. Helmer chose for his performance the familiar Impromptu (Opus 90, No. 1) by Schubert, the Wanderer Fantasy, also by Schubert and Moussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition".

The Impromptu is a "musician's work" enjoyed no doubt by amateur pianists to whom it was known. Mr. Helmer played with subtlety and restraint, perhaps even a little too slowly.

The Wanderer, as the artist explained, was a four part classic, variations on the song of the second part. The music rose and fell like emotions of the home seeking wayfarer. The artist showed much power, giving an impressive rendition of this most difficult work of romance.

"Pictures", an exacting thirty minute experience, was, on the whole, handled well by Mr. Helmer who perhaps lacks a little of the strength necessary for such an arduous task as this work has to be. It perhaps was hard too, for a classical pianist to shift to a modern Russian composition. Mr. Helmer changed one of two of the original "Promenades" throughout the musical pictures. These interludes were pleasant little melodies interspersed between

images very different in nature and therefore requiring many different types of skills. The variety, of course, provided much of the charm and interest of this great work. The professional program was in stark contrast to many of the piecemeal recitals commonly heard.

Mr. Helmer was given numerous encores and responded by playing Scarlotti's Sonata in E major and "Girl in the Flaxon Hair" by Debussy. He showed his Fredericton audience why he can fill the 3300 seats at Massey Hall in Toronto and why he is compared in professional circles to Glenn Gould.

The faculty of UNB were well represented, at the event. Student representation, however, was almost nil — a fact which shows UNB up poorly when compared to the jam-packed student recitals at Mt. A and Toronto.

A reception for Mr. Helmer was held at the creative Arts Centre, Memorial Hall, following the performance.

# China Night

China night was held on Thursday the 25th at Memorial Hall in conjunction with Festival of the Arts Week.

It opened with a display of Chinese paintings and Handicraft. Included were a Chinese translation of the Bible, an abacus, earrings shaped like fish with moveable tails and many other things curious to the western eyes. The paintings were interesting for their variety of style and technique, as well as for their beauty and subject matter.

The first three items on the cultural program were entitled "Harmonic", "Shadow Show", and the "Art of Chinese Cooking." A Chinese folk song followed and then an original composition played on the flute, telling the story of a Chinese Princess. A demonstration of Chinese painting, self defense, a fashion show and a film "Idyllic Island", completed the evenings entertainment.

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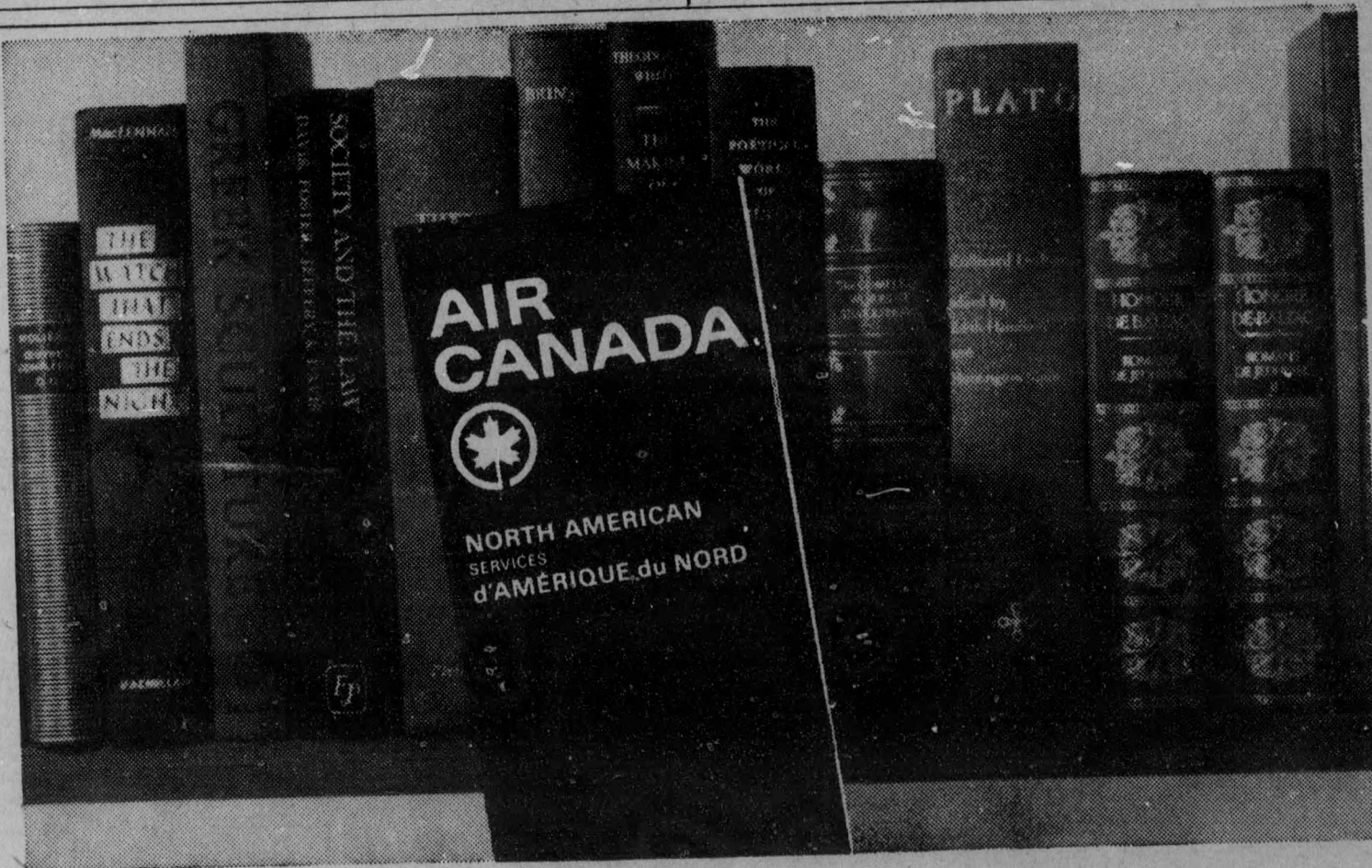
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