

ESO--the fab forte

Two Edmonton Symphony concerts have come and gone since the Arts section of the Gateway last appeared. The most recent—and most memorable—occurred last weekend, when the ESO performed a concert of Monteverdi, Debussy, Brahms, Beethoven and Mozart, with contralto Maureen Forrester as soloist.

It is not really very often that a reviewer finds that he has been left with very little to carp about, but such was the case last weekend. Not only was Monteverdi's *Ballo delle Ingrate* quite passably performed at the Sunday concert (though I have heard sinister rumours about the Saturday performance), but for the first time I can recall, a piece of major Mozart (the *Jupiter* symphony) was well enough played to be a popular success.

For Miss Forrester I have nothing but praise. Her voice is without doubt one of the finest contraltos in the world, and she handles it with great care and artistry. She sang the Brahms *Four Serious Songs* with such feeling that an Edmonton public not usually used to such weighty and deliberate music responded with what can only be called a crouching ovation (in which one third of the audience stands up, another third remains

sitting, and the rest are neurotically undecided).

Arthur Fiedler presided at the ESO's Christmas offering, and the result was successful but decidedly curious. The last number on the program was an arrangement (intermittently well and badly done) of popular Christmas carols. I have never heard the orchestra play as well as they did in that more-than-occasionally mediocre medley.

Furthermore, three encores were given (*Bury Me Down On The Lone Prairie*, *76 Trombones*, and *I Wanna Holjer Hand*), and were also played with a splendour that would have done the noisiest piece of Wagner proud. The roof practically fell in with the applause.

Since the orchestra has never played any selection from the ordinary concert repertory so vigorously or so well, and since the audience has never responded so vociferously to the aforementioned repertory, I harbor the ghastly suspicion that it would be more popular with all concerned were the ESO converted into a super-jazz-band.

LEST YE FORGET: the great Soviet cellist Mstislav Rostropovich will appear with the ESO on January 28 and 29.

—Bill Beard

Cohen's first novel a gamey favourite

THE FAVOURITE GAME by Leonard Cohen. Secker and Warburg, \$1.95.

The Favourite Game is an imaginative fairy tale of the childhood and young manhood of an artist. Lawrence Breavman, the main character of Cohen's first novel, bears too much similarity to the author to be distinct from him.

He comes from a well-heeled Jewish family residing in Montreal's fashionable Westmount area. His life's ambition is to be a writer and he despises the bourgeois values of the business family he has been born into.

Breavman's intellect is developed largely through the dialogues between himself and Krantz, his best friend from boyhood.

Breavman and Krantz do everything together, including starting a fight at a French dance hall and then sneaking off to enjoy the thrill. Much to Krantz's disgust, Breavman claims that he started it all by mass hypnosis.

Hypnotism takes hold of the young man's interest when he is a teen-ager. He imagines the great powers it can bring to him when he thinks he has hypnotized all the animals in the neighbourhood. He does manage to get a few vicarious thrills when he puts the Albertan maid of the house into a trance.

The women in the life of Breavman are important to him and to the development of the novel. First there is Lisa, the first girl he saw without her clothes. He remains mystically bound to her, and later in adult life she comes to him when her husband runs out.

Tamara he meets through his activities as a young revolutionary, a stage essential to all blooming intellectuals. The Bolshevism doesn't last but he keeps Tamara for a mistress through the three years of his university career. That affair ends when they can't stand the sight of each other any more.

It is during this time that Breavman loses Krantz and the dialogue is broken off. Krantz takes the opportunity to study abroad.

Breavman goes to New York to continue his studies at Columbia. Here he meets Shell and lives with her for a year. Shell is the only person besides Breavman whose character is really developed. She, too, is from an affluent family background which she rejects. Her marriage collapses and she leaves her husband. She is self-conscious about her small breasts, but that is what attracts Breavman.

During his affair with Shell Breavman begins to develop as a writer, and he is conscious that his efforts are being rewarded.

Breavman finally leaves Shell when he is invited to be a counselor at a summer camp. He hates rich kids' camps but goes anyway, knowing Krantz will be there.

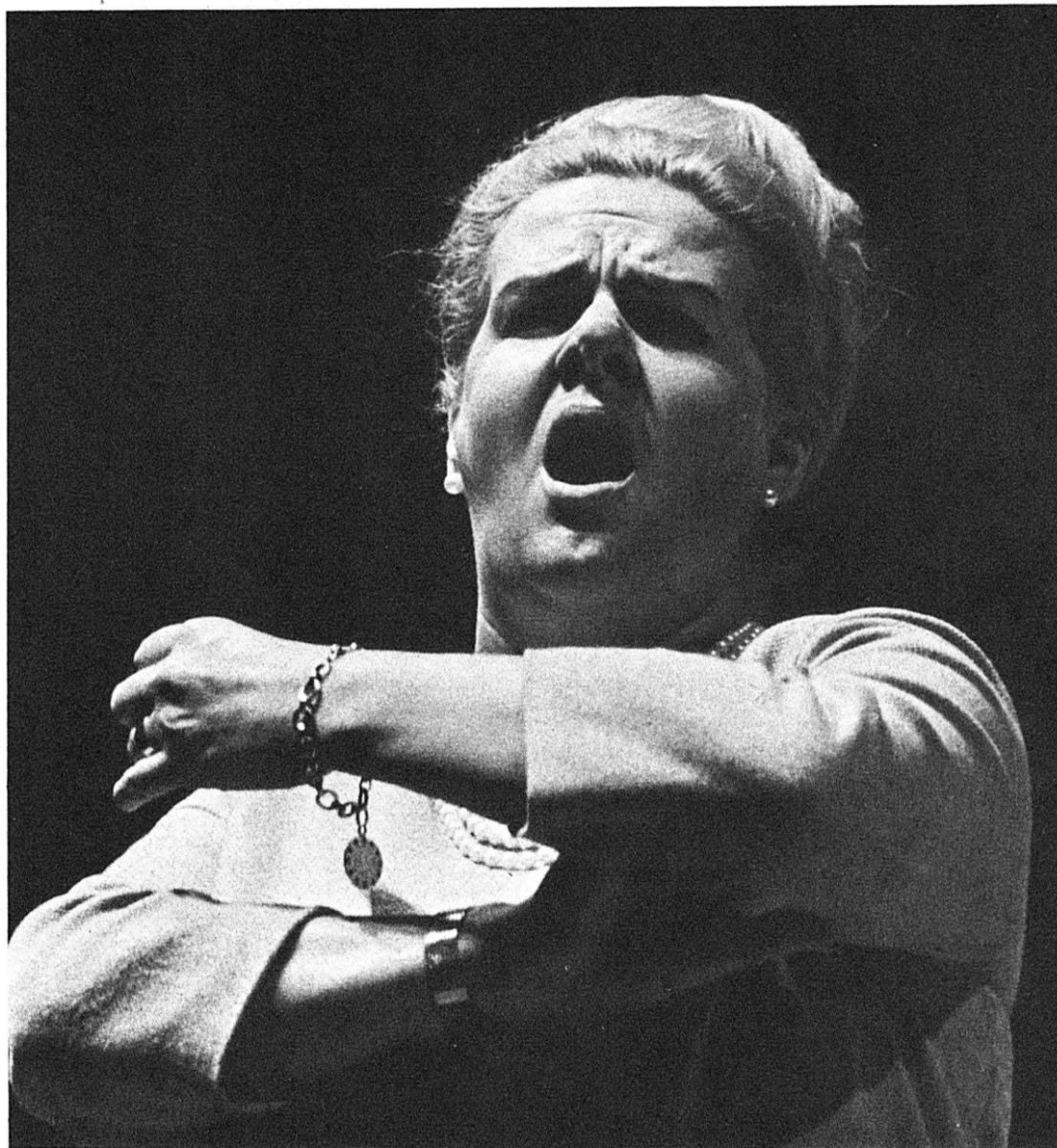
At this time he discovers that his mother has been admitted to an insane asylum. She has always tried to hang on to him and he hates her for it, although he is torn between his revulsion and his filial duty.

At the camp Breavman takes a special interest in Martin Stark, one of the campers. Martin is a strange idiot-genius of a child, and it is in Martin's insanity that Breavman sees a release from the mass insanity of the normal people around him.

There is a vague hope in Breavman's mind that the magic of the dialogue between himself and Krantz will be resumed, but the magic is gone and so is the childhood.

Compared to the later novel, *Beautiful Losers*, Cohen's *Favourite Game* is hardly a masterpiece. The variety of expression is not as rich in the earlier novel, and Cohen goes to considerable lengths to tie up loose ends which would be better left alone.

The Cohen who wrote *The Favourite Game* four years ago was an idealist. He was not the same man who created *Beautiful Losers* last year, but the first of his novels is well worth reading, for it shows the death of a boy and his rebirth as a man.



—Jim Griffin photo

GET OUTA MY HOUSE, GET OUT, GET OUT—Intones Canadian contralto Maureen Forrester. But she sang so sweetly that a packed Jubilee Auditorium crowd applauded instead. She sang Brahms, Beethoven, and Mozart in German and Italian. So who understands German and Italian?

Education Students!

Your Student Placement Office Has Information About:

Province-wide Coverage of Permanent

- TEACHING POSITIONS
- PRINCIPALSHIPS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIPS
- VOCATIONAL TEACHING POSITIONS
- BURSARIES AVAILABLE FROM VARIOUS SCHOOL BOARDS
- INTERNSHIPS

Summer Employment Opportunities

For Further Information Contact Your

CMC STUDENT PLACEMENT OFFICE

11149 - 91 Avenue

Phone 433-3737

DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION