

GATEWAY TO THE arts

Arts Calendar

SADIE HAWKIN'S DAY

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November 17

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Agriculture Building
February 30

SLEIGH PULLING FESTIVAL

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ST. LAMBERT, QUEBEC

Symphony Varies Concert Theme From Blacher To Brahms

by Elan Galper

The first piece of last Sunday's concert by the Edmonton Symphony Society was, for the second time in three years, Brahms's Variations on a Theme by Haydn. This was rather unexpected, since the program listed the opening work as Concertante Musik by the contemporary German composer Boris Blacher. But it seems as if the conductor decided not to risk playing this difficult modern work and fell back on old, trustworthy St. Anthony.

This very imaginative and masterly set of variations was well played, with the different variations delineated well by the skillful conductor, Otto Werner-Mueller.

The next work was Chopin's Concerto in E Minor for piano. The guest pianist, Robert Schrade, displayed an amazing tonal control and ease. His playing, especially in the ornamental details and the rubati, brought off quite nicely the Chopinesque perfume. However, the wisdom of presenting this rather non-symphonic work in a hall the size of the Jubilee Auditorium is questioned, since this is a concerto on a chamber music scale, and in a large auditorium, much of the effect and intimacy are lost, and the work becomes soporific. The

artist's pianissimos were barely heard in the main hall, let alone the second balcony. As his encore-piece, the pianist played a charmingly humorous piece by Debussy.

GOOD SKIN, BONES

The last work was Symphony No. 3 in C Minor, the fifth (despite the title and the program notes) and last symphony by Saint-Saëns. This gargantuan two-movement symphony, starkly new at the time of its first presentation in its employment of an organ and a piano (four hands) *obbligati*, is a work typical

of Late Romantic French writing. It is colorful, elegant and pleasant, has a brilliant skin, sturdy bones (French composers are always obsessed by a logical structure)—but no heart. It attempts to swamp the listener in a sea of sensuous delight—and no more. This work would have achieved a well-polished performance, had it not been for the sometimes imperfect playing of the trumpets.

As a whole, the concert was good, though, in spots, a bit boring; it left an impression that the young German conductor Werner-Mueller knows his job.

Film Society Treated To Better Hoffmann

By Bob Pounder

Achtung! Be it hereby known that Herr Kurt Hoffmann has produced a film of great style and humor, a comic satire encompassing life in Germany from World War I to the present, that more than compensates for the inadequacies of his "The Confessions of Felix Krull," which we saw last year at the Film Society. Entitled "Wir Wunderkinder,"

it was screened Monday evening for a large and receptive audience which went away well pleased. It is a picture slow in hitting its stride, but once there, it is full of all manner of fun and warm laughter perpetrated by a man who is not afraid to laugh at himself and at his nation. We chuckle right along, remembering (hopefully) that the horror which lies behind much of this humor should never be allowed to repeat itself.

The film examines mainly two characters, from their boyhood days at the start of World War I to the plentiful days of West Germany in the late 1950's. The major portion deals with the Germany of the Nazis. Hoffmann somehow produces hilarity out of this period along with a strong realization of its grimness.

LIBERAL USE OF IRONY

The hero is a young intellectual who refuses to be taken in by the ravings of the Austrian paperhanger. His protagonist is a crass opportunist concerned only for himself. Much irony is used here, as when, first by a liberal professor and then by some boorish SS men, the young man is urged to read an important work entitled *Mein Kampf*, for rather different reasons. And one almost Bergman-like touch occurs at the fadeout of a wedding supper scene upon the receipt of sad news, when the camera focuses on some burning candles, their wax dripping down like falling tears.

These are but two of many clever incidents which make the movie memorable. Present German prosperity is by no means spared; the opportunist is still flourishing (until he takes a rather rapid elevator ride), and the intellectual still has difficulties. Hoffmann gives us a definite warning at the close of "Wir Wunderkinder." He makes it clear that the picture was not made only to make it audiences laugh.



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