

Impeccable Paganini

If the musician as artist functions somehow as an antenna for the rest of the society, then the messages transmitted to the members of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra last Saturday evening were jammed by some sort of schizophrenic power-out. In the first half of the concert, the orchestra under the direction of guest conductor John Avison seemed limply determined to auditorily represent the prophetic words of T.S. Eliot and set out to prove that the music must indeed be played "not with a bang, but a whimper." Perhaps it was the dazzling fiddling of soloist Franco Gulli that "inspired" the orchestra to work harder, but in the second half the ESO returned with a much more energetic reading of their program. All of this combined to leave me shaking my head wondering if I had suffered some sort of memory lapse and had in fact wandered into two concerts and not just one.

Joseph Haydn got an undeservedly flaccid reading of his *Symphony No. 94 in G Major* from Avison and the ESO in the first half of the concert. Even though this symphony, titled by many as the *Surprise Symphony*, is an extremely familiar work, it stores within itself a good deal of musical intensity which deserves much more than the perfunctory treatment that the ESO gave it. Haydn the rascal, the man who would write a fortissimo crash for the full orchestra right in the middle of a slow, melodic passage just to wake up his audience, (the so-called "Surprise") was also Haydn the genius who wove an impressive amount of tension into the fabric of his piece, without which the "Surprise" would never have worked.

Granted, the piece is now so familiar now that today's "sophisticated" audience would not admit to being surprised by the passage. But the question must be raised as to whether that is in fact because of the familiarity of the piece or because of its unconvincing treatment by smug orchestras and conductors? If musicians

are to remain true to the vitality of a piece of music, then they must play it as if it is to be heard for the first time over. That requires a sparkle and passion which Avison was unable to generate out of the musical resources that were available. Even the strings which in past concerts have been the bastion of clarity for the orchestra, were impelled to play their stands by Avison's conception of the piece.

Until the last two movements of the Dvorak's *Czech Suite in D Major, Op. 39* the ESO was still unable to breathe any life into its performance. However, with the remarkably well-played solo passages of flautist Harlan

and his speed and clarity of fingering was impeccable.

In the opening movement, I took exception to the tonal quality of his playing, finding it thin and lacking in the robust, passionate temperament that seems to be required. But as the piece progressed, Gulli moved more towards that texture. His control of the special techniques of the violin - the harmonics, the jete bowings, the left hand pizzicatos - was no less than dazzling. Audience and musicians alike were impressed by the virtuosity displayed by Gulli, as evidenced by the plentitude of curtain calls which he received.

With the performance of Canadian composer John



Green and English hornist Terri Hart in the movement marked *Romanza*, the orchestra began to pick up some momentum. In the final movement marked *Finale; Presto*, this energy came to fruition in some formidably played full orchestra passages.

In listening to a violinist play a Paganini concerto, one cannot help but be amazed by the incredible demands placed upon the soloist by the composer, as well as disconcerted by the sparse orchestral accompaniment which is utterly inconsistent with the solo passages which it surrounds. But, Paganini was a master of the violin and ruthlessly used the orchestra as a means by which he could display his own pyrotechniques. Franco Gulli, the evening's soloist, did diabolical justice to Paganini's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 2 in B Minor, Op. 7*. His control of the instrument was superb,

Beckwith's *Music for Dancing* an important question comes to mind. With the prospect of a unfamiliar contemporary piece being played, an all too large contingent of the audience got up and left the concert before even giving the piece a chance of a hearing. Thanks to the momentum of the preceding piece, and because of Avison's intimacy with Canadian music, the Beckwith got a very grateful reading from the ESO. Even though the piece may never reach classic stature (postenty decides that anyway) it is very much worth listening to and deserves not to be walked out on. Are symphony goers merely more sophisticated muzak consumers, or are they really interested in some measure of musical edification? If the latter is the case, then they must realize that ages past have no monopoly upon the composition of worthwhile music.

allan bell

Writers competition

Two new awards intended to recognize the work of published Alberta authors have been announced by Alberta's Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

The awards, of \$650 and \$1,000 will go to authors of works of regional history and general non-fiction published in 1973 and will be known as the 'Alberta Regional History Award' and the 'Alberta Non-Fiction Award'.

Commenting on the new awards, John Patrick Gillese, head of creative writing for the

Department, said that they will encourage literacy excellence in the writing of regional history and give recognition to Alberta's advanced writers.

Anyone, or any group, may submit a published work for consideration under the award scheme, not later than December 31, 1973.

Full details of the awards and eligibility for them can be obtained from John Patrick Gillese, Creative Writing, Alberta Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, 11th Floor, CN Tower, Edmonton, 'phone: 429-7957.

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ORACLES

theatre lives

4 pieces sur jardin by Barillet and Gredy and directed by Reginald Bigras will be Le Theatre Francais d'Edmonton's second production of the season. Novembre 30 et decembre 1,2,7,8, et 9. Curtain at 8:30. Reservations at the door or phone 467-3626. \$1.25 for students. En francais so here's your chance to polish up with the real thing.

I Do! I Do! by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt is the next production scheduled at the Citadel. This production featuring Roma Hearn and Doug Chamberlain will be directed by Jon Neville. Choreography will be by Danny Sirretta. This show opens on December 1 but it is possible to take in a preview at cheaper prices on eith November 29 or 30. Tickets are \$1.50 for students and \$2.00 for adults. Cast will remain after the performance to discuss the play and production for those who are interested in talking to the actors about the play.

Godspell

, directed by Mark Schoenberg will be Studio Theatre's second production in its Stage 74 series. Opens on December 7. See article in this issue for more information.

the eyes have it

Latitude 53 will be exhibiting drawings by Diane Whitehouse and watercolours by Robert Sinclair November 22 - December 5. Hours: Noon till 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, Tuesday evening 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Upstairs at 10048 - 101 A Avenue. The Edmonton art gallery has two interesting exhibits on view:

In the 1740's, the Venetian architect, Giovanni Battista Piranesi had settled in Rome and began his famous series, the VEDUTE di ROMA, view of Rome. He continued to work on these etchings - 135 in all - until his death in 1778. The Vedute are not accurate, architectural reportage, but dramatically exaggerated and intensified visions of antique and Baroque Rome. Even after more than a century of photography, Piranesi's etchings are an unforgettable image of the grandeur of the Eternal City, an image which has haunted the imagination since the 18th century. Til November 29.

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts closed its doors this April for a two year renovation and expansion program. During these two years, some of the Museum's most important European works of art have been lent to the National Gallery of Canada for circulation across the country. This exhibition consists of 19th and 20th century paintings, primarily by French artists. Among the best known of the paintings are, Henri Matisse's WOMAN AT A WINDOW, a 1945 still life by Pablo Picasso, and Paul Cezanne's ROAD IN PROVENCE. The exhibition offers a fairly comprehensive view of major developments in painting between the 1850's and the 1940's. The exhibition is supplemented by works of the period from the Stern, MacAulay, Poole and Scrymgeour collections. Till December 8.

Recent ceramics by potter Noboru Kubo will be exhibited and on sale at the SUB gallery November 28 - December 6. A fourth generation potter, Noboru Kubo was born in Kyoto, Japan and has been working professionally since 1963. He has exhibited in Japan, the U.S.A. and in Canada. He instructed the Edmonton Potters' Guild for two years and is currently entering his third year as an instructor at the Students' Union Arts and Crafts Centre. Show opens on November 28th 1973, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Refreshments.

easy on the ears

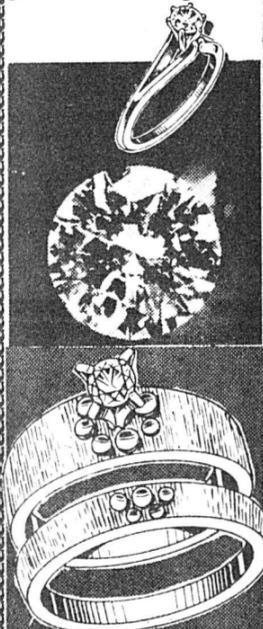
The Edmonton Chamber Music Society will be presenting the Duo Perret-de Zayas in a concert of Renaissance music for lutes and voice November 28 at 8:30 p.m. in Con Hall. Admission by season membership in the Chamber Music Society. Season tickets at Fine Arts 3-82 or at the door before the concert. Special rates of \$5 for the season for full-time students.

The Department of Music is presenting a chamber music recital by students of the department Sunday, December 2 at 8:00 p.m. in Con Hall. The concert is free. Here's your chance to hear some very talented musicians display their art. Go and hear them. They deserve your support and you can only do yourself some good.

The Western Studies Colloquium is keeping its hand in the musical scene through the courtesy of the Edmonton Folk Club. It will be presenting an evening of Folk Music of the West at 8 p.m. on Wednesday December 11. Admission is free. You've got to hand it to the Folk Club, they really keep things happening in town. Concert is at Tory 14-14.

Tonite there will be an Edmonton Folk Club workshop on Ballads, traditional and contemporary. All live music. Starts at 8 p.m. at Garneau Church Hall, 84th Ave. and 112 Street. No admission charge, though donations are appreciated (and needed). Folk Club again, like I said, they're busy people.

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