

audience greystoned at concert

So after the goat had eaten the reel of film and found it (like much modern art) indigestible even by a goat, his friend (not a film-lover) asked how it tasted. The goat moaned a little, and replied, "It was fine, but I liked the book better."

What this has to do with the Greystone Singers is that one felt one had tasted their program before, and that perhaps it was a little better the first time.

This is not to say that the concert was not good, for it was.

But when a concert of this type is presented, it must be judged by higher standards than would be applied to a more modest amateur choral group.

The Greystone Singers are sixty-five students from the University of Saskatchewan dedicated to the study and presentation of fine choral music, music difficult both to present and (for the average audience) to comprehend.

While they by and large achieve their goal, one wonders if at times they don't overreach themselves.

Friday's program was broken into four parts, representing four periods of musical composition, from music of the early 16th century to modern folk song.

The program began with a Cantata Domino by Hassler, an Ave Verum Corpus by Byrd, and an Ascendat Deus by Gallus. These were without exception admirably done. The control was striking, the clarity and finish excellent.

The voices (especially the basses) showed fine training.

So far so good. Had the concert ended at this point, I would have had to admit they were among the most promising choirs I had heard. However . . .

The second segment of the program consisted of Bach's "Jesu Mein Freude".

This is a long work, a demanding work, that strained the choir's voices (especially the sopranos) and lost much of the audience.

Still I would defend the performance, if only because I can only admire any group that attempts such a work. The attempt itself indicates a certain level of musical comprehension. And much of the performance was successful enough to be delightful.

An Alleluia by Thompson started the third part of the program. Being a more subdued but marvellously beautiful piece, requiring a smooth blend and a gentle approach it was performed excellently.

Milhaud's "Cantata de la Paix" was next; and, like the Bach, it was somewhat beyond the voice capacity of this group.

It is another longer work, and toward the end, as before, the voices became strained and control was lost.

But again this should not be emphasized, for on the whole one had to admire the musical understanding and interpretation. What a treat to see a group not afraid to tackle choral works requiring real musicianship!

Vinea Nea Electra, by Buleau, completed the third segment of the program. It was one piece where the choir was obviously tired; all clarity was lost.

The evening ended with three negro spirituals. This was a pity.

It is really too bad that in this part of the world a crowd-pleaser always has to be included in the program.

Having a classical chorus sing negro spiritual is like having a chamber orchestra doing the blues. A slick product may result, but it isn't the blues. And certainly what we heard Friday night weren't spirituals; instead we got pop-classical cliches based on spirituals.

The U of A's own chorus combined with the Saskatchewan group to end the program in the traditional manner with the Alberta Cheer and the Saskatchewan Hymn. Somehow it would seem more appropriate the other way around.

—N. Riebeck

new plays old plays and replays

This weekend the Yardbird Suite presents a short—and by all accounts delightful—play by John Orrell of the English department, entitled "The Escape". Directed by (yup!) Bud D'Amur, it features Vic Bristow and Robbie Newton.

On the same program Friday through Sunday night (Dr. Orrell's play runs from Wednesday through Sunday) will appear a drama group from Ross Sheppard High School presenting William Saroyan's "Hello Out There".

Seems these students have had to do things pretty much on their own. Ross Shep has no drama teacher, wouldn't let the students even use it rooms. So they asked to work at the Yardbird.

That's 9:30 p.m., at the corner of 102 St. and 81 Ave.

And while the subject of Theatre is in the air, those who missed the All Saint's Friendship Guild's stunning presentation of Robert Bolt's "A Man for All Seasons" (director Jack McCreath) have another chance. It's being put on in Victoria Composite Auditorium at 8:15 p.m. March 25 and 26.

an apple before the cart-horse

Isabelle Foord's "The Apple Cart", at the Yardbird Suite last weekend, is a good little effort. Little, indeed, but enjoyable.

As one person said after the performance, "It works". Another comment was, "It was effective".

The really important thing about it, in spite of an obvious lack of experience and a tendency of the actors to take themselves too seriously, is that it was done.

The tired Mr. D'Amur did it,

using Lynne Close, Lee Rideout, Isabelle Foord, Marcia Reed and George Duthie.

Isabelle Foord has some good ideas about the treatment of the cliché existentialist angst about knowledge without experience. She has potential. One hopes she continues to remember that the absurd works even on existential old-fashionedism.

It's a bad sign for the Suite's future potential, though, that Mr. D'Amur is its only experienced director, manager, promoter and general doer.

It's too much for one man.

But as long as the butt-ends of snobism continue to smoulder in the ashtray of Edmonton theatre—that-used-to-be, the Yardbird will continue to struggle with potentially good drama as counterpoint to ineffectively perfect Citadel and Studio Theatre drama.

—Pee-wee Pornostrophe

brand new music for a thursday

Students of creative music will hold a special composition lab Thursday, during which they will perform for the public.

Students will play their original compositions at an informal open session from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in arts 311.

This is a new program for U of A, and the promoter, Prof. Violet Archer of the the department of music, hopes to make the student production an annual affair.

The compositions are some of those created by students in Prof. Archer's music 360 and 460 classes.

Prof. Archer says students are invited to attend the performances and discuss the art of music composition in an informal way with the music students.

The seven student composers who will present their efforts for public judgment are:

- Rhoda Lilje
- Ann Mazur
- Reinhard Berg
- Jim Whittle
- Mrs. G. Ritter
- Gerald Inman
- John Lewis

Students' performance will be assisted by Prof. Claude Tenneson of the music department.

assessing our fetal position

Who says we have ballet? Who? A few staunch aesthetes who believe in the beauty of the dance (a word much confused by many folk). Dance here in Edmonton has become synonymous with a long string of adjectives: gogo-Arthur Murray-folk.

But just plain dance does exist. I know. It's sometimes hard to see the real goods for the wrapping.

Take for instance Ruth Carse's Christmas gift to Edmonton—a bunch of costumed kiddies all prettily wrapped up in the Annual Box Concert.

And a few weeks ago we caught the fleeting shadow of dance in the op-art gyrations presented by the Princess in the Chamber Symphony's "Histoire du Soldat".

But let me say again that we do have plain dance. I most definitely haven't made a faux pas. But the fact that I have to emphasize this is an indication of the impression that our Edmonton Ballet Company has made.

Hold the hollering, you aesthetes! I acknowledge the fact that money, good choreographers and through lack of (primarily) good schools (the schools that are here now have the crust to sandwich ballet between baton and acrobatics in their Yellow Page ads), the EBC has not had a toe-tapping time of it.

But our other art forms have had to fight against the "barren wasteland of the northland" label too, and have surprised people by developing in the cases of art and drama to the conception and embryonic stages respectively, and in the cases of music (or at least of the Edmonton Symphony), having presented itself to the world with a loud wail.

For two pedestals I would say that the Edmonton Ballet Company is going places. At least the company is doing so literally by dancing round small towns here in Alberta to show that square dancing is not the only form.

Also, the company is providing a fine footing for the professional operas that are put on here in Edmonton.

—Marcia Reed

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Letters of application should be forwarded immediately to:

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Mackenzie District, N.W.T.
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