

# Pungency lacking in a conservative performance

by J. C. LaDalia

Friday night's Edmonton Symphony Orchestra concert was not one of their best. The absurdly conservative nature of the program almost kept me from showing up. Perhaps fagged out from *Salome*, the orchestra didn't have time to master anything too ambitious. As well, since a smaller orchestra was needed for the Haydn concerto Maestro Hetu may have decided to dispense with extra players entirely. That makes perfect sense, but there are many modern works which require great pungency and excitement for chamber orchestra by Stravinsky, Milhaud, Frank Martin. As it turned out the most modern work performed was written in 1816!

Mozart's Symphony no. 36, K.425 (nicknamed "Linz") began crisply and remained so. While not as profound as the last two of Mozart's symphonies, it nevertheless contains more weight and nobility than most have showed us. The first movement sounded more like an overture than the start of a symphony, as it was taken lightly and at a good clip. The tympani's important passages were hollow and thumpy rather than stirring. The beautiful, thoughtful Adagio appeared pleasant but not very interesting, and the brass and wind imperfections tended to blare. The last movement was faster than the strings could comfortably

negotiate, so lines were frequently blurred. The final pages did convey a certain excitement but it was, overall, a disappointing reading. The minuet was excellent, however, possessing that pronounced lilt which Hetu admirably insists upon in such dance movements, and the winds were quite good.

Those Haydn and Mozart symphonies which are not universally accepted as serious or tragic (such as the 36th) are often played in a determinedly sprightly, "this is just good fun isn't it?" manner. One must turn to older European conductors (such as Otto Klemperer and Karl Bohm) for readings that achieve the proper balance of gravity and merriment, thus revealing the greatness of the music.

The Haydn D major Cello Concerto followed, with Pierre Fournier, the French cellist, as soloist. Now 70, Fournier used a cane to mount the platform, but his playing, while not as suave and perfect as in the past, was passionately alive. The whole performance was splendid and the breadth of the work more clearly conveyed than in the Mozart or the Schubert which followed. Fournier's cadenzas had a surprising spontaneity, and in the middle movement orchestra and guest played with singing intensity. This concert can easily sound as pretty but uninspiring as Grandmama's music box, yet Hetu and Fournier manifested a passionate conviction which was both engaging and moving. It was much more satisfying than Fournier's attractive but placid recording. An occasional missed

or blurred note was easily overlooked because of the insight which Fournier brought to bear on the work as a whole.

The Schubert 5th Symphony began promisingly with light but clear articulation and quick tempi. The brass and winds were not always in evidence, however, and this proved to be the main problem of the performance. Strings were too dominant and, while they played well, the symphony's robust quality never came to the fore. The second movement might have been allowed more time to flow, but Hetu tended to rein it in. The scherzo lacked the proper balance of timbre, and the trio was not differentiated sufficiently, so that the scherzo repeat seemed just more of the same. The last movement, taken rather quickly, sounded over-serious rather than genial.

**Recordings.** Fine readings of the Mozart 36th (both backed by the 39th) are given by Karl Bohm and the Berlin Philharmonic (DGG) and Klemperer with the Philharmonia (Angel). The Haydn concerto is played well if a bit unexceptionally by Fournier, along with the Haydn C major Concerto (DGG). A more exciting reading is given by Starker, who includes the Boccherini B-flat concerto, superbly accompanied by Giuliani and the Philharmonia (Angel).

Schubert's Fifth is beautifully played by Bohm and the Berlin Phil, with an equally good "Unfinished" Symphony (DGG).

# Random transformations and...

by Dave Samuel

*Ching Kanada* by Dave Godfrey, (Mussosbook Co.) \$5.95 paperback.

*Ching Kanada* grows on you, organically, like a sprout of the lower bowel. It is an adaptation of the Chinese original, transformed to fit the Canadian culture with archetypal "crofter myth." As *Ching Kanada* is not a book of poems but rather a guide to living, the usual critical techniques do not apply. It demands application to the real world. As Godfrey says, the book "is nothing until your own experience is added to it, nothing except the shape of possibility and probability."

One casts the yarrow stalks, or good Canadian wheat straws, and discovers the particular hexagram which contains appropriate advice. Lacking yarrow stalks I have fallen upon the expedient of letting the book fall open at random, letting fate guide the reader's eye where it will.

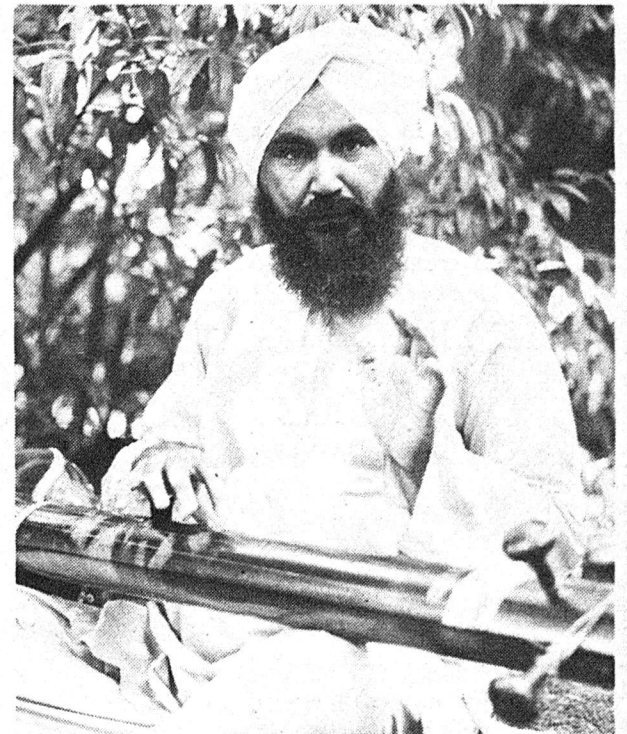
Fate chooses "CHI CHI, after completion." The enlightens on "remain quiet after the success; hit the brakes. A fox with a wet tail does not jump back into the stream." "Remain quiet after the success," good advice, additional modesty, but why "hit the brakes." Wouldn't it create noise? Why stop further progress? Presumably to prevent oneself from becoming too successful, too fast, a common problem. But what about the "fox with a wet tail?" Do foxes with wet tails run the water, or is it cats or some other animal of which Godfrey is thinking? What is the relationship of foxes and water to success? Perhaps the writer means

to suggest that one should not immerse oneself in the rat-race too readily, the cold, nasty, competitive battle for success. But is having a wet tail really an experience equivalent to success?

Ahah! The real problem here is that no experience has been "added" to the text. This is a mere attempt to make sense of the printed word on the page. Now I have few recollections of wet foxes, none with foxes with wet tails, and small experience with success. Perhaps it is not my experience which should be meshing with the hexagram, but someone else's, someone with a more fortuitous cosmic synchronization. But all is not lost, I sense the presence of an alien aura...I relax, fingers resting on the typewriter keys, electric vibrations phasing fully with pulsing neurons...I am drunk careening wildly down the road after the election rally, with even drunker secretary pawing amorously. A back road, tree limbs caught in the corner of the headlights, muddy ruts, bridge abutment, a fox transfixed in the light wet, shivering, surely he will jump aside. He stands as if frozen, will not contemplate jumping in the stream. I swerve sharply...Karma unheeded, brakes untouched. Prosperity lost, much fact lost. Honour of good man trailed in mud. Presidential hopes crushed like bean shoots stamped under foot.

This is the real thing! A new psychic influence, more of Godfrey's text: "Six in the fourth. The finest clothes turn to rags, even if bought in Yorkville. Use them to plug the leaks in the floorboards. Danger."


Lapsing into synch again. Not floorboards but boat bottom. Not a stream but the Rideau canal. Not a secretary but Justin's governess...*somebody's got to warn the...*



Balbir Singh Bhangu, an East Indian vocalist will perform on the U of A campus Friday, March 8. Mr. Bhangu sings Indian Classical music, folk music from the Punjab, Ghazals or light classical music as well as devotional pieces of various sorts.

Sponsored by the Dept. of Religious Studies, Mr. Bhangu will be performing Friday, Feb. 11, in CAB 289 at 2:30 p.m. On the evening of Feb. 11 he will also be giving a concert, with accompaniment, at the Unitarian Church (12530-110 Ave.) at 8 p.m.

**TEILHARD DE CHARDIN'S PHENOMENON OF MAN**



**2 Day seminar**  
**Mar 4/5**  
 Illustrated in-depth lectures with well-known Unity Minister David McClure  
 Twenty-five dollars (Incl. lunch).  
 Phone 455-7883 / 435-0442 for registration form.  
 7:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

**NEW THOUGHT CENTER**  
 12530 110 Ave.

**STUDENTS' UNION**  
 UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**HOUSING REGISTRY DIRECTOR**

**Wanted**

**Duties** - To co-ordinate, manage and publicize the Students' Union Housing Registry.  
**Salary** - Part-time for April and May. \$750/month for June, July, August and September.  
**Qualifications** - Experience in administration and public relations preferred.  
 For more information contact Eileen Gillese, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, Room 259 SUB. Phone 432-4236.

*Applications available from Receptionist, General Office, Room 256, Students' Union Building.*

*Deadline Wed. Feb. 23 Noon*

**STUDENTS' UNION**  
 UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER**

**Wanted**

**Duties** - Responsible for the organization and operation of all Students' Union Elections and referenda.  
**Salary** - Approximately \$5.00/hour to a maximum of \$1,000 per year.  
**Qualifications** - Ability to organize and co-ordinate people and materials. Must be available on a part-time basis throughout the year, especially January and February.  
 For more information contact Eileen Gillese, Vice-President, Finance and Administration, Room 259 SUB. Phone 432-4236.

*Applications available from Receptionist, General Office, Room 256, Students' Union Building.*

*Deadline Wed. Feb. 23 Noon*