## Guest conductor delights audience

by C. McLean

One could actually catch musicians smiling. The obvious vitality of the orchestra at the Atlantic Symphony's first concert of the new year surprized regular symphony-goers.

The refreshing rapport between the conductor and both musicians and audience was a tribute to guest, losif Conta. Artistic director and chief conductor of Rumania's Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra, he proved himself worthy of the reputation he has earned as an exceptional talent. Not only his ability but his enthusiasm placed him in good stead with Monday night's audience.

A playful exploration of the string section in four movements opened the programme. Benjamin Britten's "Simple Symphony for Strings" was a luring introduction to what was a well-balanced selection of



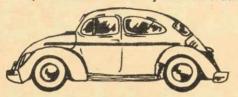
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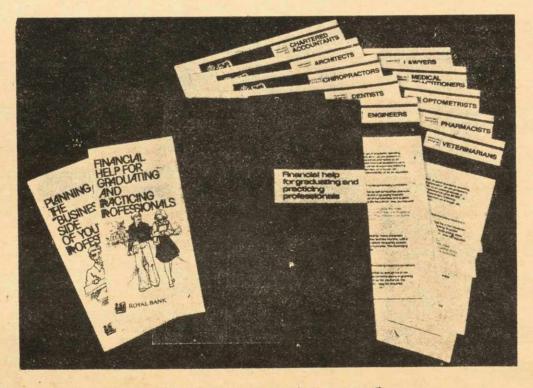
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By far the greatest delight of the evening was Georges Enesco's "Rumanian Rhapsody". The struggle through extreme driving condit-

ions was well worth the bother for this segment of the concert alone. The sustained richness and exuberance of the work was met with numerous rounds of applause. The ASO's inclusion of the rhapsody in the programme was a welcome deviation from their responsible aesthetic concern. Such 'entertainment' was obviously appreciated by those attending.

A power rarely achieved by Brahms was enjoyed the performance of his "Symphony No. 4 in E minor". Marked by intensity and variety of expression, the first and third movements were most enjoyable.

Conta, alone or with his orchestra, travels to the music centres of the world as well as major centres of North America. His concert with ASO was one of several debut performances he is making in Canada. Halifax, graced by his visit, is looking forward to his talent setting the trend for this year's



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