

Goldie-oldies scheduled for 69-70 Symphony Season

Another symphony season is underway and we are again bombarded with assurances that the Edmonton Symphony is the keystone of culture, "the third best" in Canada and improving fast, is exciting, vibrant, and new.

Edmonton is Athens on the North Saskatchewan and the cultural renaissance is just around the corner. The Citadel Theatre is pre-

senting the best professional community theatre in the country and Opera has never been better; but at the centre of this great intellectual re-birth is the three-part program of the Edmonton Symphony.

As far as I'm concerned this is so much hogwash. The management of the ESO should take to selling snake oil. This year's program is unbalanced and unimag-

inative.

The soloists in this year's subscription and mid-week series are what the rock jockeys would call oldies but goodies. I'd call them just old.

I mean we've seen that great technician Ruggiero Ricci twice before, and both times he has insulted the audience with less than adequate performances. I suspect the ESO has a belief that its audience comes to hear a name. Frankly, I go to hear the music.

This year we will also be treated to the return of Katharina Wolpe. Last year Miss Wolpe was called in at the last minute and played Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 on short notice. It was an uninspiring performance, but we can not be too harsh because of the short rehearsal time for both the performer and the symphony.

But even so, Miss Wolpe just played the notes. Her performance was sterile, not to say frigid. She picked up few vibrations from Edmonton's great orchestra. There was no magic.

This year she is playing Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, and something better happen.

The return of Mstislav Rostropovich is perhaps one thing worth waiting for this season. He is a great and serious artist, unlike some others we will see. He plays as well in New York as he plays in the sticks. Set time aside for the concerts February 14-15.

And Marek Jablonski is back for the triumphant return to the old home stand. Admittedly it was about time, for this major cultural

event happens every two years. Jablonski is as regular as the predictions we get from Rocky Mountain House of a "bad winter". He is also a good musician and worth hearing. But there are other good musicians worth hearing in this province.

What about the young Calgary girl who won the Bach Prize in Washington last weekend over an international field with the extremely high score of 99? Surely the powers that be knew of this girl's talent before she went south for the official seal of acceptance. It is not that I dislike Jablonski—he is good—but I wonder about the buried musical talent in this province. Perhaps the University Symphony will have the guts to bring her in, and others like her.

And in the mid-week series we have much the same thing, Edward Lincoln and Robert Stangland will repeat Poulenc's Concerto for two pianos, we will hear the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" again, and we will get an overdose of J. Strauss again.

But the final insult to the audience is the return of Arthur Fiedler, the much-lauded conductor of the Boston "Pops". I should say a few words about the "Pops", and clear up the misconceptions about the source of its excellence. Fiedler's orchestra draws its members from the heavily drilled Boston Symphony, and the two orchestras have their programs so arranged that rehearsal schedules and performances never conflict. The old man with the white hair has ridden the musical coat-tails of Eric Lindorff for years. Playing the Beatles with a 75-piece orchestra is not

great symphony or great anything. If the ESO is serious about music they'll drop him in favor of someone worthwhile, say Colin Davis or Carlo Maria Giulini. There's a place for him in Edmonton even if he does leave the ESO program, he could lead the orchestra as the central attraction at the Klondike Days grandstand. After all he's a "money-maker" as the management will tell you.

I am also worried about the direction of the musical taste of the ESO. We are seriously over-burdened with Romantic and post-Romantic music. There is only nodding recognition of Mozart in the mid-week series. And it seems that we're doomed to life with the composers of the great noisy period from 1800-1900.

We have Strauss, Debussy, Berlioz, Dvorak, Rimsky-Korsakov, Elgar and Bruch running out our ears. How many times have we heard the Bolero?

Perhaps the orchestra believes you play louder when you're only 28th best. Admittedly the orchestra lacks precision, but the only way to build it is to play some works which really require it—namely Mozart. Haydn and composers from the late Baroque and Rococo periods. They are as lost to the modern ear as composers from our own period. To play a program of the old and the new is an experiment worthy of the symphony.

What they give us now is what they think is worthy of the audience. And if you accept their estimate you are not a very worthy audience.

—Brian Campbell

What's new this time?

Citadel Theatre presents the horrors of being a handsome, successful bachelor who has a beautiful teenager hot for his bed. Terence Frisby's mad sex-comedy, *There's a Girl in My Soup*, began Wednesday and continues all this month; at 8:30 p.m. You can get in on the special student performances on Saturday afternoons for \$1.

SATURDAY and SUNDAY: The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra begins its subscription series with selections from Strauss' *Don Juan*, Debussy's *La Mer*, and Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6 (Pathétique)*.

MONDAY: SUB Art Gallery begins the second in its series of one man shows: *An Exhibition of Paintings by Virgil Hammock*. Hammock is art critic to the Edmonton Journal and a faculty member of the Art Department. *The Centennial Suite*, a collection of graphic work by B.C. artists will be shown concurrently. The Suite was commissioned by the Simon Fraser University Center for Communication, and includes work by Ian Baxter and Michael Morris. Tonight the official opening is from 8 to 10 p.m.

WEDNESDAY: Noon Hour Films presents the widely acclaimed National Film Board production, *YUL 871*. At the noon hour, needless to say, and its all FREE at SUB Theatre.

The Department of Extension begins the first of eight presentations of experimental and art films by well-known independent directors such as Andy Warhol, Kenneth Anger, Godart, Renais, et al. Called *Critical Seminars in Film*, the series includes *Night and Fog*, *Peyote Queen*, *Scorpio Rising*, *La Chinoise*, and *Chafed Elbows*. Showing will be open to holders of memberships only, and will be followed by critical discussions of each presentation as art.

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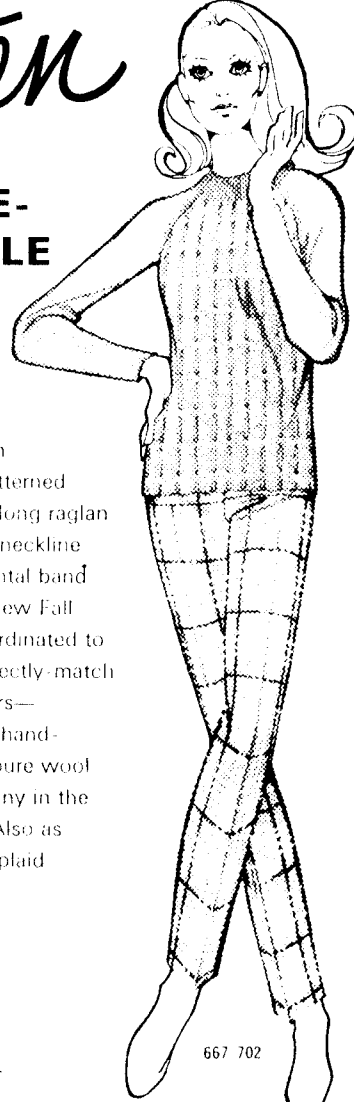
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