

Oct. 22, 80 Variety

A Certified Goodun' at U of T

By Paul Schabas

Judging by the make-up of the audience in the MacMillan Theatre Saturday night one would never have guessed that a University event was taking place. Why? Because there were so few students in the audience. One wonders whether non-Conservatory students on campus know that there is a U of T Symphony made up of students in the Faculty of Music. If not, it is a pity, because the orchestra, under the direction of Victor Feldbrill, gave a fine concert Saturday evening.

The program opened with a work by Lothar Klein, a Canadian composer, entitled *Prelude, Madrigal and Fantastic Spirits*. This charming work was inspired by Elizabethan music and poetry, and is based on sixteenth-century melodies. The orchestra conveyed quite well the bright spirit of the chamber-like

music. In the second movement, *Madrigal*, the interweaving of solo lines was particularly interesting. The third movement, *Fantastic Spirits*, is, according to the composer, "intended to portray the fantastic humour and hi-jinx of 16th century English music", and the orchestra was very successful in bringing out the delicate and humorous character of the music. After all, how often does one hear a drum solo at a classical music concert?

The major work on the program was Beethoven's *Violin Concerto*, which featured Paul Thompson as soloist. A fourth-year student in the Faculty of Music, Thompson gave an admirable performance of a very challenging work. Although some intonation and technical problems were occasionally apparent in the solo line, this did not detract from the overall performance. Thompson played with a large, full sound, and

made some beautiful contrasts in dynamics and tone colour. Particularly well done was the long, expressive solo at the end of the second movement. The cheerful, rustic character of the final movement was brought out well, giving the work a rousing conclusion. The orchestra, on the whole, provided a well-balanced accompaniment, although there were several places where the sound became rather muddled, and there were some very ragged woodwind attacks. Special mention should be made, however, of the tasteful bassoon solos in the second and third movements.

The second half of the concert consisted of Borodin's *Symphony No. 2*. A chemist by profession, Borodin composed on his holidays and during periods of illness, which, as the program notes state, were "fortunately" frequent. The *Symphony* allowed the orchestra to shine

in numerous ways. The first movement, with its "barbaric" theme, allowed the orchestra to play with a loud, impressive sound, while the second movement, light, and very Russian in flavour, displayed some very good ensemble work. In the song-like third movement, beautiful horn and clarinet solos were heard. Feldbrill brought the entire orchestra to life again in the festive final movement, which provided a bright conclusion to the concert.

Although the U of T Symphony doesn't perform again until January, there is another orchestra on campus which will be giving concerts very frequently in the Concert Hall at the Royal Conservatory on Bloor St. The chamber orchestra of the Orchestral Training Program opens their series Friday night under the British conductor and author Lawrence Leonard.