

For a change, a classics-only performance

By PADDY PATTON
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

The Pittsburgh Chamber Orchestra, as conducted by Szymon Goldberg, apparently does not know that every respectable concert should include at least one horrendously unlistenable contemporary work. For its ignorance, the Chamber Orchestra will have my unending gratitude.

The audience at Saturday night's performance in Eisenhower Auditorium seemed to share my appreciation for a program of three classical symphonies: Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550; Beethoven's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2 in B-flat major, op. 19; and Schubert's Symphony No. 3.

To start a program with a piece as well known as Mozart's No. 40 takes a certain amount of courage. There is always the possibility that because people recognize a work, they will think they know it as well as the performers do. These front-row conductors take offense at tempos varying from "what's on the record" and derive sadistic pleasure from picking out what they, in their vast wisdom, know are sour notes.

Fortunately, the Chamber Orchestra need have no fear of budget classic critics. The Molto allegro opening movement sounded fresh, for all it is so familiar. The sadness facing it was not less intense for being handled with a clear and energetic string attack, not less warm for being performed with close attention to timbral contrasts. In fact, this kind of care in the performance of well-known works argues for their more

frequent programming. When an audience can hear new aspects of a familiar work in a live performance, the musicians are doing their jobs well.

The second movement, Andante, was performed with propriety: proper restraint, proper refinement, proper conservation of forces for most effective use at points of contrast. I found it pleasingly listenable, imbued with the moderation and seemly conduct expected of a classical slow movement.

But the third movement, Allegretto, was more than just listenable. Goldberg took a bustling tempo and proved that classical works can convey righteous indignation as emphatically romantic or contemporary pieces. Similarly, in the finale, Allegro assai, the Chamber Orchestra clipped right along with a furious activity, driving to an exciting close as any struggle with fate ever had.

The evening really only began as the Mozart ended. When pianist Boris Bloch came on stage for the Beethoven concerto, sparks truly started to fly. While the music inclined to more shifts of mood than did the first piece, it was still classical in nature. Bloch demonstrated a wonderful ability to dramatize without distorting, to play the demanding passage work clean, with an unselfconscious musicality.

Though he tossed off the opening Allegro con brio with delightful dexterity, Bloch's real talent manifested itself even further in the second movement, Adagio. Herein, his ability to enjoy and lavish care on more logical thoughts brought tranquility and emo-

tional repose to what is always in danger of being the boring part of a concerto.

High spirits bubbled forth in the last movement, Rondo: molto allegro. Adjectives abound: merry, jocose, ebullient, teasing, mischievous, light-hearted... if it's fun, then it describes how Bloch and the Chamber Orchestra wound up the concert.

The last work on the program, the Schubert No. 3 came as a bit of a let-down. A self-satisfied, confectionary elegance coupled with Schubert's characteristic lyricism made for pleasant but unremarkable music.

The first movement, Adagio maestoso—allegro con brio, alternated between sunny, jaunty traveling melodies and more stern, striding themes. The Chamber Orchestra did justice to the music, exercising care with its execution; but this work lacked the substance of the other two.

The second movement, Allegretto, continued in this placid, sanguine mood, but the third, Menuetto: vivace, offered brisker fare. Warning to the chase, the Chamber Orchestra played the finale, Presto vivace, as a headlong dash to the finish. (The Orchestra won.)

Though the Schubert was not the most thrilling work ever performed, Goldberg and the Chamber Orchestra are to be commended for their ability to meet classical music on its own terms: to perform it with technical command, artistic sensitivity and emotional subtlety and without token contemporary works on the same program.



Boris Bloch

Sometime sparkle from Pgh. Chamber Orchestra

By TOM BOYER
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

In a concert in which the high points were very high and the low points very low, the Pittsburgh Symphony Chamber Orchestra, with Szymon Goldberg as violin soloist and conductor, played with inconsistent sparkle Friday night in Eisenhower Auditorium.

The program, sponsored by the Artists Series, included two Beethoven Romances and a Schubert Rondo for violin and orchestra, Stravinsky's Concerto in D for String Orchestra, and Haydn's Symphony 104, "The London."

Goldberg, who has been performing for the better part of the century, showed his audience both fruits of advancing

age: musical maturity and dulled technique.

The Beethoven Romances began the program. They are short and simple, containing none of the sense of tragedy permeating Beethoven's later work. At the beginning of both romances, the violin states the theme—modest, noble melodies—accompanied unobtrusively (distasteful, in this case) by the orchestra.

Goldberg's face, made longer by his huge forehead and near-baldness, was placid as he played, his eyes closed as if he were dreaming to the phrases. However, his playing was stiff at times, the tone pinched and uneven, especially near the beginning of the concerto.

For the Stravinsky work, the players

gritted their teeth and dug into the music with greater intensity.

The Concerto is filled with jagged rhythms and unsettling harmonies, not entirely pleasing to the ear but intriguing nonetheless. In the first movement, the violins and violas played with verve an irregular, cynical-sounding melody to a rumbling accompaniment in the basses and celli.

The second movement, a breezy, waltzing piece not unlike a German landler, is pretty in a bitersweet way. The violins played a legato passage very smoothly and calmly, pushed along by pizzicato in the lower strings.

During the Haydn symphony both Goldberg and the orchestra were at their

best. The players seemed to enjoy themselves, playing energetically and even cracking a smile or two.

While Haydn symphonies are not technically difficult to play, they require much care of the orchestra not to sound muddy. Haydn's harmonies and orchestration, unlike the fuller, more dense work of later composers, are dangerous because the audience hears every rhythmic discrepancy.

Goldberg seemed to have, if not warm contact with the players, at least complete control over them, for the sound as a whole was well-balanced and disciplined. The orchestra's attacks were precise—like breaking celery—in the way Haydn's stuff upper lip.

changes in dynamics were uniform, the winds never overpowering the strings.

The third movement, a Minuet, was most fun for both players and audience alike. Here Haydn's sense of humor shows through, the orchestra making the most of the opportunity to joke. One could easily picture lords and ladies of some centuries ago waking up from their banquet to dance.

Goldberg's interpretation was expansive, making the group seem more like a large symphony than the portly-sized group Haydn wrote for. But the sound was never heavy enough to be bogged down, nor would the liberties Goldberg took with the music have disturbed Haydn's stuff upper lip.

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DOONESBURY

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DOONESBURY

SCHERZER! DON YOU DON'T LEAVE ANY- TRYING TO CHANGE DO IT. I THINK YOU? IT'S IMPOR- ANTI TO PLAN. PRUD.

"600-730 GO TO DINNER: 800-100 GO TO WORK: 800-100 GO TO FRUIT PARTY: THAT RIGHT?"
DOONESBURY

"100-230 TRY OUT MORE."
DOONESBURY

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PRUFROCK U

CHRIS I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE JOHN DID THIS...
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SHARING A HOUSE WITH TWO OTHER GUYS...
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WELL NOW DID YOU THINK YOU COULD AFFORD A HOUSE?
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IS RIGHT I'LL BUY IT!
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I NEED SOME COURSES ON RELIGION. TRY CATHOLISM I'D.
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Across

1 Hearts or darts
2 Dorian
3 Nation in the news: 1978-1980
4 Black
5 Asian capital
6 Crooner Perry
7 High jumper's work
8 Accompanying
9 Rock salt
20 Make a second hole
22 Rock salt
24 Half of blackjack
25 Fraginella plant
27 Sifter
30 Protestion in "The Sting"
31 Heavily guarded
35 Hero in Hyenas
37 More appropriate

Down

1 Bike part
2 Sallid
3 Joy or woe
4 Use an acid, perhaps
5 State source
6 Section
7 Lennon's spouse
8 Name of Guilty
9 Dream, of a sort
10 Kettner's country
11 Sculptor of "Le Penseeur"
12 Friendliness
13 Musical symbol
14 Champagne bucket
23 Impasse; stylized
25 No and I.Q.
26 Printing workers
27 Diamonds, e.g.
28 Exactly 2.54 centimeters
29 Entertainer Adams

38 Frost the cake
39 Ken Follet novel
44 Certain teeth
45 Slang player
46 Law, medicine, education,
48 Harbor boat
49 Be nostalgic
50 Refuge
51 The King
52 Not under the influence
53 Royal feature
58 Certain color
61 Word after family or shoe
62 Wears
63 Like Thor
64 Seaside grains

39 Eggbeater
30 One not in the clergy
33 Matt Bahr's specialty
34 "home" behind man
36 About thirty million seconds
40 One language of 10 Acres
41 Fencer's sword
42 Kind of moon or movie
43 Aerie inhabitants
45 Aerial craft
47 Lama's home
48 Prime number
49 Muggy
50 Apparatus
51 Scarlett's home
52 Level
53 Clannet's need
54 Like Corona
57 Saloon

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