



Symphony bids farewell in last concert

By MELANIE MODLIN

The North Carolina Symphony concludes its concert season with performances in Raleigh's Memorial Auditorium tonight and Friday night.

But classical music fans can take comfort knowing the North Carolina Chamber Players, most of whom are Symphony members, kick off their summer season Sunday.

Respected pianist Byron Janis will be guest soloist at the N.C. Symphony's two 8 p.m. concerts, performing the "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 43" by Rachmaninoff.

Janis made headlines in 1967 and 1973 by twice discovering different and hitherto unknown versions of Chopin waltzes, set down in the composer's hand.

He recently completed a film essay for French television, "A Portrait of Chopin by Byron Janis." Its Parisian premiere on French television met with tremendous acclaim, and it will soon be available for worldwide release.

The concluding work on the Symphony program will be Mahler's "Symphony No. 1 in D Major." Tickets are priced at \$3.50 to \$7 and can be purchased at the N.C. Symphony Box

Office in Memorial Auditorium. Students and senior citizens will be admitted for \$1 at the door the night of the concert only.

The North Carolina Chamber Players are 30 professional musicians under the direction of clarinetist Donald Martin. The group celebrates its summer season with a gala opening concert at 6:30 p.m. Sunday in Sarah P. Duke Memorial Gardens, Durham. There is no admission charge.

The N.C. Chamber Players made their debut in 1973 and have been entertaining Triangle area audiences ever since.

With the core of a chamber orchestra the group forms and re-forms itself to offer a broad spectrum of music from chamber orchestra to small ensembles.

This summer's Monday Evening Concert Series displays the group's flexibility and its diverse repertoire:

- June 11: Baroque Orchestral Music. Works by Purcell, Bach, Vivaldi and Handel.

- June 18: Music for Strings and Winds. Chamber works by Beethoven and Ibert.

- June 25: All-Schubert Program, with soprano, clarinet and piano soloists.

- July 2: Music for Strings, Winds and Piano. Compositions by Persichetti, Prokofiev and Schumann.

All concerts are Monday evenings at 8:15 at Gross Chemical Laboratory Auditorium on Duke University's West Campus. Season tickets are priced at \$12 and are available at Page Box Office, 684-4059. Single tickets are \$4.

Sellers redeems 'First Bite'

By JERE LINK

Two farces were dropped over town last week, and the 'chute failed on one.

Love at First Bite is slow-paced, spotty and stupid. A few good one-liners and sight

gags can't make up for the overall ineptness of this aborted parody of *Dracula*. Luckily, Peter Sellers' *Prisoner of Zenda* redeems the parody genre.

Sellers plays both the insipid playboy Prince Rudolf (pronounced "Wudolf") and the feisty London hackman Sydney Frewin. All the other characters from the 1894 Anthony Hope classic are there: the wicked Duke Michael, the laughing and

unscrupulous Rupert of Hentzau, the seductive Antoinette de Mauban and the virginal Princess Flavia. Two other characters are added for comic relief: Elke Sommer playing the sightly Countess and Gregory Sierra as the buffoon-cuckold Count.

The plot, as in the original work, hinges on a set of *Prince and the Pauper* twins, with the romance and intrigue of *The Three Musketeers* thrown in for good measure. In the straight 1930s film version with Ronald Coleman, it was all brave sentiment and noble resignation. Not so for Sellers' version.

The Prisoner of Zenda, filmed in Austria, offers some great scenery of the imaginary kingdom of Ruritania. *Love at First Bite* offers only a two-bit set of Transylvania and the usual mugshots of New York City.

George Hamilton, to be fair, is not bad as the Count beset by the 1970s. Richard Benjamin is even good as the demented Jewish psychiatrist Rosenberg, descendent of old Dr. Van Helsing in the 1931 movie. But Arte Johnson as Renfield is predictable; Susan St. James as a neurotic fashion model, unconvincing; and Isabel Sanford and Sherman Hemsley downright embarrassing in cameo roles out of a latter-day minstrel show.

In sum, avoid *Love at First Bite*. It's Hollywood trying to prove the same stupid 10-year-olds who used to pay 75¢ to see real movies will pay three bucks to watch TV at a moviehouse.

N.C. Symphony director resigns

John Gosling, director of the North Carolina Symphony for the past seven years, announced his resignation on Monday, May 28 at a press conference in Raleigh.

His resignation follows increasing dissension among orchestra members over the past two years concerning artistic matters and the excessive amount of travel required of musicians.

Some symphony members have also parted ways with Gosling, complaining of a new system of ticket pricing. Under this system, concerts in different cities carry different ticket prices.

Critics of the pricing system say the symphony should serve all parts of the state equally for equal prices.

Under Gosling's leadership as conductor and artistic director, the N.C. Symphony was named one of the nation's top 33 major symphonies in 1976 and received acclaim for performances at Carnegie Hall in New York, and at Washington's Kennedy Center.

This summer, Gosling will conduct at the Bear Valley Music Festival in California's High Sierra. Gosling founded this well-known festival.

—KATHY McADAMS

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Sue Wenzel, "Leisureline",
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