

No one leapt from the balcony

Symphony mixes mischief and melancholy

by Kevin Barris
Staff Writer

The large crowd which packed Memorial Hall Monday night was treated to an excellent performance by the North Carolina Symphony and soloists Beverly Wolff and William Brown.

From the Haydn-esque opening of the Schubert *Symphony No. 1 in D Major* to the final sad tones of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Song of the Earth) the concert was a tremendous musical success.

Aesthetically it was somewhat less pleasing, for the stage setting gave the impression of an impromptu concert given in an alley beside some warehouse. Throughout the Schubert symphony the audience in the right orchestra section was assaulted by the glare of what might have been an obnoxious porch light.

Opening with the cheerful composition Schubert wrote at age 16, the Symphony provided a bit of light-hearted fantasy to balance the despairing tones of the Mahler piece to follow.

The Symphony's romp through the Schubert work was refreshing and obviously enjoyed by the audience. The piece itself is suggestive of a conflict between work and play, with fun and frolic winning out. The first and fourth movements, both with tempo marked *allegro vivace*, were the most vibrant.

In the first movement an opening violin melody gave way to a second foot-



Staff photo by Bill Huss

tapping violin tune. The violins opened the fourth movement with a melody of mischief and, when the rest of the orchestra joined, the chase was on until the exciting finale.

The orchestra displayed excellent sensitivity during the *andante* movement. At times the harmony provided by the violas and cellos was breathtaking, which prevented the

movement from becoming just another dull *andante*.

The overall performance of the Schubert symphony was highlighted by the work of the strings. Except for an occasional outburst by the brass, conductor John Gosling had his troops under control.

After intermission the porch light went out and the orchestra and soloists

settled down to the serious work of the night, the Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde*.

In the opening, nightmarish *Drinking Song of Earth's Misery*, tenor Brown sets the tone:

When care draws near, the gardens of the soul lie waste, Joy and singing fade away and die. Dark is life; dark is death!

The piece which Mahler considered more a symphony than a choral work, is so depressing that Mahler himself worried, "Is it bearable?"

No one leapt from the balcony, but the work was very emotional. Mezzo-soprano Wolff provided highlights with her performances in the second (*Autumn Loneliness*) and final (*Farewell*) movements. Her tremendous sensitivity brought out the quiet despair in both Wolff's. Wolff's intonations in the final, melancholy notes left little doubt that Mahler was a depressed man when he wrote it.

Orchestra and soloists usually mixed well, although at times it was difficult to hear Brown. Gosling kept the orchestra under proper dynamic control to best underline the soloists.

Although both Wolff and Brown gave excellent performances, the real star of the night was the North Carolina Symphony. Showing why it has recently been recognized as a major orchestra in this country (and will soon give a concert in Carnegie Hall), the Symphony was superb.

Carolina Quarterly: a mass of white shapes

by Marianne Hansen
Staff Writer



Carolina Quarterly Winter 1977

The cover of the winter 1977 issue of the *Carolina Quarterly*, a montage of snowflake forms by James Bradner, might be considered a graphic representation of the volume's contents. There is a mass of white shapes, but there are too many of them for comfort, and they are hard to tell apart. One snowflake stands out amidst the others, intricate and unusual.

Most of the stories and poems are like the cover design—competent, but undistinguished except for a single element. Lipsitz's *Neurotic Woman* is a good example—full of clever lines that might have been written by almost anyone about almost anything, redeemed only by the sudden picture of the woman's children: "their heavy, demanding faces, their dead weight of sandbags piled high, to keep her from flooding/wildly over everything."

Gudnowska's "You Ask Me, Wnuczka" is marred by unresolved difficulties with a shifting point of view, but is a fine example

of careful, thoughtful characterization.

Some of the works are simply bad. Among these are ones by poets who write of matters so intensely personal that the reader, who isn't acquainted with them, cannot tell what they're talking about. It may be interesting to know that Gordon Ball's "knowledge of history overwhelms (him)," in *Yr 20th Birthday* or that Edgar Adcock, Jr. has an intimate and enduring relationship with an unspecified other in *Anniversary Curtain* (assuming that the "I" of these poems is the poet, and I suspect it is), but this does not tell the reader much about the people in the poems or exactly what's important about them.

Other writers discuss experiences many people have, such as a distressing malaise following intense concentration on academic matters (Stanton's *After English Examinations*), or being or knowing an adolescent female who was popular in high school (Smith's excerpt from *Black Mountain Breakdown*). Unfortunately, the writers lack either the perception or the literary skill to renew these experiences for the reader. The result is boring.

There is, in spite of all this, some very good work in the *Quarterly*. The stylistic freedom of Shelmutt's prose piece *Good* stands out, as does the lovely correlation between form and content in Rabb's *Reaping*. *Work Song* by Gingham, is a happy-ending fantasy full of charming characters one wishes were true.

Ketchum's *Lulu* combines an affectionate statement about a back-to-the-land couple with an understated, pleasant exploration of language: a cat who "jumped/ to sit fixing his ears in the corn, / tumbled in sunset." Sander's *Walking to Sleep* is a marvelous finale to the selection of prose fiction—sensitive and well-handled.

Like the snowfall of its cover, the winter 1977 issue of the *Quarterly* has good and bad elements. While some pieces were vague and indistinct, the beautiful execution of others makes the issue worthwhile.

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ACTUALLY, MOVIE STARS AND POLITICIANS HABITUALLY TURN INTO UNABASHED GROUPIES IN EACH OTHER'S PRESENCE. IT'S REALLY SORT OF PATHETIC.
WELL, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT. THAT'S WHY I MOVED ON IT.

by Garry Trudeau

THE Daily Crossword by James A. Brussel

ACROSS
1 Skin opening
5 Determination
9 Condiment
14 Brain channel
15 Bib name
16 Of a fore arm bone
17 Catches a crook
18 Certain Southerners
20 Pentothal sodium
22 Reference book abbr
23 Where dogies roam
24 Collens
27 Fodder
28 School sub
29 1051 to Cato
30 Uninterest ing
33 Citizens
35 - depends on you'
36 Individual
37 For - sake!
38 Star singer and actress
40 Suspicious note
41 Period of
42 Okinawa city
43 Comedian
44 Maids of old
46 Let the air out of
50 Sound of contentment
51 February communications
53 People with speech problems
55 Small drinks
56 Pastry
57 Glacial ridge
58 Kind of club
59 Firebug's crime
60 Resorts
61 Espied

DOWN
1 Mottled horse
2 Jap port
3 Contradict in a debate
4 Former
5 Like a lawn
6 Rent again
7 Steel beam
8 Listed one
9 Addition problem
10 Works hard
11 Lifeless

12 Stamping machine
13 Hesitation sounds
19 Valuable violin
21 Front page item
25 Steal in a way
26 Effeminate one
28 Miraculous sustenance
30 Gripp'd, in a way
31 One with charm
32 Lovers
33 Cloud formations of a kind
34 Sharp taunts
39 Unguent
43 Taste
45 - voice
46 Skin
47 Like an old woman
48 Indian residence
49 Ger city
52 Spring
53 Depot abbr
54 Knockout count

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2/2/77

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