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Orchestra, soloist blend prime talents

By DANIEL E. WHEELER
Battalion Staff Reviewer

Soloist Renee Hostetler combined talents with the Bryan College Station Chamber Orchestra to present an impressive and well-rounded performance last night in the Rudder Theater.

Under the baton of conductor Charles Johnson, the concert began with a dramatic rendition of Ludwig van Beethoven's "Egmont" Overture. Based on Goethe's five-act tragedy of the same name, the "Egmont" Overture is a virile work, and was presented as such.

The elemental originality of the colossus Beethoven, one foot in the Classical period, the other in the Romantic, was dynamically projected by the Orchestra. Firmness in the strings, in the winds, in the percussion, in the brass combined with meticulous balance, strategic use of dynamics, and phenomenal communication between conductor and orchestra gave "Egmont" more drama in four notes and a pause than five acts, a prologue, and an epilogue of Goethe.

When the applause of the audience subsided, the second selection of the concert, Johann Stamitz's Orchestra Trio in C major began. Stamitz's work is very appropriate for the Bryan-College Station Chamber Orchestra in that it was written at a time when there was no formal differentiation between a chamber orchestra and a symphonic orchestra. The orchestra has grown from ten string players to in excess

of fifty musicians of diverse talents; hence the analogy.

The Stamitz piece, one of ten composing his Opus 1, is by nature colder, more formal, more stoical, less human than its Beethovenistic predecessor. The Allegro movement is one of a restrained, dignified gaiety. The formality relaxes in the Andante ma non Adagio, becoming almost jovial. The Menuet, however, returns to the forebodingly rigid style of the first movement. The final movement, Prestissimo, epitomized the age of its creation — sharp, terse, rigid and perfectly in tune. The Orchestra's performance would certainly have satisfied Emperor Karl VII, in whose palace, under Stamitz's direction, the Ten Orchestra Trios were often played.

The enthusiastic welcoming of soloist Renee Hostetler to the stage marked the beginning of the concert's finest offering, Frederic Chopin's Piano Concerto in F minor. To the keen but poetic, strict but elastic, and emotional but controlled accompaniment of the Orchestra, Hostetler played as though instructed by the composer himself.

Her fingers fell like summer rain on the keyboard, with the accuracy of sniper fire, as she made child's play of difficult runs and arpeggios. If the seven-foot Steinway piano is, as rumored, strung like Odysseus bronze bow, Hostetler effectively hid the fact with her mastery of the legato, her absence of breaking of hands or halting rhythm, and her

enviable control of rubato. To the splendid background of Hostetler and the Orchestra, one's mind becomes that of the young Chopin thinking of his first real love, Delphine Potocka, to whom the work was dedicated. The beauty evoked by both Hostetler and the Orchestra certainly justified the standing ovation they received.

The final selection, Franz Schubert's Symphony in B minor No. 8 is reminiscent of a BC Athenian tragedy. The music is hellish for the orchestra, with many opportunities for error. If the orchestra effectively presents the piece, in spite of its difficulty, as did the Chamber Orchestra, the audience involuntarily experiences what Aristotle called "catharsis." Because of the subtly tragic and poignant of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, those who hear cannot evade feelings of fear and pity.

After hearing this piece, which is a war, the war of a man with himself, a brilliant mind, finally terminating in harsh, strong resolution, the audience leaves the theater or concert hall feeling cleansed, fortified, uplifted. The orchestra's performance of what is perhaps Schubert's most sublimely intellectual work can only be called lyrically and aesthetically superlative.

The Arts Committee sponsored the performance and will sponsor them again on December 4 at which time they will perform Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

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Children meet chickens, pigs, horses, one cadet

By WILL ANDERSON
Battalion Staff Writer

Do you remember field trips from elementary school? You got away from your drippy classes and got to see something new.

Do you remember your first grade teacher? She looked like somebody's grandmother, she always smiled and she scared the ever-living hell out of you.

I took a walk through the past (and from my Thursday morning classes) when I went with a busload of first-graders on a field trip to A&M's agricultural facilities. The kids were from Bryan's Bowie Elementary School and the event was the Children's Barnyard Tour, sponsored by the Saddle and Sirlin club.

About 1450 Brazos Valley first graders took the tour which was supposed to instill an appreciation of agriculture. By showing the cows, pigs, chickens, horses and their products to the children they were supposed to realize that this is what makes living in the United States so good.

I stepped on the bus and met the teacher, Anne Hatfield. (They don't look nearly as scary from above as they do from below.)

The kids and I spent the ride staring at each other. When we got off at the Poultry Center, the man gave us a tour of the Center's several varieties of fowl and the children were interested. Then, we came to a scraggly white chicken with a bald neck. She lays blue-green eggs.

The reason the blue-green egg is important is the higher nutritional value which the poultry science

folks are breeding into the scraggly necked bird. Appearance isn't everything.

"Ohhhhh," they said in unison. How are kids so easily amazed? How can even the simplest things fascinate them? How DO they make scraggly white, bald-necked chickens that lay blue-green eggs?

After the poultry, we climbed back on the bus.

"Walk with your partner. Form a line. Ricky, where's your partner?" Mrs. Hatfield said.

"Move to the back of the bus. Three to a seat."

I leaned against the back door in the aisle and met the little kids around me. Michael, Vincent, Meredith, Connie, Tracy, Ricky, Patrick, Richard and Sally-with-the-blue-eyes.

One of the kids reached out and asked, "What's this thing?"

"My Corps brass, kid; please don't touch."

I asked Sally-with-the-blue-eyes how she liked her first year of school and she replied earnestly, "Fine!"

"Do you know how long it'll take you to get out?" I asked.

"A long time," she nodded. "A whole year."

"Sweetheart," I said. "If you go to college it'll take you 16 years to get out."

"Ohhh," she said. "Sixteen years!" Amusement (or was it fear) clouded her face. I felt like the man who killed Santa Claus.

By that time we had arrived at the Dairy Farm and filed off the bus.

"Find your partners, children. Form a line."

"Watch your step, children. The cows have been here. Cows have no manners, you know."

"Does anyone else need their shoestring tied?"

"Ricky, did you hit Patrick? You know better than to hit Patrick."

The children were all hands. When they approached the cages or pens it was in a mad rush forming little mounds of human flesh. They'd reach in a grab for the chickens, but were afraid of the cows. The size factor again.

While we walked, I asked the children around me what they wanted to be when they grew up.

"A teacher."

"I'm gonna be a Aggie-man and play football."

"A Army-man, yeah, a Army-man."

I asked if he wouldn't really prefer the Navy. He and about five or six others replied with a loud, "Yeah, the Navy, the Navy."

A blow for the combat arms.

One of them volunteered that he was going to be an "Aggie band player." Such deviant behavior will hopefully fade before he gets much older.

I had to leave after the Dairy Farm. The kids were kind of refreshing after the disillusionments of college life. As I drove away I kind of regretted that I never fulfilled the dream of my life when I was six-years-old. I wanted to be a pirate.

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