

Guarneri String Quartet

Music determines moods

By DAN WHEELER
Battalion Staff Reviewer

The Guarneri String Quartet, that ensemble of four virtuoso musicians who thoroughly dazzled an in-excessably small audience in the Rudder Theater last night, draws its name from a master violin maker of the early eighteenth century.

Thoroughly disgusted with the violins his contemporaries in the Italian province of Cremona were producing, Giuseppe Antonio Guarneri (called del Gesu) devoted his life to the revival of the Brescian school of violinmaking. His efforts resulted in instruments with bold outlines, distinctive scrolls, and rich, full tone, second only in quality to those of his predecessor Antonio Stradivarius.

On the basis of last night's performance, it is plainly evident that violinists Arnold Steinhardt and John Dalley, violist Michael Tree, and cellist David Soyer are to musicians as is Guarneri to violin makers, definitely of the highest order.

The first of the 1975-76 OPAS Special Attractions, the Guarneri Quartet began the program with Felix Mendelssohn's broad, gentle, elegant Quartet in E flat Major. "Felix," the composer's first name, is Latin for happy. The word happy accurately describes the creamy sea within which the four masters baptized the mesmerized audience. In spite of the spirited staccato of the Canzonetta allegretto movement and the introduction to the molto allegro vivace, the Quartet in E flat

was broad, emotional, flawlessly performed, and soothing.

Only John Milton could describe the change in mood wrought by the evening's second feature, Bela Bartok's Third String Quartet. The honeyed lines of Mendelssohn were forgotten as the violent, very dissonant, barbaric lines of Bartok fell upon the audience. The expertise with which The Guarneri Quartet presented the Third was mind-boggling, particularly on the part of Steinhardt, who coaxed unthinkable sounds from his instrument. The neo-Bachian polyphony, the percussive, toccata-like rhythm, the frightening dynamics were all played to perfection.

The spirit of Bela Bartok was no gentle one as his Third String Quartet indicates. The audience was fully aware of the hellish, unholy, powerful, and savage emotions which permeate the Third. As Soyer, Tree, Dalley, and Steinhardt set their bows to rest, relief was obviously the dominant sentiment among the audience.

With the final work of the evening, Franz Schubert's Quartet in D minor, the Guarneri Quartet led the audience from the gloomy, macabre, void where they had led them with the Bartok selection to the rich, intellectually satisfying realm of the sublime.

Conceivably the most popular quartet Schubert wrote, the D minor began as one of his songs, "Tod und das Madchen." (Death and the Maiden) This song appears

in the slow movement where it is the subject of variations.

The D minor, although vigorous in the scherzo movement, never completely loses its somber air. In the final movement, the presto, appears an undeniably tragic conflict which is never resolved. In spite of pretexts at gaiety, the work never frees itself from the chords of death.

In the hands of Steinhardt, Dalley, Tree, and Soyer, who function like one organism with eight arms and forty fingers, the D minor quartet was profoundly unified. The melancholic contours were never abandoned. The spiritual paths roamed vividly through the score, sometimes obscurely, but always alive.

Through a peculiar wizardry which comes only from intimate familiarity with instrument and work, the Guarneri Quartet's performance seemed drawn from Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy. At their command, the elements of earthly life, the inferno, and the intellectual paradise were called forth and revealed to their small but appreciative audience.

Suppliers check on NY accounts

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Phones are ringing busily at City Hall with 14,000 suppliers from across the country calling to find out if financially hard-pressed New York will be able to pay for the \$500 million worth of goods it has on order.

That doesn't count such capital items as \$300 million worth of subway cars being built by the Pullman Co. in St. Louis.

"So far there's no panic, but there's an awful lot of anxiety," said a spokesman for the Municipal Services Administration.

Among the most anxious was Dave Koeppel of Airport Motors in the New York City borough of Queens. Koeppel has 25 Plymouth police cars on his lot waiting for delivery to the city and is unsure what to do since, he says, the city already owes him \$1.5 million. The contract is worth \$6 million a year.

"If we don't get paid, the car people in Michigan don't get paid and the glass people in Pittsburgh don't get paid and the tire people in Akron don't get paid and so forth," Koeppel said.

"But we got faith. We got faith the money will come from somewhere,

because if it doesn't, an awful lot of people in an awful lot of towns are going to suffer."

Koeppel said this shipment at least will go through and added he's already used his own money to pay for them.

Thomas Cecil, president of Swift & Co. in Chicago, telephoned purchasing commissioner Robert I. Cohen the other day dunning him for a \$605,000 unpaid food bill. Cohen said Cecil told him if the city doesn't pay the company would have to close a section employing 110 men, the largest single loss in the history of the meat packing firm.

"This thing is national in scope," Cohen said in an interview. "And it works two ways. If we can't pay the bills, they're not going to deliver. What are we going to do for water if we can't pay for the chemicals to purify it?"

The national scope of unpaid New York City bills was a major theme of a speech Mayor Abraham D. Beame prepared for the National Press Club in Washington today.

The city, meanwhile, is entering into no new contracts except short-term ones for such perishable items as fresh foods.

Truck farmers from as far away as Iowa and Florida were reported among the most insistent callers. Some of them grow produce almost exclusively for the city.

"Some of the smaller firms will go bankrupt if New York City goes bankrupt," Cohen said.

City officials said big firms would not be hurt over-all, but sections devoted mostly to supplying New York would be.

For instance, there is a \$12.5 million a year contract with International Harvester for Sanitation Department equipment made in Springfield, Ohio, and Fort Wayne, Ind.

IBM supplies \$1.5 million a year worth of goods from Boca Raton, Fla.; Rochester, Minn.; Boulder, Colo.; and Raleigh, N.C.

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