

Andre Watts: pianist plays the Romantics

By MARY ALICE WOODHAMS
Battalion Staff

Andre Watts is the kind of dynamic concert pianist who receives rave reviews everywhere from Teheran, Iran to Munich, Germany to ... College Station, Texas.

His superb performance Tuesday night, sponsored by the Opera and Performing Arts Society, should merit an equally good review.

But alas, the Battalion's resources were limited Tuesday night, and I went to the Watts concert even though my only previous 'musical' experience was an interview with the singer of "Telephone Man." The resident music critic was covering health planning meetings in Bryan and Andre Watts was not to get his just reward.

I consoled myself with the fact that the Boston Globe sometimes lets sports writers review the ballet.

So I did a lot of homework. Newsweek magazine pointed out that Watts, at 31, is "the most sought-after American pianist since Van Cliburn." They also mention that Watts has "an animal restlessness."

"From what I remember," advised the Battalion's music expert, "he's just super-expressive when he plays. I mean, a piano's not a piano — it's a mistress."

"One thing you can look for is intonation," said my roommate. "Does he make transitions well? Can you tell what the mood of the music is? Is there variance? You never want too much of the same type of material."

Indeed, the piano Watts played Tuesday may well have been a much-loved mistress, for all the care with which the pianist touched each key. He did display animal restlessness. But only enough to pique the

audience's interest until he could soothe them with soft melody.

Watts' performance consisted of Schubert's Impromptu in B-flat Major and Sonata in G-Major; Chopin's Ballade in C Minor; Debussy's Children's Corner; and Les Jeux d'Eau a la Villa d'Este and Hungarian Rhapsody No. 13 by Liszt.

Selections from Romantics Schubert, Chopin and Liszt followed a pattern as Watts alternated between the sensuous and the tempestuous — bringing each piece to an appropriate climax and ending with an equally appropriate calm.

The focal point of the stage was Watts' hands, which fluttered across the keys, exchanged places, and finished with a flourish and a gesture in the air.

But then, the rest of him had a part in the concert, too.

Watts seemed to especially enjoy playing Children's Corner, a group of six pieces which Debussy wrote for his daughter. He was as animated

as the music he played, giving way to an occasional leap from the piano bench. His head moved forward during intense moments, then back as pieces began to lose their force. And through it all his body seemed to dance.

The pieces themselves were delightful — from the dark, melancholy Jimbo's Lullaby to the delicate tone of The Snow is Dancing. Yet the mistress analogy fails here, and Watts' animated treatment of lighter music halfway through his program provided necessary variety.

The crowd seemed to approve of Watts — so much that they interrupted with applause at least once when the pianist paused to mop his brow. That, someone once told me, is just not done.

The screen behind the piano undoubtedly served to project the music to the audience, because a curtain alone would absorb sound. But the picture of Andre Watts in a tuxedo sitting at a grand piano is marred by the flimsy, awkward screen. Pink lights projected on the screen don't help, either.

Review

Sexually active girls' pregnancies still high

United Press International
BALTIMORE — More teen-aged girls use contraceptives than in the past. But because so many are sexually active the number of teen-age pregnancies remains high, according to a national survey.

The federally funded survey, conducted by John Hopkins University and released Monday, showed that in 1976 four out of 10 girls in the United States between the ages of 15 and 19 engaged in sexual intercourse. That compares with three out of 10 in 1971.

The survey also showed that during the same five years, the number of sexually active teen-agers who used contraceptives leaped from 20 to 40 percent.

Drs. Melvin Zelnik and John Kantner, sociology professors at

the university's School of Hygiene and Public Health, coordinated the 1976 survey of 4,392 teen-aged girls from across the country. In 1971, the two professors conducted a similar survey of 2,193 girls.

The survey found that the number of girls between 15 and 19 who had engaged in sexual intercourse jumped from 30 to 40 percent between 1971 and 1976.

"The alarming statistic is that in spite of increased contraception, the rate of premarital pregnancy remains the same," Kantner said.

The surveys showed that out-of-wedlock childbearing as well as marriage resulting from the pregnancies declined significantly during the five-year period, particularly among whites.

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