

Bright song renditions highlight symphonic band performance

By Staci Finch
Reviewer

The band opened with "Commando March," perfect for Texas A&M with its military tradition. But the evening bore no resemblance to a night at boot camp. The fall performance of the A&M Symphonic Band in Rudder Auditorium Thursday night was worthy of an evening with the New York Philharmonic.

The 83-member band, directed by Dr. Bill J. Dean, followed its first selection with "Colonial Song," by Percy Granger. The opening attack by the brass was right on cue, there was not a sour or out-of-tune note in the

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whole piece. The band finished out the first half of its concert with "Overture to 'Candide.'" The band had a little trouble with tempo, and a few of the sections took a couple of bars to get their timing together, but the 500-plus members of the audience had no trouble recognizing the familiar strains of the song.

The highlight of the first half, if not the whole concert, was "Concettino," a flute solo performed by Melissa Underhill. The piece was described as "emphasizing the beauty and technicality of the flute." Underhill's performance certainly lived up to that description.

A flutist for 13 years, she seemed a little nervous at first, but her runs soon smoothed out and she treated the audience to a fine performance.

In some places it was hard to believe so many notes could fit in one measure, as Underhill trilled and glided her way up and down the musical scale. But her mastery of the flute was most evident in her rich tone and clear intonation. Leigh Baker provided excellent accompaniment without overshadowing the soloist.



Photo by Robert W. Rizzo

Conductor Bill J. Dean directs the 83-member Texas A&M University Symphonic Band in Rudder Auditorium Thursday night. The fall performance attracted more than 500 people.

The second half of the concert was as delightful as the first. The opening piece, "Salvation Is Created," was a compilation of Russian Orthodox hymns, and after listening to the full, rich chords, one expected to look around and see tall steeples and stained glass.

"The Hounds Of Spring" featured the woodwind section, and was probably the most technically diffi-

cult piece of the evening. But the band performed admirably and showed the audience that there is more than one excellent band at Texas A&M.

The band closed its concert with a rendition of "America the Beautiful." From the opening notes to the narration on patriotism in America, the symphonic band filled the auditorium with the stirring notes of the

familiar anthem, and gauging from the resounding applause, the effect was not lost on the audience.

Overall, the performance was excellent. There were only a few tempo and timing problems, and the acoustics of Rudder Auditorium allowed the audience to hear every instrument in the band, from the high-pitched piccolo and oboe to the low, rich tones of the bassoon.

Smokeout includes newborns

Babies born during the Great American Smokeout received T-shirts proclaiming "I'm a born non-smoker" as puffers looked to friends for moral support when the nation's smokers tried to keep from lighting up for a day.

It was the first year that the American Cancer Society had counted infants among its participants during the annual campaign, which also went after non-smoking tobacco users Thursday.

The Great American Smokeout, meanwhile, worried some restaurateurs that they wouldn't have enough room in their non-smoking sections.

In Corpus Christi, the popularity of a city smoking ordinance approved last year has exceeded the expectations of restaurateurs. The ordinance calls for smoking and non-smoking areas in restaurants and office buildings.

The Cancer Society hopes at least one in every five smokers will participate in yesterday's smokeout, Karen Givens, Corpus Christi smokeout chairman, said.

The society hopes tobacco-chewers also will participate.

Band offers progressive rock to A&M crowd on 'Work' tour

By Tom Reinarts
Reviewer

R.E.M., one of the leaders of progressive rock in the 1980s, brought its "Work" tour to G. Rollie White Coliseum Thursday night to help support its latest album "Document," released a few months ago on I.R.S. Records.

Opening for R.E.M. was another I.R.S. band, the dB's. This is the first appearance for both groups in College Station.

R.E.M. has influenced several bands across the United States since it released its debut EP in 1981, "Chronic Town." Since then the band has released six albums. All of them have done well on the album-sales charts, but "Document" is the first with a chance to give the band a successful single with "The One I Love."

The headline band started playing at about 9:10 p.m. and was welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd as the opening number "The Finest Work-song" was played.

Several people were standing for the full ninety minutes the band played.

Throughout the performance the band had films and slides showing various scenes or pictures on a screen behind drummer Bill Berry.

Lead singer Michael Stipe led the group through songs that came from all of the band's albums.

The best songs of the evening were "Exhuming McCarthy" and "Driver 8." The audience gave its most favorable responses to "It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine)" and "The One I Love."

Stipe was full of energy the entire evening and he danced through most of the songs. During "Begin the Begin" a strobe light created an interesting effect as it focused on Stipe.

The other members of the band were not as enthusiastic but are quite talented and the members gave excellent renditions of their recorded songs.

The final song of the evening was "So. Central Rain," which featured only guitarist Peter Buck and Stipe

except for a brief appearance by bassist Mike Mills.

The only real problem with the performance was R.E.M.'s reluctance to establish any rapport with the audience.

For one reason or another the band did not find it necessary to try to involve the audience more than it was from the start, and the result was a lack of spontaneity that made one wonder if the band really wanted to be there.

The dB's started the concert shortly after 8 p.m.

In September the group released "The Sound of Music." This is the dB's first record to be widely distributed in this country, even though the band has received praise from rock critics and college music fans since 1981.

Most of the songs the band played in its 40-minute set were from that album.

Those that showed up early enough to see the opening band were treated to some fine pop-rock songs that included "Think Too Hard" and "Never Say When." Lead singer Peter Holsapple has a fine, versatile voice and Will Rigby is an accomplished drummer.

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