

Brazos Valley Orchestra gives show that sparkles



The Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra.

Photo by Jay Janner

By Brian Frederick
Reviewer

Over 800 people were treated to a sterling performance of the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra Thursday night in Rudder Auditorium.

The orchestra, conducted by Franz Anton Krager, performed works by Salieri, Mozart and Tchaikovsky, supplying the audience with a delightful respite from work and studies.

At the end of the evening, the performers' efforts were rewarded with a standing ovation. Members of the audience praised the performance with such adjectives as "wonderful," "thrilling" and "glorious". One lady commented that she could hardly believe that the local symphony was this good and favorably compared it with the Warsaw Symphony Orchestra, which was here last spring.

The orchestra's stirring performance of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony in E minor proved to be no letdown from October's performance of Beethoven's famous Ninth Symphony. According to Executive Director Wendy Dackson, these fine back-to-back performances "are a shadow of good things to come."

The orchestra opened the pro-

gram with "Axur re D'Ormus," a short piece by Antonio Salieri. The piece was smartly played and demonstrated that Salieri was a competent composer though by no means a great one.

Mozart's "Symphony Concertante," which followed, made the distinction between good and great clear.

Written for flute, oboe, bassoon, horn and orchestra, the piece quietly sparkled. The soloists' instruments gently chattered back and forth to one another and to the orchestra.

All the soloists played well, but Philip Alexander on the oboe was particularly outstanding. Tchaikovsky's Fifth deals with the theme of man's struggle against Fate.

The first movement opens solemnly with Fate's theme slowly played on the clarinet. Man's theme later enters heroically, but Fate soon returns to dog his steps, and the movement ends on an ominous note.

The slow second movement paints a tranquil picture of life that is occasionally disturbed by Fate's discordant intrusions.

A cheerful waltz in the third movement suggests that Fate has been routed, but the end of the movement reveals that it was only Fate masquerading. Hope for Man builds fleetingly in the fourth movement, but he soon finds himself in a race with Fate that he cannot win. The movement ends with a powerfully dominating victory march for Fate.

Conductor Krager deliberately chose pieces by the rivals Mozart and Salieri for the sake of those who had seen the movie "Amadeus". He wanted to demonstrate that they had been real men involved in a real rivalry.

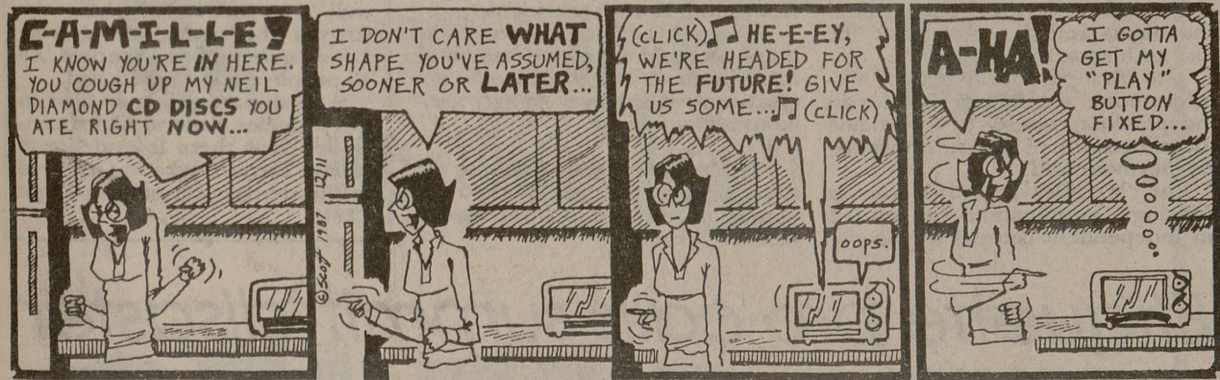
The works he chose revealed that while Salieri was indeed a good composer, Mozart's genius completely eclipsed him.

If nothing else, the Orchestra's performance is an indication that at least one oasis of culture exists in the supposed cultural wasteland of Bryan-College Station.

The Orchestra will follow Thursday's concert with performances of Engelbert Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" in February.

Warped

by Scott McCullar



Waldo

by Kevin Thomas



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