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Review of St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's performance at UMM

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a review of last week's St. Paul Chamber Orchestra performance at the University of Minnesota, Morris written by UMM music senior Richard Moll of Battle Lake.

MORRIS (5/10/76) -- The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra was given a warm welcome Thursday night by a near capacity audience in Edson Auditorium. Those present heard why the orchestra holds the high reputation it has because it plays with warmth and excitement and a good sense of ensemble.

The program included "Appalachian Spring" by Aaron Copland, "Commedia -for (almost) 18th Century Chamber Orchestra" by William Bolcom, "The Lark Ascending" by Ralph Vaughn Williams, and "sinfonia in D Minor" by Luigi Boccherini.

"Appalachian Spring" was presented in its original version for a small chamber ensemble, and while it was played well, there was a sense of something missing that could perhaps have been filled by a ballet group giving us the really original version of this ballet music.

"Commedia" was given its premier by the SPCO last winter. True to its name, it is a farce of sorts, as expressed by the composer in his program notes. Unfortunately, most of the audience either did not catch Bolcom's tongue-in-cheek, or did not dare allow itself to laugh at a concert.. After all, the composer is laughing all the while, why shouldn't we?

"The Lark Ascending" is a beautiful and lyrical piece -" a romance for violin and orchestra." Concertmaster Remuald Tecco matched the orchestra's warm and rich sound with his warm and lyrical playing as the solo line rose, dipped and fluttered in imitation of a lark moving through the wind. Bravo! for this performance of a very effective piece.

The "Sinfonia" of Boccherini, subtitled "The House of the Devil," is an interesting programatic piece. The orchestra played it excitedly, giving full vent to the idea of the Devil which was associated with this type of music of the late 18th Century.

This concert was a very enjoyable one, not only for the orchestra's playing, but for the receptiveness and courtesy of the audience as well. Some of the most exquisite moments at concerts are those few seconds after the music dies away and the audience waits for the conductor to relax - all the while savoring what has just been heard.

Bravo! again, and this time for the audience.

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