music at mit...

Concert Band Gives Modern Pieces

By Janet Sholes

Friday evening, March 15, the MIT Concert Band, gave a program of twentieth century music, including compositions by Milhaud, Schoenberg, Hervig and Hindemith which was warmly received by the audience.

The concert opened with "West Point Suite" by Darius Milhaud. The suite is divided into three movements, the first being a short introduction. This movement is built around a principle theme. First introduced by the brass and woodwinds, the second movement featured a flowing melody which passed from one instrument to another. The solo oboe, Carl Scholander, and the first trumpet, James Ruttenberg, captured the lyricism of this movement. Unfortunately, this movement was not conveyed to the rest of the group and thus the melodic unity of this movement was lost. The third movement was presented with a spirit appropriate to its title, "Fanfares." In a contrasting second romance the oboe and saxophones were featured in some excellent solo work.

The following work, "Theme and Variations" Opus 43A, by Arnold Schoenberg, is one of the earlier works of this composer. This work was originally to have been conducted for high school band. The composer, however, found that he could not abandon his own artistic obligations in order to make his work easily performed by a younger age group. The result is part of the standard repertoire for concert bands.

The MIT rendition exhibited the many skills of the director, John Corley, and the band. The phrasing of the thematic ideas was precise and meaningful. In the first and second variations an excellent balance was maintained between the thematic ideas and secondary figures.

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The third, fourth, and fifth variations deserve special mention due mainly to the execution of the solo woodwinds. Balance was not always maintained, however, for at times the solo woodwinds, by the supporting instrumentalists. In the music of Hindemith the harsh sound provided strength for the ensuing climax. The final statement of the theme was powerful and dynamic.

"Music for Winds and Percussion:" by Richard Hersey involved a reduced portion of the concert band with the addition of a pizzicato cello, and woodwind and percussion. The work was unified. One such figure, as ascending chromatic scale of varying syncopation was admirably executed by the wind section.

The highlight of the evening was the Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith. The presentation of this symphony was impressive. At times the woodwinds were not precise in some of their triplet figures. Syncopation in the first movement, however, exhibited good phrasing and good separation. In the second movement the woodwinds between the woodwinds and the alto sax was beautifully performed. Although the variation to the tempo of the middle section was rugged, the theme was performed with spirit. The third movement incorporated a fugue, one of Hindemith's favorite forms. Following a subdued middle section, three of the predominant themes were played in a brilliant counterpoint which was aptly projected by the band. The symphony terminated with a repetition of the fugal theme.

It was surprising that more members of the MIT community did not take advantage of such an exciting and stimulating concert.

Pro Musica Gives

Bach's 'Passion'

The Chorus pro Musica will present "The Passion According to St. John;" by J. S. Bach, at Symphony Hall March 24 at 8:00.

The chorus will be accompanied by the Cambridge Festival Orchestra, with Daniel Pinkham harpsichordist. Soloists will be Marguerite Willauer, soprano; Anna Goldsen, contralto; Charles Breeden, tenor; Marc Morgan, bass; and John Ring, bass.

Tickets range in price from $2.50 to $6.00.

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The former Physical Science Study Committee has been award a general grant of $1 million by the Ford Foundation.

Now called Educational Services, Inc., this non-profit educational research organization of Watertown, Mass., originated under the auspices of MIT in 1956. In addition to the PSSC program, ESI is working to improve the curricula in American schools in five areas. Curriculum reform programs are now being conducted in the teaching of science in the elementary grades, and in developing social studies and humanities curriculums applicable at all grade levels.

Besides programs in primary and secondary schools, ESI is assisting in developing new techniques for the teaching of engineering and science in the universities. ESI also participates in various educational programs overseas.