Music at MIT

Orchestra begins season

By David Gross

David Epstein led an improved MIT Symphony Orchestra in its first concert of the season last Sunday evening. In it, he left no doubt of his continuing passion for finding Boston performers for his group.

The program opened with a segment of an orchestral suite by John Heirind Roman, a little-known Swedish baroque composer, who, judging from this work, probably deserves to retain that status. It is so completely derivative that to enumerate its direct influences would be pointless.

This fact of itself, however, would not necessarily be disparaging in the context of the baroque, but the work does fail to develop in-hand and lacking in delicacy. Those in slow tempi, seem heavy-handed and lacking in several portions, especially winds. This had the effect of making the entire string section of the orchestra, along with the few required instruments, even more prominent, and was, in general, quite tiring.

The second work was a slightly overdone first movement of a symphony by Leopold Mozart. It was originally intended as a study in timbres, it can be rather interesting, and it was indeed this aspect which Mr. Epstein emphasized, succeeding in effectively playing off two-color variations between strings and brass. At times, especially in the first and third movements of the five-movement work, the conductor was able to obtain some notion of majesty and sweep. Again, the technical difficulties were not overly abrupt.

 Soloist Silverstein

To conclude, Mr. Epstein offered the Beethoven Violin Concerto, with Joseph Silverstein, concertmaster of the Boston Symphony, as soloist. The orchestral work throughout was of a fairly high calibre, though the tune was at times somewhat harsh. Mr. Silverstein's playing revealed little new about the work, but the overall interpretation was quite adequate.

As usual, Mr. Silverstein's technical performance was faultless, but his tone often lacked richness, and he left it generally solid, but uninspiring impression. During most of the piece, Mr. Epstein demonstrated that he knows how to establish a proper relationship with the soloist, but occasionally drifted away from this contact.

Thus the Orchestra has been raised, hopefully permanently, from the depth of mediocrity hit last year. Mazurka No. 61

David Epstein, conductor:

MIT Symphony Orchestra:

MTV, December 4, 1966, Kresge Auditorium, 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Epstein's interpretation of the Year Winner, Friday evening, December 16, at 8:30 p.m. in Kresge Auditorium. Tickets are priced at $2, $2.50, and $3.00.

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