MIT Symphony shows varied skills

By Robert McCall

Saturday evening the MIT Symphony performed its last concert of the year. Fresh from their gig at Carnegie Hall, the orchestra showed that it is capable of playing together and playing well. Although the concert was composed of standard numbers, the overall execution was sharp and cohesive. David Epstein, conductor, once again proved his versatility in the many ages of music.

The concert's first number, the Brahms Tragic Overture, although performed well lacked the feeling which it demands. The brass section here and throughout the concert sounded as if it was being played back over a bad Hi-Fi system. The Brahms is the lesser played of the two popular overtures, and is much more demanding both on the orchestra and the conductor. It is also, if one performs properly, a much more dramatic and fulfilling experience for the audience.

The second number was out of place on the program—traditionally, a number with guest performers is given the last slot. Nonetheless, Mozart's Concerto No. 10 in E Flat for Two Pianos and Orchestra was done excellently. John Buttrick and Robert Freeman performed the concerto with grace and perception. With the exception of the second movement andante, which was a bit slow and sluggish, the piece was very enjoyable indeed.

The highlight of the program, the suite from "The Firebird" (1919 version) by Igor Stravinsky, was fresh and exciting. The Firebird was Stravinskii's first well-known composition—a ballet based on the old Russian folk tale about a magical bird commissioned by the Bolshoi Company. Stravinskii had not yet broken many of the ties with conventional arrangement, and so the ballet was well accepted. Its ballet suite was also greeted with enthusiasm and accepted by the critics at its premier. Although the orchestra was hampered by lack of some technical skills in this very difficult piece, they performed passably well.

It is the unfortunate nature of school orchestras that, as they approach some degree of quality, they must disband and await next year's freshmen. Perhaps more concerts toward the beginning of the year could bring about the cohesiveness necessary for any orchestra to perform well. The MIT Symphony is always well attended (its last two concerts here have sold out) and could easily support more appearances each year. The MIT Symphony concerts will always be a welcome part of the MIT community.

TECH SHOW OPEN MEETING

Interested authors, composers, directors, designers, as well as people interested in production and business are invited to come to help plan

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