music

The MIT music faculty present a Schubert Festival

Under the auspices of the Goethe Institute of Boston, the MIT Music Faculty presented what was billed as a "Schubert Festival." The performances consisted of two of his song cycles on February 16 and 23 in Kresge Auditorium.

On the first evening, basso buffo Leslie Guinan and pianist John Buttrick presented Die Schone Mullerin. The work consists of 20 poems from the poems of Wilhelm Muller. Guinan's interpretation of the work was excellent; his voice is well suited to this rather demanding work. Mr. Buttrick's accompaniment was also well done, with a fine sense of the dramatic. The balance between the two was not quite what it might have been, although some of this fault might be attributed to the auditorium, which is not the proper place for this type of material.

The two concerts were well attended and received by their respective audiences; it appeared that the auditorium was somewhat better than half filled on both evenings. However, the Little Theatre might be better for a program of this nature; Kresge is too monstrous to be a proper recital hall.

film

The Boyfriend: all potential, no kinetic

Ken Russell had the chance. What he was offered with The Boy Friend was the opportunity to make the non-musical musical. Instead, he has made a twisting, mindless mess. It is not so disconcerting that this is a musical (although this writer, for one, regards them as anathema to reasonable cinema), but that it could have been, but failed to be a plausible, intriguing look behind the pejorative facade of the musical theater.

Instead, Russell oppresses us with his "startling" camera technique, and, as if the mere idea were not enough, subjects us to two hours of this meaningless drivel. God knows that musicals are bad enough, what with young maidens and a hundred-fifty-piece orchestra innately baring their Cleopatra's and other suitably unlikely locations. But Russell tries to distinquish it Sandy Wilson must be rolling over in his grave. When he wrote it in the '30's, it was a parody of the musicals of the '10's and '20's. Whatever enjoyment we could have had from that, Russell has stolen from under the podium.

The fantasy scenes, which were obviously great fun to make, are truly fantastico - in the saucy, overlown musical theater sense. Here, if anywhere, is the forte of the picture - justifiable opulence. By placing his fantasy within the absurd light of Hollywood musicals, Russell permits us to accept it without the traditional musical hangup. "But where is the orchestra coming from? Etc."

Also, however, Russell can't resist the temptation to dress up everything, and soon we hear the orchestra creeping in all over the place. The cheap run-down musical becomes instead a great musical in a cheap run-down theater, which it is not, and which it was not intended to be portrayed as. Russell successfully not only destroys both fantasy and non-fantasy, but the film as well.

With all this against him, Russell derris it hopeless and adds the crushing blow: he makes it all-out musical right there, no fantasy, no play, just Twiggy, there in the dressing room, singing a pitiful accompaniment to the orchesta. Twiggy may be able to act, but she can't sing, which is probably the most refreshing thing about the film. It truly is a joy to be blasted with a musical without having to tolerate a Julie Andrews as well. Twiggy can't sing, can't dance, can't really act, is flat-chested, and talks with a cockney accent, and, if anything in this overstuffed musical toy can be called magnificent, it is she and she alone.

But, good grief, asking the poor frail kid to carry a whole movie, which is too long, too big, too crazy, too everything, is pure madness. Watching characters trying to upstage each other for two hours is tedious and hardly basis for the one line joke which ties it all up, nonetheless for a whole movie.

Someone said The Boyfriend marks the beginning of a new surge of musicals. Let's hope not. The moviegoing set has done nothing to deserve being pelted with such obnoxious deluge again. Better for all if The Boyfriend marks the end of an era, rather than a beginning.

the tech

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