Ragtime at Harvard

In celebration of his ninety-second birthday, Eubie Blake appeared in a special performance/tribute at Harvard's Sanders Theatre last Friday night. the hall was filled to the brim with happy friends and fans. Mr. Blake is the last surviving pioneer ragtime composer/hall was filled to the brim with happy birthday, Eubie Blake appeared in a and work to the other trends in black studies faculty member related his life and work Blake wishes to introduce to the public. The records are well pressed, and they reproduce in the home (four brass bands surrounding the audience blare out the "last trumpet" to signal the day of judgment). Bernstein's Verdi was an experience of an entirely different caliber. His own video-production company, Amberson Enterprises, has created a series of musical events on film and videotape that capture, at their best, much of the essence of a live concert. The Verdi Requiem, too, is a difficult piece to capture on a small screen and a small loudspeaker. His creative concept work did help. Other Bernstein TV pro-

The MIT Chamber Players took advantage of the unusual acoustic ambience and mood of the building's lobby to present a midnight concert there on Friday, December 13 (actually Saturday). The program featured Bach's Fourth Brandenburg Concerto and Musical Offering and Wagner's Siegfried Idyll, and was under the direction of Marcus Thompson of the music faculty. "Lobby 7 is, for most of the day, a chaotic environment, ill-suited to any but the most fortuitous and high-powered music. At midnight, however, the audience was most attentive, and only a small group of ill-mannered boors wandering noisily across the floor momentarily marred the hushed atmosphere.

Even granting the respectful silence of the audience, the Musical Offering was the least successful piece of the evening because of its delicate intimacy. A set of intricate contrapuntal variations written on a chromatic theme given to Bach by a royal patron, the Offering ideally wants to be performed in a small room, and loses in effect when given even in a small concert hall, let alone the cathedral-like space and sonority of lobby 7. The performance, appropriate to the scale of the music, was ill-suited to the location.

The Fourth Brandenburg was far more successful. I can, and do, take issue with a representative of the Pre-Rags to Classics

EUBIE BLAKE

Christmas Music on TV

Television brought several musical events to the home screen on Christmas Eve. Among them were a Berliner Requiem from Milwaukee (shown on Channel 1 here in Boston at 9:30 pm) and a Verdi Requiem conducted by Leonard Bernstein in London (Channel 5 at 11:30). Perhaps it is just an automatic association of choral music with Christmas that placed these two incongruous works on the Christmas Eve TV schedule, but it would in any event be hard to think of any less appropriate music for the Christmas season than two Masses for the Dead! (Perhaps the Mendelssohn First Weihnachts- or Carmen Burana?)

Eubie Blake was performed adequately, but it would be unfortunate if the wide TV audience had its only exposure to this grand and monumental masterpiece through the means of an amateur performance reproduced through a single tiny loudspeaker. The power of the Berlioz Requiem requires live performance, and it is one of the few pieces that fairly demands quadraphonic reproduction in the home (four brass bands surrounding the audience blare out the "last trumpet" to signal the day of judgment). Bernstein's Verdi was an experience of an entirely different caliber. His own video-production company, Amberson Enterprises, has created a series of musical events on film and videotape that capture, at their best, much of the essence of a live concert. The Verdi Requiem, too, is a difficult piece to capture on a small screen and a small loudspeaker. But the creative concept work did help. Other Bernstein TV pro-

The Berlioz was performed adequately, but it would be unfortunate if the wide TV audience had its only exposure to this grand and monumental masterpiece through the means of an amateur performance reproduced through a single tiny loudspeaker. The power of the Berlioz Requiem requires live performance, and it is one of the few pieces that fairly demands quadraphonic reproduction in the home (four brass bands surrounding the audience blare out the "last trumpet" to signal the day of judgment). Bernstein's Verdi was an experience of an entirely different caliber. His own video-production company, Amberson Enterprises, has created a series of musical events on film and videotape that capture, at their best, much of the essence of a live concert. The Verdi Requiem, too, is a difficult piece to capture on a small screen and a small loudspeaker. But the creative concept work did help. Other Bernstein TV productions, such as theMailer-Aitch Symphony in Venice, have been even more effective, and clearly demonstrate the potential of this medium for the future.

Even with the untold satisfactions of these two performances, particularly the Verdi, the question of why they were placed on Christmas Eve remains. This kind of tokenism with respect to music on TV needs affirmative action.