The Guarneri String Quartet, one of the world's most famous and widely recorded quartets, gave a free concert in Kresge Auditorium on April 10 at 8 p.m. under the sponsorship of the William L. Abravanel Lecture Series and the Department of Humanities. I presume (because of the Humanities Department involvement and the location) that this concert was intended for the benefit of the MIT community, but through bad planning and careless publicity releases it was announced throughout Boston in the newspapers and on radio. At the door, there was no attempt at restricting admission to members of the MIT community (though certain areas of the hall were reserved for invited guests of Mrs. Abravanel). As a result, the hall was packed full with unfamiliar faces and many MIT students went home disappointed.

I was personally unfortunate to hear the opening Mozart C Major, K 157, because of the crowding. When I finally did get in, I was frankly unhappy about the performance of Bykowski's Opus 127 Quartet No. 17 in E Flat Major. Though the sound of the group was rich and full, only those near the stage or in the balcony could be individually perceived. Quartet playing at its best is a discourse among four equal partners, not the homogenized, undercharacterized mush of this performance. Additionally, the intonation and tone quality of Arnold Steinhardt, the first violinist, were deliberately sacrificed to allow the rhythm section to keep up with the maestro.

The opening of Boccherini in D minor (after intermission) was more successful, since it demands less interpretative depth and benefits from the full "orchestral" sonority of the Guarneri. Even here, however, the brilliant trio seemed more a display of technical prowess than any sort of attempt to come to grips with the music.

From a group with the reputation and the ability of the Guarneri String Quartet, one expects a lot more than facile note-spinning.

Rufus Hallmark, a member of the MIT music faculty, will be the tenor soloist in the Boston Conservatory's first concert of the season, to be presented at the Museum of Fine Arts Lecture Hall on Tuesday, May 12 at 7 p.m. in Sanders Theatre on Saturday, May 10 at 8:30 p.m.

The program, entitled La Primavera, will be a celebration of spring in English, French, and Flemish Renaissance music and poetry. Tickets are $4 and $2 for students (at Sanders only). La Primavera will be one of the programs featured on the Conservatory's upcoming tour of France in June and July, which will culminate in a ten-day school for instruction in Medieval and Renaissance music in Corben.