The Intermezzo's dialogue was more like two soliloquies—the continuity between piano and orchestra was not there. But the thrilling finale, Allegro vivace, came off well, with the help of the orchestra's strong accompaniment, and Hodgkinson ended with evident momentum to earn a rousing ovation.

Mahler's Symphony No. 1 is a true test of any conductor and orchestra's technical and interpretative powers. And here the challenge was met with success. The first movement opens with a slow introduction, a sustained A, creating a strange. The orchestra began a bit tensely, with the strings wavering a bit. The theme opened over with the arrival of the main theme, a quotation of one of Mahler's own songs, "On the Morning Field I Tread." Zander built up to a truly thrilling climax at the end of the movement which was especially remarkable in that it was totally under control. The exhibition of the orchestra spilled over into the 2nd movement allegro. The third movement is a worthy of some background comment. It is titled "Funeral March in the Manner of Callot" and is famous for its use of the folk song "Breaker Martin" (perhaps you know it as "Frere Jacques") — a rather ironic use in that Mahler turns it into a doleful canonic dance. It gave the 19th century audience the power of nature by its music, and Hodgkinson failed to produce. The melody, which begs to be sung, was played with a cool precision, as was much of the rest of the movement. After a change of key the first theme soon arrived, calling for a lyrical depth, a fiery start, to match the orchestra's similar movement. Hodgkinson opened with a change of key, and when the first theme returned, it was more gentle, with a gradual buildup of tensions. But as things proceeded, the mood was fast and it was just notes.

The orchestra picked up quickly with the next movement, and the virtuoso runs were handled quite well. The majestic march was so impressively played that the orchestra received a standing ovation from the appreciative audience. The New England Conservatory is a top-notch music school as evidenced by their fine symphony orchestra. They offer many concerts a week, ranging from small chamber ensembles to full orchestra concerts, several concerts a week, ranging from small chamber ensembles to full orchestra concerts, and most are free. The unusually designed Jordan Hall is reasonably close to M.I.T., and the entryfee is such that it would be a good place to visit. An All Piece program instrument, that he managed to cover with a stage-wide raised platform, behind the rest of the orchestra. The minimalist trend in popular music is a further development of electronic music, and although they may never create an album like Yes for King Crimson and U.K., is the single greatest influence on Asia's sound. He has a pleasing voice and is a competent composer. Steve Howe, of Yes fame, lends his unique guitar stylings, but as usual, he doesn't stand out, choosing instead to contribute unobtrusively to the overall effect. Geoffrey Downes, who replaced Rick Wakeman on the last Yes album, provides a battery of synthesizers, creating a spacious orchestral backdrop. Virtuosic drummer Carl Palmer, (formerly with ELP) adds earth to the band's image, making it a solid rock band.

The result is pleasing. The track that has received most airplay, "Heat of the Moment," is actually interesting. There is no doubt that it is a commercial attempt, but it retains some of the quality expected from the performers involved. Rhythms are varied, texture complex and melody musical. Commercially aside, the music's sheer skill makes it a pleasure to listen to well-played music again.

The past Thursday saw the Boston debut of Asia. Their show was, as one might guess, well-prodded and not unimpressive. Downes was encased on a stage-side raised platform, behind the rest of the band, that he managed to cover with at least a dozen keyboards. Central to the assembly was a new digital synthesizer, complete with CRT, which he used to grand effect during a keyboard solo that was purely pretentious bombastic (but fun). Palmer contributed to the bombast with an awesome five minute drum solo, complete with oriental gongs and cymbals. Not to be outdone, Steve Howe delivered a more low-key acoustic guitar solo that was quite enjoyable. Asia also played a few new songs that showed promise. With "Heat of the Moment," the concert closed with a show that was entertaining and definitely not boring.

What would the world be without a bit of good wholesome nostalgia now and then? Although the overall sound of Asia is quite up to the task of creating enjoyable music, the "classical rock" back into the public eye, four musicians of distinguished background have bonded together to form Asia. Their music breaks little new ground, but is well conceived and faultlessly performed. John Wetton, former singer/bass player for King Crimson and U.K., is the single greatest influence on Asia's sound. He has a pleasing voice and is a competent composer. Steve Howe, of Yes fame, lends his unique guitar stylings, but as usual, he doesn't stand out, choosing instead to contribute unobtrusively to the overall effect. Geoffery Downes, who replaced Rick Wakeman on the last Yes album, provides a battery of synthesizers, creating a spacious orchestral backdrop. Virtuosic drummer Carl Palmer, (formerly with ELP) adds earth to the band's image, making it a solid rock band.

The result is pleasing. The track that has received most airplay, "Heat of the Moment," is actually interesting. There is no doubt that it is a commercial attempt, but it retains some of the quality expected from the performers involved. Rhythms are varied, texture complex and melody musical. Commercially aside, the music's sheer skill makes it a pleasure to listen to well-played music again.