**ARTS Menuhin mixed; Stern good**

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yehudi Menuhin, Symphony Hall, March 2; Isaac Stern, Symphony Hall, March 3; The Erdely Duo, Kravis Auditorium, March 2.

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's Boston concert was of mixed quality. The first piece, Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man was troubled by an uneasy forcefulness bereft of elegance. Copland's Quiet City for Trumpet, English Horn and Strings Orchestra was more relaxed, though, and given a gentle, thoughtful performance.

André Watts provided a probing account of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2. In the first movement he showed his capacity for a lightness of touch but depth of insight. The strings were at their best at their softest; at times, though, they were coarse and too methodical.

The Adagio showed Watts at his most subtle; at times, here, orchestral accompaniment was most effective too. One lingered, for example, on the sympathetic power of quietly-plucked strings as the pianist, seemingly lost to reality, wandered, as if alone, above the line of the accompaniment. One could hear the silences surrounding each note, and they were haunting.

Watts produced a dazzling conclusion to the piece; the increasing rhythmic drive of the piano was exciting. The orchestra lapsed into woodenness, though, its modelled dynamic disappointing.

The first two movements of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6, Pathétique were given a mundane treatment, but the orchestra woke up to provide a dynamic Allegro, a solo violin of frenetic drive and beautiful balance. And the finale, Adagio lamentoso, Andante, was played with sensitivity, the tragedy of the music brought to the fore. This terrific evening ended the evening.

Isaac Stern was in good form for his Symphony Hall recital on Sunday. In the first half, the tempo di menno of Mozart's Sonata in E minor, K. 304, was particularly enjoyable, the gossamer airiness of Stern's violin met by the simple but passionate piano playing of Paul Ostrovsky.

Bach's Partita No. 1 in B minor for solo violin, BWV 1001, was played with more than mere aesthetic; Stern wove complexities adding meaning at every twist, gripping variations in texture, in emphasis, in mood, underlying a tenacious hold on continuity. An intense performance, then, one as full of humanity as of intellect.

In the second half, the sharp East European tunes of Four Romanian Dances by Barók were played with a melodic beauty, the shapes effortlessly woven, the sound complex and rich. The Erdely Duo above mere technique.

Stephen and Beatrice Erdely have a capacity for Barzny and clarity. At times one suspected that their reading of Beethoven's Sonata in A minor, Op. 23, was mere aesthetic, but there was enough of interest to the second movements. Their lovely playing for the finale. The contrast between piano and cello well developed in Schubert's Sonatina in A minor, Op. 195 with pleasing little touches, while Brahms' Sonata in G, Op. 78, ended the evening with more than enough insight to请.

Erdely Duo above mere technique.

Jonathan Rich

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