New England College Band amazing

The second work of the afternoon, a "Medieval Suite" by Ron Nelson, made extensive use of the varied tonalities of the band. An intoned Gregorian chant, superimposed on ad-libbed trumpet and flute flourishes, created the weighty mood that surrounded the composition. Once again, the musicians shined, producing sustained pedal tones and harmonic intervals under an increasingly complex theme.

The section dedicated to Machaut (the 14th century composer) brought the climax of this piece. Harmonies effortlessly slipped from major to minor keys, as the volume and complexity of the composition steadily grew. Finally, the listener was left with only the haunting opening chant.

The finale, "Gazebo Dances," merely ebbed from major to minor, as the musicians added finishing touches to what the band had already demonstrated. Under Corporon's skillful hand, the group walked through varying time signatures and syncopated accents. An excellent sectional balance was maintained at all dynamics. The final Tarantella took the band full circle, to a familiar beauty feeling found in "Children's March."

The performance could be criticized for a dearth of challenging melodic lines for individual players, in contrast with an earlier performance of MIT's own band. Surely, the lack of rehearsal time and the conscious effort to emphasize the unity of the group made some omissions necessary. But the cohesiveness of the band, something normally expected only of long-standing groups, tended to supersede any such shortcomings, making the afternoon an uplifting experience.

Scott Lichtman