Fresh and interesting performances from Banchetto Musicale

Central Square haven for Middle Eastern Eating Studies

BANCHETTO MUSICALE
conducted by Martin Pearlman.

Ali-Haydn concert
Jordan Hall, Feb. 21.

By JOE SHIPMAN

BANCHETTO MUSICALE'S Music Director Martin Pearlman began the ensemble's all-Ali-Haydn concert (playing the solo part of Haydn's Piano Concerto in D major on a fortepiano). This unusual instrument has the hammer action of a piano, but the strings are damped immediately. The resulting sound has the tone and some of the dynamics of a piano but the clarity of a harpsichord.

The choice was perfect for this piece, which is written in a transitional style and is frequently performed on both piano and harpsichord. Pearlman handled the virtuosic solo part with dash and color, and every note was clear (including a couple of pizzicato in each of the oboes and flutes). Pearlman's handling of the Haydn's Symphony No. 57 in D major is scored for string orchestra, oboes, and violins that are “natural horns.” Unfortunately, one of the oboes got snowed in in New York and the work was performed without either oboe. There was no noticeable loss of harmonies, but the performance may have lost a little color. There were, nevertheless, some very interesting tonal effects — thrumming basses and cellos at the beginning of the first movement.

The second movement, the final, a difficult prelude, was well done. I had enjoyed the Concerto more, but that may simply be because it is a greater piece of music.

After the intermission, the program concluded with Missa in Angelis, “Missa in Time of Fear,” popularly known as the “Lord Nelson Mass.” Like the other two pieces we heard, it is in the key of D. Dating from 1798, it is the most recently composed piece Banchetto has ever played.

The Mass is scored for orchestra, organ, and chorus. Of the four guest soloists, soprano Sharon Barker and baritone James Maddalena were very impressive, while mezzo Pamela Dellal and tenor Jeffrey Thomas were good but not spectacular. This was a long and interesting piece, and I would like to listen to it again. I thought the orchestra and chorus did well, but the organ (which was a replacement for the one originally to be used) sounded a little too “modern” and unchurchlike.

Overall this was quite a nice concert. Banchetto's fidelity to original instruments and original scores, coupled with musical sensitivity, always results in fresh and interesting performances. I am looking forward to their Don Giovanni on Apr. 11 and 13.

KEBABISH OF LAHORE
Khyber Pass Cuisine at Central Square.

By BEN STANGER

KEBABISH OF LAHORE, flanked by several other Central Square Indian restaurants, offers MIT aficionados a remarkable two-for-one deal. It is one of the most affordable ethnic restaurants in hungry Cambridge. But is it not only cheap, if you order the right dishes, Kebabish provides interesting and filling food.

Ordering the right dishes, however, is somewhat of a task. The six of us had a hard time arranging a diverse dinner using the standard algorithm of: one chicken, one beef, one lamb, etc.

The appetizers were the most successful part of the meal. The spicy vegetable pakora was a definite winner, and the samosas also made for a delicious start. The main part of the meal was more homemade than the introduction. One round of tourists felt the need to distinguish between the goopy and the chewy. Among the chewy dishes, the lamb and chicken kebabs (or tikka) led the list. The chicken was plump and fragrantly spiced, the lamb was rich and barbecued perfectly. We had one tandoor dish, chicken shish. The quality of meat was high, and it was carefully spiced and cooked.

The lamb shawarma was disappointingly mild in taste. But it had enough spice to give it a tender, foreign flare. It was not the flavor that many people expect it to be. But even so, you will thank the waiter when he comes to refill your water glass.

The beef and vegetarian curry dishes were better, but also bland. A delicious dish that was neither too spicy nor too bland is the ghost tikka. Fresh and interesting performances from Banchetto Musicale.

Central Square haven for Middle Eastern Eating Studies.

Keep in touch with the 'Tute...

The Tech's been keeping in touch with the Institute for over a century — covering issues both on and off campus that affect MIT students. From the future of student loans to the future of pass/fail grading, from fun on the football field to fun in and around Boston and Cambridge. The Tech has kept its readers informed and entertained since 1881. There's no better way for parents (and aunts and uncles and brothers and sisters and goldfish) to keep in touch with what's going on at the Institute. Subscribe to The Tech — join 12,000 readers who keep in touch...

with The Tech.