Cymbeline, After Shakespeare
Written by Charles Fussell
Performed by the Collage New Music Ensemble at Sanders Theatre, Monday, November 2.

By JULIAN WEST

Collage, the contemporary chamber music group predominantly composed of Boston Symphony Orchestra musicians, may be thankful to have survived the adversities of the past fifteen years. After Monday night's performance of Charles Fussell's Cymbeline, we may well wish them fifteen more years of success.

Cymbeline follows Shakespeare's tale of Roman Britain and was Shakespeare's language, but does not seek to reproduce the entire play. Rather, Fussell has taken scenes from the play as inspiration for some delightful music: bright, airy, and playful. The quickness of the music may be gauged from the instruments: violin, viola, cello, bass, French horn, bass clarinet, oboe and English horn, bass clarinet, bagpipes.

The effect of the music is somewhat reminiscent of Britten's Midsummer Night's Dream — dissonant, difficult, and delightful. Collage played excellently under Fussell's direction, and Jackson Gallo- way provided some wonderful solo bagpipes. The instrumentation, correctly, share the stage with the singers.

The performance was billed as a "world premiere" but it may more accurately be called a work in progress. Certainly a few holes in the plot deserve to be plugged, and the composition has reached a clumsy stage. Unfortunately, anyone really trying to follow the plot in either English or Ameslan must have been disappointed, as there were a number of gaping holes. Perhaps the worst was the finale, in which the soothsayer interprets a prophecy which has been delivered into the hands of Posthumus. Unfortunately, in the opera, the prophecy has not previously been mentioned, so the soothsayer's explanation makes no sense.

Another troublesome feature of the li-}

brettos was the character of Imogen. Al-}

though an appealing Elizabethan heroine,}

the demands made on her character do not exactly give with modern feminist theories.}

Perhaps this is one reason why the play is now little performed, but Fussell had an opportunity to exercise three reference

He nearly succeeds, but the phrase "you}

must be our housewife" sticks out awk-

wardly and unnecessarily.

O well, perhaps few noticed. After all,}

lights were provided but the lights were}

off during the performance.

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