Harbison’s dawn has incredible power; dusk a relief

BOSTON PHILHARMONIC
Conducted by Benjamin Zander.
East Coast premiere of
Harbison’s Symphony No. 2.
Works by Barber and Smetana.
Sanders Theatre, November 8.

By ALLAN G. PERCUS

JOHN HARBIson, chef of 1949
Professor and Chairman of the Music
and Dramatic Arts Section at MIT,
was able to attend Sunday after-
noon’s concert due to a prior
engagement on the West Coast.
As Benjamin Zander,
conductor of the Boston Phil-
harmonic, said at the beginning of
the concert, “I suppose it’s a measure of
success of a composer when he can attend
his own premieres.”

Harbison’s symphony followed a decid-
edly contemporary style, displaying
intellectual motivation rather than aesthetic
pleasure, but at no point was it unenjoy-
able. The piece was written in four move-
ments: Dawn, Daylight, Dusk and Dark-
ness. Each contributed equally to the full
spectrum of the work, while emphasizing a
completely different aspect. Although the
movements were played continuously, there
was no question as to where each
one began and ended.

The orchestra clearly had an affinity for
the work, as Zander promised at the out-
set. Dawn began with incredible power,
steadily building on itself as the strings
combined their own theme with the al-
ready developed wind and brass melodies.
The climax of Daylight then brought back
the full effect of the orchestra, including
the extensive group of percussion instru-
ments. As the sun’s power started declin-
ing, a chorus of clarinets softly ushered in
the Dusk.

After Dusk had set in, the vitality of the
previous movement became evident from
the contrast. Now more than ever, the mu-
sic showed off its true value as the amount
of activity in the orchestra decreased, and
one could consequently focus more of one’s
attention on the various instruments.

Most impressive in this movement,
though, was the effectiveness with which
Smetana's String Quartet

JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET
Program of works by Smetena,
Schubert, and Schubert.
Jordan Hall, November 1.

By DAVIN WONG

A GREAT AUDIENCE GATHERED at the Jul-
liard String Quartet, now in its 51st season. The all-American
ensemble is composed of Robert Mann, first violin; Joel Smir-
nov, second violin; Stuart Rhodes, viola; and Joel Krosnick, cello.

The Quartet no. 1 in E minor by Be-
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