Stellar Stravinsky redeems MIT Symphony Orchestra

MIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Kresge Auditorium,
Saturday, March 12, 8:30 pm.

By David M. J. Saslaw

A INTERMISSION, things looked bleak. Mozart's 39th Symphony, had been victimized by vastly underprepared strings and brass in the first half of the concert. Conducted Alan Yamamoto, apparently unaware that his players were ready to begin the second half of the concert, did not appear concerned. Had he left the theater? Would the show go on?

Finally, after about forty-five curious seconds, one of the trumpets smacked in a practice run, and the tension dissipated in laughter. Yamamoto made his entrance and closed the evening with a stellar rendition of Stravinsky's Symphony in Three Movements.

It was highly dramatic throughout. Nearly all of the life displayed in the Mozart magically vanished; the strings were redly crystal clear, and the horns and trumpets came alive with a flourish. Especially crisp were the syncopated beats in the third movement, and Yamamoto's tempo selection was so vital to Mozart's horizontal music, there was little definition of line and thirds. There was much less definition of line (so vital to Mozart's horizontal music), and no uniformity of string tone whatsoever. Yamamoto's tempo selection was sporty in most of his players either couldn't keep up with them, or grew lazy and fell behind. The Finale contained painful examples of both.

The conclusion of the evening was so dramatic and effective, that one can only wonder what kind of siphan awaited the players in the locker room at halftime. Whatever happened, they came back strong, revitalize, and adjusted; and the crowd that left Kresge Auditorium at evening's end was, on the whole, a pleased one, after all.

Alan Yamamoto conducts the MIT Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Mozart's 39th symphony.

The Chorallaries won the spirit of the day in Bad Taste.