THE ARTS

MIT Symphony recovers after uncertain start

MIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Conducted by David Yeedide.
John Doe '93, viola
Works by Walton and Beethoven.
Kreange Auditorium.
Oct. 15, 8:30 p.m.

By Craig Chang

S
aturday night saw confidence threaten the musical potential of the MIT Sym-
phony Orchestra and its soloist John Doe. Waving through the night's per-
formance of Walton's Viola Concerto and Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 were poise and
musical decisiveness, bound in hand.
First signs of insecurity during the first
movement of the Walton concerto translated
into an ambigious musical stance. A weak
rap-
pport between Doe and TSO solos suggested the players were not yet fully
focused, a state of which impression to cap-
ture. Even the dubious entrance of the viola's
second subject confused the bitter-sweet duali-
ity around which the piece develops.
Though Doe and the orchestra seemed to
relish much of their misguided energy during the scherzo, the last movement remained the players' turning point. Here richness of con-
terpoint emerged from the ensemble's music-
making, especially during the finale's fugal
section. Quite dramatically, the bold appearance of the bass clarinet solo seemed to reaffirm
the players' convictions.

This last movement also revealed Doe's ener-
gy and wide range of emotions. As its recapitu-
lated the second subject from the first move-
ment, his playing projected both a tinge of bitter
content and nostalgia, for the finale seemed to
be remaining previous themes. And just as the
final movement capitalizes on its intermingling
of themes and voices, the orchestra demonstrat-
ed new enthusiasm as it relit the sheer con-
temporal joy of the medley.

The last half of the evening's program
showcased the talents of the woodwinds with
Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Indeed the
players caught much of the rural splendor of
Beethoven's evocation of Nature. Especially
radiant was the interplay between the oboes,
flutes, and clarinets: Frolicking in the country-
side seems one apt impression from their
playing.

But, the violins seemed to bawl too much in
the luxurciousness of their sound. Indeed, a vel-
vet texture was appropriate for many moments, but their overemotionalism with the lush
sacred variety and subdued the role of the
other strings. In throwing off the balance, the
violins took much of the bite out of the
rustic edginess of the third movement.

Even with this blurred palette, energy and
enthusiasm was on the rise during the sym-
phony's finale. This trend produced some
wonderful moments of exultation, unquench-
able by minor mishaps — instead, able to
forge past the uncertainty of the evening's
shaky coda.

Tarantino's Pulp Fiction revels in gangster bravado

PULP FICTION
Written and Directed by Quentin Tarantino.
Starring John Travolta, Bruce Willis,
Samuel L. Jackson, and Uma Thurman.
Loose Cherri.
By Rob Marcato

I
spynchance to have even the slightest char-
acteristics of a film enthusiast, there is no
way that you could have missed hearing or
reading the recent praises of the new film Pulp Fiction. Since it won the Palm d'Or at
the Cannes Film Festival this year, critics have extolled its virtues, giving it such exalted
titles as "the new King Kong of crime
movies."

Faced with writing this review, and
knowing Pulp Fiction to be by far the most-
ecstatically hoped movie in recent memory, the
last thing I wanted to do was be the con-
formist and S/A into step with every other
review I had read. Therefore, the fact that I
am giving it a positive review, and an over-
whelmingly positive one at that, should tip
you off as to Pulp Fiction's undeniable
greatness.

The film consists of three principle stories.
One details the daily experiences of two hit-
men (John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson).
Another sees Travolta, at the request of his
gangster boss, reluctantly taking the boss's
wife (Uma Thurman) out for a night on the
town. And the third shows a boxer (Bruce
Willis), who has been paid off by Travolta's
gangster boss to take a dive in his upcoming
fight, instead choosing to win the fight and to
take the money and run with his girlfriend.
These and other smaller subplots are cleverly
woven together to give an intensely entertain-
ing depiction of the L.A. underworld.

But, in a film whose praise has been most-
duly due to its originality, these tales of hit men
and criminals are certainly nothing we haven't
seen before. So, what is it that makes the film
so fresh and so unlike anything before it? The
key does not lie in the film's best performance as Vega's partner
Jules, gives his character an incredible inten-
sity whether he's reading his victim a pas-
sage from the Bible as a prelude to execution
or arguing about the intimacy of foot-mas-
sages. He shows how Jules has begun to
develop a conscience and reveals the inner
conflicts that it causes. The depth of the char-
acters is greatly due to Tarantino's wit and
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Pulp Fiction and the current film Natural
Born Killers, and now with Pulp Fiction, Tarantino has demonstrated that all the
prophecies of his unique ability were well-
deserved.

There are several elements that set Pulp
Fiction and its writer/director apart from all
others. First are the characters: Tarantino
doesn't depict his hit-men as one-dimensional
killing machines. He reveals their complexi-
ties and depth by not only showing them when
they are at work, but concentrating more on
what they do before and after they work. For
example, Travolta is fantastic in showing us
that as hit man Vincent Vega he is not just a
killer, but a thinker and a skeptic with vulner-
ability.

And Samuel L. Jackson, in perhaps the
film's best performance as Vega's partner
Jules, gives his character an incredible inten-
sity whether he's reading his victim a pas-
sage from the Bible as a prelude to execution
or arguing about the intimacy of foot-mas-
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