

NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
76 CHARLES STREET WEST
TORONTO 181, ONTARIO

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Youth orchestra shows its impressive talents

By JEAN READ

The National Youth Orchestra opened at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Saturday night a series of local concerts with a program of Bernstein, Ravel, Hindemith and Prokofiev — important works all, challenging enough to try the capabilities of any orchestra, never mind one's whose membership qualifications include an age bracket of 14 to 25.

But this year's display of musical aptitude proved to be so impressive, from both a technical and interpretive standpoint, that it was easy to forget chronological age and become totally involved in the quality of the music. Under Kazuyoshi Akiyama's emphatic direction, the orchestra demonstrated a versatility and sophistication that went well beyond the expectations, no doubt, of most of the 1,400 who gathered to see it.

The evening started with a vital, unhibited handling of Bernstein's colorful Overture to Candide, a short and brightly appealing piece of music that did much to establish the high

level of discipline evident in all of the orchestra's work.

This was followed by Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major — a composition designed to bring out the personality of the piano, a task that guest soloist Bela Siki managed with technical brilliance but a slight dryness of tone, felt most obviously in the sustained song of the second movement, which was somehow lacking in depth. But the orchestra captured the capricious quality of the first and third movements admirably, with the appropriate attitude of vivacity.

Beginning the second part of the program was an interesting Hindemith composition, Kammermusik No. 3, Opus 36 No. 2.

The 10-piece chamber ensemble grasped Hindemith's subtle intricacies with a neat and capable textural awareness, while soloist Peter Schenkman drew a highly satisfactory range of color from his instrument.

But the party piece of the evening was Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 — and rightly so, as it showed off every section of the orchestra to great advantage.

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What
people
are
doing

by
Pat Wallace

Programme One

BERNSTEIN - Overture, Candide
RAVEL - Piano Concerto in G Major
Intermission
HINDEMITH - Kammermusik No. 3 op 36 No. 2
PROKOFIEV - Symphony No. 5 op 100

All platitudes aside, there's something richly reassuring, something beautiful about youth in its pride. All those brown, exuberant and healthy youngsters at Swagard Stadium Sunday afternoon at the closing moments of the Canada Summer Games expressed it.

In the evening, another slice of youthful dedication both on stage and in the audience at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre where Canada's National Youth Orchestra was performing.

The audience was predominantly youthful which refutes their elders' fixed opinion that young ears are only tuned in to discord.

Symphony has its appeal even though the evening was hot and velvety and the beach or parks might have been the logical place to find the teenagers.

Dress was the ultimate in casual . . . but with a sprinkling of more formal attire on the few older ladies in the audience. There were jeans, shorts, tank tops, bare backs, even bare feet.

But there was unanimity in appreciation of the music played under the baton of Maestro Akiyama. There will be further concerts August 17, 25, and 30.

★ ★ ★