

1975

Recital: Eugene Fodor

By DONAL HENAHAN

Eugene Fodor's career will be one to follow with interest. The 26-year-old American violinist, who tied for second prize in the Tchaikovsky Violin Competition at Moscow in 1974, plays his instrument with impressive technical command but as yet there is little interpretive depth in his performances. That comes next, perhaps.

In his appearance at Avery Fisher Hall yesterday, Mr. Fodor certainly fiddled up a storm at times, especially when he addressed himself to essentially violinistic works such as the Caprices No. 17 and No. 24 of Paganini. Only occasionally did Mr. Fodor's desire to dazzle outrun his ability, as in the left-hand pizzicato section of the 24th Paganini. Intonation, rhythm, one, bow facility—the Colorado-born musician fell below one's expectations in none of those departments.

Where Mr. Fodor's recital proved disappointing was on higher levels, which he seems perfectly able to explore if he should care to. In Bach's unaccompanied Sonata No. 1 in G minor, the skeletal notes were clearly laid out without communicating the nobility and grandeur of the music.

The playing was literal, unembellished and, particularly in the fugue, insufficiently concerned with design and architecture. The Presto went off with virtuosic speed, though without much meaning. Here and there in the Bach attempts to vary accents, articulation and phrasing could be detected, but not nearly enough.

Prokofiev's Sonata No. 2 in D, though it suffered from pianistic anemia (the lid was completely closed), shaped up satisfyingly. Stephen Swedish, at the keyboard, took a reticent accompanist's role, and while Mr. Fodor performed the piece as a kind of concerto, he did so with vitality and even some elegance.

Penderecki's "Three Miniatures for Violin and Piano" did not strike one as ideal music for this hall, depending too much on sympathetic overtones and other acoustic subtleties. Kreisler's "Tambourin chinois" was treated like a velocity study, and lost all charm. Bloch's "Simchas Torah" from "Baal Shem" (rather than the usual "Nigun") made for a welcome departure, and Mr. Fodor gave it a quietly restrained reading.

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