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News of Music

Recalls by Audience Attest Pleasure in Laszlo's Playing

By Alice Eversman

The post which 20-year-old Ervin Laszlo was called to fill last night as soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra in Constitution Hall might have dismayed a more seasoned artist. He was a last-minute substitute for Dame Myra Hess, whose illness required the cancellation of her appearance as late as last Friday. Furthermore, he was asked to play the Schumann "Concerto in A Minor," one of the British pianist's specialties. The six or seven recalls urged by the applause at the close of his performance was sufficient indication of how well he pleased the audience.

Four years ago almost to the day—March 24, 1949—Mr. Laszlo made his local debut in Constitution Hall in a benefit recital for the scholarship fund sponsored by the Smith College Club of Washington. The years between his two appearances have been put to good use and marked progress was noticeable in the art of the young Hungarian. He has personal poise and an agreeable stage presence. His technique has steadied itself considerably and his natural exuberance has been checked.

Mexican rhythms and folk tunes, expertly woven together in Copland's smooth style. Berlioz's exciting "Roman Carnival" overture was the introductory number and the close offered the greatest contrast in symphonic technique in "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" from Wagner's "Die Gotterdammerung" and Respighi's "The Pines of Rome."

This was all lusty music for the most part with oases of melody, as the love song in the overture, and "The Pine Trees of the Janiculum," brought to an end with the recording of a nightingale's song. The demands on variety of tonal effects and dynamics these works offered were fulfilled with artistic concern by Dr. Mitchell and the musicians. The conductor's watchful, spirited directing provided a most colorful evening for the large audience that had braved the stormy weather to be present.

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His performance of the concerto was polished in every detail. What it lacked was emotional depth and understanding of the particularly delicate character of Schumann's sentiment. A good, clear, deftly shaded tone, musical feeling and rhythmic security, together with fluency and strength, were in evidence throughout his delivery. But the tender melodies of the first Allegro and the truly Schumannesque quality of the Intermezzo could have been made more communicative.

The artist maintained sensitively the dialogue character between piano and orchestra, yet there were times when assertiveness would have outlined the picture more fully and with judicious dramatic effect. The figurations in the final movement were played brilliantly and easily, demonstrating his fine technical mastery. He needs only for his notable talent to ripen to take an individual place among pianists.

The orchestral part of the program was one of the most colorful Howard Mitchell has selected. It featured the first performance by the National Symphony of Copland's "El Salon Mexico," a vivid combination of

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