

Concert

Dorati Leads Muscular Beethoven Program

The Beethoven that Washington's National Symphony Orchestra emphasized in a program given over to that composer's music yesterday afternoon at Avery Fisher Hall was the monumental sculptor, not the Romantic tone painter. In the Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, splendidly played by the soloist, Peter Frankl, the orchestra under Antal Dorati set the basic style and the pianist contributed graceful variations.

The Third Concerto lends itself nicely to the kind of sturdy, heavily accented interpretation that Mr. Dorati gave to the opening movement's orchestral exposition. Mr. Frankl could contrast brusque passages with more gentle and aristocratic phrases and keep the performance in perspective, reminding the listener of its Mozartean parallels and inspirations. The pianist's playing had a strong spine to it, and a powerful momentum except in the Largo, where the line tended to sag because of an exceedingly slow basic tempo.

After intermission, Mr. Dorati took on the Third Symphony and carried on the blunt, muscular view of Beethoven that he had established so quickly in the concerto. This was an "Eroica" with scarcely a light or tender moment, even in the Funeral March. The orchestra played with precision and a robust tone, but one grew jaded after a time with Mr. Dorati's four-square rhythms and the almost brutal attacks that he favored during much of the symphony.

DONAL HENAHAN

