

Critique of Army band unfair

To The Editor:

On June 23 the First Infantry Division Band gave a concert as part of the summer Arts in the Park series. I have noted the review given by your music critic, Mr. Payne, and wish to take issue with that review.

Being a career Army officer, published composer, and professional musician since my election to ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) in 1974, I feel qualified to make the following statements regarding the music presented and Mr. Payne's curious thoughts on military spending. The views expressed here, however, are mine alone and do not represent any official military policy.

The only criticism of the music was one word, "uninspired." Just exactly what does that mean? I kept reading the review hoping that some musical analysis was to be made about the playing. Alas, there was none, simply a glittering generality, "uninspired."

Music performance is made up of correct notes, proper rhythm, appropriate tempos, dynamics, good pitch, crisp attacks and releases, good ensemble balance when two or more are playing, and consistent phrasing.

In my opinion, the performance was well played, musically addressing all elements of performance. I was particularly pleased with the fine ensemble playing, translating the music so beautifully from the most delicate pianos to the fortes.

The general "beef" and focus of the article was not on the music. Instead, it was on the use and allotment of funds by the Department of the Army. If one is going to be a music critic, then address the music. If one is going to take issue with political matters, then address that on the general editorial page, and leave music out of it.

The matter of how the defense

budget is spent has to encompass not only the materials of war, but also how to meet the psychological, spiritual, social, and physical needs of its people. The military must provide for itself the same richness of community life that our civilian counterparts have in order to assure that the defense of this nation be accomplished by persons who are fulfilled, content, and capable human beings. Army bands meet some of these needs for the military and do more than just play in public parks.

Mr. Payne's suggestion that the priority of spending for Army bands versus that of the National Endowment for the Arts be questioned, isn't fair. While I am sympathetic to the needs of the national endowment, it is no more appropriate to siphon money from the Army's cultural and recreational needs than it is to ask the same of the citizens of Manhattan, sending

their monies to the National Endowment for the Arts.

If Army spending is a matter of concern to Mr. Payne, it should be addressed through the appropriate channels of the Congress and Senate. They, if they choose, can adjust the defense budget.

I shall not leave my comments where Mr. Payne left his, simply on non-constructive criticism, but suggest Mr. Payne subscribe to the *Washington Post* and review the work of their illustrious music editor, Mr. Paul Hume. He frequently had critical remarks to make, but they were always based on sound musical analysis in appropriate detail, not just one word. In his unforgettable skewering of Margaret Truman's singing, he not only said that it was bad, but why it was bad and did so with taste and dignity, not mixing politics and music.

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