

# Recital 'one of best concerts' of season

By IFAN PAYNE  
Music Critic

"One of the best concerts of the season", proclaimed an acquaintance as I walked out of All Faiths on Wednesday evening at the end of Craig Parker's trumpet recital.

And certainly it was an event that was as stimulating as it was rich in variety and enlightenment.

Mr. Parker is a gifted musician who is also an engaging entertainer with a flair for the *mot juste*, scattering his recitals with observations: "If you think that the piccolo trumpet has an ear-piercing sound — just think what two of them will do."

One of the more interesting aspects of music-making in this community is that there are opportunities to take advantage of the relationship between town and gown. There is also the notion that the university is part of a wider community and that it can be more than a forum for presenting concerts; that there are occasions when advantage can or should be taken of the educational mission of the university, a mission that surely has a wider frame of reference than the classroom and the prescribed course work.

Thus it seems entirely appropriate for a musician on occasion to be educational, entertaining and musical all at the same time, which is exactly what Craig Parker succeeded in doing. His spoken introductions to the works which he played were informative and witty and entirely ap-

propriate. Perhaps he has not yet pithiness of a Thomas Beecham...but as every trumpeter knows, practice makes perfect.

The danger of this approach is in being patronizing, or of talking down to an audience or of being just plain silly.

Mr. Parker was none of these things. He was funny, he was enlightening and he was unfailingly musical and stylish in his playing.

Thus it was, for example that his amusing introductory comments to "Largo al factotum" from *The Barber of Seville* did not lead to a hammed-up rendition. On the contrary, the performance, with Mary Ellen Sutton's sparkling yet controlled accompaniment at the piano, was elegant and stylish and, as soon as one adjusted to the slightly slower than expected tempo, through its quality made one listen afresh to music that has become routine through overuse. This despite (perhaps because of?) an introduction in which Mr. Parker informed us that he would be playing the work in the original Italian. This, of course, was a blow to those of us who are advocates of opera in English!

Mention of Mary Ellen Sutton's excellent contribution reminds me that the other assisting artists during the concert were percussionist Craig Biegler and trumpeter Philip Clark. Clark, who studied with Craig Parker, now performs with the Kansas City Symphony and who showed

himself to be a secure and musically attractive player.

It is not possible to detail the many contributions made by these performers, but it should be pointed out that their individual and collective contributions were of the same high order as that of Mr. Parker himself.

One composition must, though be singled out, for both its entertainment value and for the "gee whizz" quality of the music.

"I bet that all of you came here to find out what a piece of music that is called *Diversions for Two (other than sex)* sounds like", said Craig Parker by way of introduction.

What it sounds like is a clever collection of pops and clicks and whistles and kisses into the trumpet mouthpiece by Craig Parker and joyous tapping and pounding and carressing of percussion by the other Craig, and a "let's-see-that-again!" moment when he, Craig, Biegler, that is, tapped the skin of the timpani in front of him while seemingly simultaneously tapping the copper sides of the timpani behind him.

Don't ask me how he did that...he seems to have only two hands like the rest of us.

A fascinating and entertaining work that is well crafted in terms of exploring the variety of aural excitations that two men with lengths of metal tubing 'n stuff can produce.

The concert ended with a performance of Hanley Jackson's *Aesop's Trumpeter* that contained one bit of

staging that was a successful development from the first performance in that the trumpeter entered from behind the audience.

The programming could scarcely be faulted for its variety or interest, but given the languors produced by the warmth of the evening it could perhaps have been a little shorter (maybe the Stoezel could have been sacrificed?).

The playing by all concerned could not be faulted...well, this Beckmesser did make a few notations, but I am not about to be picky about such an evening.

More importantly, when may we hear Herbert Clarke's captivating *Cousins* again?

Yes, I think he had a point.

Certainly one of the most stimulating concerts.