

MUSIC

By WARREN WIRTZ

NESS AND MILSTEIN SOLOISTS

What makes Minneapolis more important musically than most cities of its size is that it is growing at a faster rate. In last night's performance of Arnold Schoenberg's Second String Quartet, Op. 10, by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in Northrop auditorium, a first American performance, Minneapolis led the country.

We may be grateful to Mr. Mitropoulos for such leadership as this. His is the historical point of view which will not allow the possessor to die with the times.

Yet, lest we become smug and gain too much pleasure from this kind of superiority, it must be remembered that the quartet was published 26 years ago.

It represents only the beginning of the one school of composition which is fundamentally new. Though we are ahead of others, there is still 26 years to bring us up to what is current. Let this performance lead to more firsts.

Schoenberg's Second Quartet is transitional in character—it comes at the end of his more or less conventional period and before the atonal beginnings of the piano pieces of Opus 11. Wagner, less self-indulgent, is still there. A noticeable change of style, however, develops in the course of the four movements.

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Nancy Ness, soloist in the third and fourth movements, was commissioned by Mr. Mitropoulos to set this remarkable precedent among singers. The vocal difficulties of her part, more real than apparent, were so in her command that it meant a tre-

mendously moving performance. Her dramatic soprano voice is of great range, and especially her low tones are rich and sonorous.

Hers is an intense and thorough musicianship fully grounded in conventional successes, and last night her dramatic projection of Stefan Georg's lines had powerful expressive impact.

It is true that farther back in the auditorium, the quartet lost much of intimate detail and that Miss Ness' voice was at times covered by the strings. In rehearsal this was not the case. Perhaps if she had been in front of the orchestra (the usual place for an easier work but less justified for the complications of the Schoenberg score), a more equitable balance might have been achieved.

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It was rather unfortunate that the old vehicle, Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, offered by Nathan Milstein, coming as it did after an enterprising and rarely heard work, detracted somewhat from his superb artistry.

Smooth and youthful in appearance, Mr. Milstein played as polished a violin as one can hear. A clear and natural tone plus a pleasing interpretative

fluidity made it highly expressive.

A sprightly reading of Haydn's *Symphony in G Major*, No. 88, completed the program. Mr. Mitropoulos made the delicious good humor of the minuet entirely captivating.

AMUSEMENTS

What Goes On Here

By BRENDA UELAND

AT KSTP WITH NANCY THEN. Bee Baxter admires her hat. (Nancy laughs; it cost \$1.95, or indeed 90 cents. It is just an old one with white flowers added.) We go to the symphony and she looks just dazzling, sloe-eyed, laughing, a cloud of black tulle above those eyes, and turn-up nose, and strong shoulders and jewels sewn on her dress and the fur boa. Oh, my.

We ate dinner in the kitchen and it is like having dinner with a kind of Renoir prima donna in Paris, under glass chandeliers with champagne.

Adorable Nancy, so honest, strong, warm. And full of feeling and nobly intellectual—knows Ibsen, Bjornsen, great music, etc. And sometimes she is one of those people who just laugh, laughs her head off.