

RARE TREAT FOR MUSIC LOVERS

(BY REV. AENGUS BUCKLEY,
O.P.)

LIMERICK received a rare treat yesterday evening when Yehudi Menuhin and the Philharmonia Orchestra gave a recital in the Savoy Theatre.

The Orchestra opened the concert with that delightful overture by Rossini, "The Silken Ladder," a work of gaiety and verve, typical of the master in his more whimsical moods. But there are many pitfalls in interpreting the compositions of a composer like Rossini, all of which the Philharmonia avoided. Indeed, Efram Kurtz, the conductor, understanding that freshness is its keynote gave that delightful rendering of it which has made the Overture one of the favourites of concert-goers.

Yehudi Menuhin followed with the famous violin concerto by Beethoven; the only one the Master wrote for the instrument. It is a profound work that tests a violinist's technique to its limits, whilst at the same time demanding a depth of musical sensibility for its interpretation. Beethoven may have only written one violin concerto but in it we have the masterpiece.

HIS TECHNICAL ABILITY.

Certainly Menuhin's technical ability is nothing short of extraordinary and the ease with which he played some of the most difficult passages in all violin playing was a delight to see and hear. In all he seemed effortless and his tonality was superb throughout. Particularly in the Larghetto of the Second Movement there was that round and full tone that have made the name of Menuhin famous. Here there is a dreamlike quality that creeps into the texture of the music which was used to its full extent. The blending of the Orchestra with the solo instrument made, indeed, this passage an unforgettable experience.

Still one wonders if the Menuhin interpretation of the rest of the Concerto just missed the brilliance that Beethoven surely intended it to have, especially in the ornamental passages. Contrast, that element that Beethoven so much loved, seemed to be missing. This was especially noticeable in the finale where the Rondo is linked to the preceding movement of the Larghetto by only a brief cadenza, after which the music immediately takes hold of the Rondo theme—and what a theme. The tonality and pensiveness of the Larghetto should have been lost in the roll-licking Beethoven humour of the Rondo.

WONDERFUL CONCERTO.

The wonderful Concerto in E. Minor by Mendelssohn followed. This is a work of exquisite beauty and justly beloved by all violinists. It, too, demands an impeccable technique as well as a poetic interpretation, especially is this latter needed in the famous "link" or Andante of the Second Movement. Menuhin shone here; indeed, that part could have been written for him. It was a magical piece of playing and interpretation and here again we had the glory of the Menuhin broadness of tonality. One forgot the orchestra, even forgot the soloist, whilst the emotional cloak of Mendelssohn at his best covered all like a spell.

There seemed to be some hesitancy in the opening bars, but once Menuhin got into stride the master hand took over, and made it, indeed, a memorable evening.

The potentialities of the Orchestra were best seen in the "Egmont" Overture which followed. Needless to say this is not Beethoven at his best, but it is, nevertheless, a powerful piece of composition. The Philharmonia brought out everything—it had, indeed at times it seemed as if it would break into a Symphony. The pity is that there wasn't some major work on the programme for the Orchestra that would do it justice. It is to be hoped that the Limerick Symphony Concerts Society will give its patrons the opportunity of hearing this fine Orchestra again.