

S.B. Symphony in top form for Strauss concert

By JERROLD PRITCHARD

CONCERT REVIEW

The San Bernardino Symphony scored a major triumph Saturday by overcoming the musical and technical problems inherent in a concert devoted to only one composer.

Under maestro Stewart Robertson's masterful baton, this first-rate ensemble plumbed the depths of Richard Strauss' expressive output over a long and fruitful life.

At the outset of the symphonic tone poem "Don Juan," the orchestra took its stand that this was to be a vigorous, energetic and exciting evening. The clean, clear and lyric conducting of Robertson helped balance the lush strings and full brass sections, the tender and the brash, so that the delicate and sensitive flute and clarinet lines could interplay.

The Horn Concerto in E Flat began with a fierce bugle call which announced the warm, rich horn tone of an outgoing and confident young soloist, Eric Ruske, an artist of the highest level. His complete command of the treacherous wide-leaping melody and

the variety of tone color and moods which he drew from his instrument produced a vocal-like quality of operatic proportions.

The second half of the program featured "Serenade for 13 Winds," a intimate and delicate jewel of Strauss' youth which deals with sonority as much as with classic form. The usually excellent wind section ... lacked the richness, fullness and direction of line we have come to expect from this fine group.

The final work on the program, the 1945 "Suite," was adapted from the 1911 Richard Strauss opera "Der Rosenkavalier." The opening was lively and full, with the string section at its singing, flowing best. This performance was elegantly done.

The San Bernardino Symphony was in great form and performed with the musicality and high level of artistry we have come to expect under the fine leadership of Robertson.

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