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Hornist Ruske delights Symphony-goers

By ANNA CREBO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

WEST YARMOUTH — The sounding of the horn is a traditional call to alertness and to arms. For soldiers it signaled an impending battle; for hunters, it announced the chase.

The modern French horn — capable of complex and subtle utterances — retains its primal flavor, rousing the spirits and imparting a sense of high adventure. Small wonder all four of Mozart's horn concertos — which are among his most popular works — have exuberant "hunting call" finales.

Boston-based hornist Eric Ruske, who has recently recorded these works with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Sir Charles Mackerras, combined subtly and precision with an open, buoyant sound in his performance yesterday afternoon with the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra of Mozart's Concerto for Horn and Orchestra No. 3 in E-Flat, K447. Led by Royston Nash, a pared-down orchestra, consisting of strings with pairs of clarinets and bassoons, provided stylish and notably well-balanced accompaniment. Ruske, a top prize-winner in sev-

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eral international horn competitions, seemed a bit overly cautious at the beginning of the opening allegro, but he soon hit his stride, delivering a smooth, dynamically varied rendition of the elegantly flowing movement. The poetic romance that followed was remarkable for Ruske's clean, pianissimo entrances and long, gracefully curving phrases. Best of all was the deftly delivered, rollicking 6/8 finale, with its fleeting but unmistakable hunting calls.

Recalled for an encore, Ruske responded with Marin Marais's joyful, fast-paced "Le Basque."

The concert opened with American Broadway and film composer Richard Adler's "Wilderness Suite," commissioned by the National Park Service and premiered in 1983 by the Utah Symphony Orchestra. In six movements, the programmatic work sought to depict

in musical terms important elements and scenes that are preserved in our Western national parks. It also paid homage to Native Americans, specifically the Athabazi of Utah and the Navajos.

Percussionists in particular were kept busy with prominent xylophone solos, Chinese cymbals, tambourine and wood block accents, tom-toms and various drum and timpani rolls.

Adler, who is best known for his collaboration with fellow songwriter Jerry Ross in the Tony award-winning musicals "The Pajama Game" (1954) and "Damn Yankees" (1955), was on hand to speak to the audience after the presentation of his work. He will also attend tonight's and tomorrow afternoon's performances.

Animatedly and expertly led by Maestro Nash, the 90-member Cape orchestra concluded the well-attended, well-received concert with a full-bodied, colorfully executed performance of what

IN CONCERT

- **WHAT:** Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra
- **FEATURING:** Eric Ruske on French horn
- **WHEN:** 8 tonight and 3 p.m. tomorrow
- **WHERE:** Mattacheese Middle School, Higgins Crowell Road, West Yarmouth
- **TICKETS:** \$29, \$15 for students, available at door
- **INFORMATION:** 362-1111

some consider to be Czech composer Antonin Dvorak's highest achievement in the symphonic realm — his dark-hued but heroically spirited and emotionally-charged Symphony No. 7 in D-Minor, Op. 70.

Woodwind and French horn solos were notably well played.