

Concert Support Hit By Reviewer

A FINE CONCERT performance, featuring a splendid appearance by the All-City Junior High School Audience, drew a disappointing crowd Thursday night—and Times Arts Editor Franke Buske registers a complaint. His lively review and comments merit attention, Page 2.

A Fine Concert, But Too Small A Crowd

By FRANK BUSKE
Times Arts Editor

One regrets the absence in Anchorage of a responsible musical public, willing to support better-than-average concerts by local musicians.

Last night there was an especially interesting concert at Sydney Laurence Auditorium with the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Frank Pinkerton. Featured in the performance were pianist Willard Straight and the Anchorage Community Chorus and also, and very importantly, the All-City Junior High School Orchestra.

The appearance of the All-City Junior High School Orchestra as the program's opener was welcome. These young people gave a splendid account of themselves. The sound was well balanced, they followed their director well and the intonation was good. It should be a matter of shame to the community conscience that this group's performance received such shabby support.

Last night's concert continued with two selections by the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra. The first of these, "Matinees Musicales" by contemporary English composer Benjamin Britten, is a brilliantly witty work and it was performed in delightful fashion by the orchestra. The satiric touches are deft and sure though there are also some lovely lyric moments in the "Nocturne" section.

The "Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80" of Brahms was well balanced but the orchestral sound appeared small for the work. There was a lack of coordination in some of the transitional passages although the

traditional student songs were nicely handled.

The big work of the evening was the "Choral Fantasy, Op. 80" of Beethoven, featuring Willard Straight, pianist, and the Anchorage Community Chorus. This curious work contains Beethoven's gifted writing for piano and also foreshadows the choral portion of the Ninth Symphony. Willard Straight is a gifted musician, a strong pianist who plays with skill and sensitivity, and whose playing captured the free-wheeling nature of the piano role in the work. The Anchorage Community Chorus sang with dramatic intensity and beautiful blend, both in the quartet and full-chorus passages.

The concert concluded with "Jubilee" by Ron Nelson, a contemporary work. The music is easy to listen to and cheerful and undemanding. It was a romp for the orchestra and they played it with verve.

Conductor Pinkerton has done a good job in bringing the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra to a point of dependable performance. He is to be commended for his work with the junior high group.

As we have written before, a healthy community musical life involves a mutual responsibility: community musicians to provide competent musical performances and support from area music lovers. Local musicians have accepted their responsibility; alleged music lovers have not.

The concert will be repeated tonight at Sydney Laurence Auditorium at 8 p.m.