

Orchestra responds

Robert Cooper made the Burnside Symphony Orchestra sound like a large professional body at last night's concert in the Burnside Town Hall.

True, there was some augmentation of players. But even with the strings below their normal strength, the overall tone deserved a bigger hall in which the orchestra would not have had the disadvantage of performing on two levels.

Mr. Cooper's choice of the seldom-played symphonic poem, "November Woods," by Arnold Bax, the English composer who died only 20 years ago, posed a big challenge which the orchestra met with straight-forward application to the conductor's musicianship.

In this subtle, descriptive music with its original effects, the orchestra caught a good measure of the serene atmosphere and the contrasting storm in the woods.

After a vigorous rendering of Mozart's "Il Seraglio" overture, the orchestra provided a nicely subdued accompaniment for tenor Neville Hicks in "O Loveliness Beyond Compare" (from "The Magic Flute") and "Il Mio Tesoro" ("Don Giovanni"), two of Mozart's loveliest operatic arias, followed by "Una Furtiva", from Donizetti's "L'Elisir d'Amour," each sung with fine understanding.

The programme ended on a lighter note with the "Four Centuries" suite by Eric Coates in which the orchestra successfully conveyed the composer's attempt to imitate the styles of four different periods.