

Chamber Concert Has Party Air

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There was a great deal of good music at the affair, but the final concert of the St. Paul Chamber orchestra Tuesday night seemed almost more like a party than a concert.

Much of the informal party atmosphere was supplied by the guest artist, Suzanne Bloch, who performed on various ancient instruments, made explanatory remarks about them and her music and sang some 400-year-old hit tunes in a pleasantly unprofessional way.

Another contribution was the custom adopted at these concerts of serving coffee at intermission time in the Highland Park junior high school lobby.

Miss Bloch's formal part in the program consisted of her Elizabethan Suite, arranged for lute and chamber orchestra, and Renaissance Dances, which she has arranged for recorder and orchestra. Miss Bloch played both solo instruments expertly.

Both used tunes popular some four centuries ago and still delightful to hear. On the whole, the Renaissance Dances were more effective. In that auditorium the lute did not produce proper balance with the other instruments.

But as accompaniment for her songs, the lute proved very pleasant indeed. These included a French chanson and an old Christmas carol, which with more secular words did double duty as a drinking song as well.

Miss Bloch also performed several numbers on the vintage, a small, readily portable harpsichord.

Leopold Sipe led the orchestra in lively, clean-cut performances of several works old and new.

The novelty was the Symphonia Concertante by Lothar Klein, young Twin Cities composer. Written in 1955 while, I should judge, he was still a University of Minnesota undergraduate, it is a work of considerable charm and humor. It has recognizable models (Stravinsky seems most conspicuous), but what is impressive about it is its fluency and spontaneous high spirits.

Mary Roberts Wilson, the orchestra's flutist, was soloist in Bach's Suite No. 2 in B minor, negotiating her difficult part with commendable skill.

Mozart's Symphony No. 39 in E flat brought the concert to a strong close with a buoyant performance.

Date of Book Review