

Orff's 'Burana' receives fine treatment

Carl Orff's fascinating, demanding and lengthy masterpiece, "Carmina Burana" (Songs of Beuron), received a fine dramatic performance by the Rogue Valley Chorale Thursday evening.

Lynn Sjolund, the chorale's founder and director, led the chorus and an orchestra of pianos and percussion instruments in the annual fall concert at the First Christian Church in Medford.

"Carmina Burana" evokes medieval European life at the secular level, producing some highly satisfying musical adventures.

The chorus appeared at its best in several of the choruses — those greeting springtime in the first section and in the syncopated, rhythmic "Veni, veni venias" in the third section.

The singers also emphasized Orff's characteristic musical use of rhythmic speech, which makes the words as important as the musical accompaniment. The melodious "Floret silva," praising the flowering woodlands in the spring, and the "In taberna quando sumus" for male chorus, received excellent interpretations.

The soloists all acquitted themselves well. Tenor Dale Borum mer-

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Commentary



rily squeaked his way through the "Olim lacus colueram," the lament of the swan that has been barbecued for dinner in the tavern, and baritone Sean Warren gave a convincing portrayal of the drunken abbot, hearing confessions in the same tavern.

Baritone Eric Smith joined soprano Kathy Gordon and the Children's Chorus, directed by Doris Sjolund, in a lyrical rendition of "Tempus est iocundum," praising youthful romance. The children's clear, young voices added a sweet purity to the adult activities de-

scribed in the song.

Orchestral accompaniment was provided by pianists Carol Davidson and Janis Rands; Lew Aytes on timpani; Nancy Purdy, snare drums and chimes; Larry Hudson, cymbals, triangle and bells; Gary Lovre, bass drum, gongs, tamborine; and Sara Backus, bells. They not only gave the singers strong support but also shone in the two solo dance numbers, both filled with vigorous syncopation and the folk tune quality Orff uses so effectively.

The program opened with three Part Songs by Haydn, all showing his innovative flair in creating delightful harmonies, and directed by Ron Holtensted, who has been a member of the chorale since its organization in 1973.

This was followed by Benjamin Britten's exquisitely lyrical "Hymn to St. Cecilia," praising the patron saint of music.

The program as a whole once again showed Sjolund's ability to

choose interesting, unusual works to present to an audience that generally has to hear such music only on recordings.

The chorale will repeat the program at 8 p.m. today.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$4 for seniors and students. Tickets are available at the door.

Mary Ann Campbell is a Mail Tribune staff writer.