

## Youthful Musicians, Dancers Rate Plaudits

By EARL JONES

The California Youth symphony, directed by Aaron Sten, combined with the Ziceva Ballet school in a delightful symphony-ballet program yesterday afternoon in the San Mateo High School auditorium.

The first half of the program featured the orchestra which has played with surer intonation and more precise ensemble. But the fact that one is tempted to such objective criticism can only be construed as praise for such a group. They play well enough that one feels it unnecessary to make the usual allowances. To attend any concert by this symphony is to be surprised at the degree of sensitivity to which Sten has trained the group, and at the considerable authority these youngsters bring to the performance of works demanding contrasting interpretive styles. This grasp of style was best illustrated yesterday in the playing of Tandel's Prelude and Fugue in D minor. A Suite of "English Folk Songs," lovely model melodies refreshingly arranged by Vaughan Williams, highlighted the orchestra's portion of the program which closed with the popular Nutcracker Suite.

During the intermission, the orchestra cleared the stage and assembled in the pit to accompany Olga Ziceva's ballet ensemble which opened the second half of the program with "Chopiniana"—a set of choreographic interpretations of some of Chopin's best known works.

It seemed commendable to this reviewer that Madame Ziceva did not choose to contrive a series of ballet-sketches depending upon plot or pantomime, but chose rather what might be called the "unprogrammatic" type of music for her dancers—so that the total effect of each ballet depended solely on their technical excellence. Her students justified her choice.

Outstanding among the dancers were Clyde (unusually interesting name for a girl) Queen, who with

Richard Opaterny danced a pleasant pas de deux, Ursula Martens and Russell Sage, who did a delightfully peasant dance to Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 6.

But the high point of the ballet program was a beautifully conceived and costumed "Jewel Ballet" which was danced to Richard Olson's playing—accompanied by the orchestra—of excerpts from Saint Saens' piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 4. Some striking counter-grouping was achieved within the total ensemble by smaller units—costumed as amethysts, sapphires, and emeralds—each in independent motion subordinated to three diamonds, danced by Clyde Queen, Sandra Roveta, and Sally Wolfe.

All in all, the pleasant afternoon's concert-ballet lacked only one thing—the capacity audience it deserved.