International Acclaim for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra’s New CD

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MAGAZINE: Gramophone
Yale local band embarks on a series of Walton recordings with thrilling results Under William Boughton, these splendidly idiomatic performances from the New Haven Symphony Orchestra of both Walton’s iconic First Symphony and his Violin Concerto. The nagging repetitions in the first movement of the First Symphony are magnetic, the leading Scherzo quirky. In the concerto, Kurt Nikkanen is a clean-cut yet warmly expressive soloist. -- Edward Groenthal

UNITED KINGDOM: The Sunday Telegraph
If William Walton’s music has rather gone out of fashion since his centenary in 2002, performances like this make one wonder why. The Violin Concerto is surely one of the 20th century’s finest romantic concertos, and is marvelously well played here by the American violinist Kurt Nikkanen with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra under its music director William Boughton. The orchestra has access, via Yale, to a very large number of Walton’s original scores and these will be used in future recordings of his works. If they are all as good as this savage performance of the First Symphony, fashion will doubtless swing back his way. --Michael Kennedy

UNITED KINGDOM: The Arts Desk
William Boughton’s opening is steady and cleanly articulated, accentuating the dotted rhythms and tiny harmonic changes. The big tuttis are impressive, but so too are the lonely bassoon solos in the central development. And that recapitulation is so crude but so effective; rasping horns in canon with tuba, a final juicy chord and an aggressive cry of triumph in the closing seconds. Both scherzo and slow movement impress through their cool understatement, and Boughton is successful in binding together the disparate elements of the finale. The generous coupling is Walton’s 1939 Violin Concerto which nicely mingles schmaltz with Stravinskian spikiness. It’s beautifully played here by Kurt Nikkanen, clearly unfazed by taking on a work commissioned by Jascha Heifetz.

NEW ZEALAND: New Zealand Herald
Rating: 5/5 Verdict: "A definitive symphonic venture for the Rolls-Royce of English composers" --William Dart

INTERNATIONAL WEBSITE: Classics Today
The concerto comes off best. No one after Heifetz in his two recordings has played the work successfully at the same breakneck speeds, but among modern versions Kurt Nikkanen’s marries a lovely tone in all registers (he’s terrific in high passage work) with a technical fearlessness, particularly in the central Presto, that’s really impressive. Boughton and the NHSO provide secure, idiomatic accompaniments, and the recording is excellently balanced. --David Hurwitz

INTERNATIONAL WEBSITE: ClassicalNet
William Boughton conducts with great purposefulness and force with the New Haven Symphony completely at one with his creative ideals. I also enjoyed reading the fastidiously detailed notes provided by Boughton himself and also by Richard Freed who analyzes the works almost surgically. The Violin Concerto has Kurt Nikkanen playing to the manner born and his version is now the best one when compared perhaps to Lydia Mordkovich’s now ageing but still excellent version on Chandos. Nimbus provides excellent sound in the Woolsey Hall at New Haven with the New Haven Symphony proving to be rather a revelation. One looks forward to further Walton releases from this source. --Gerald Fenech

LOCAL MEDIA: The New Haven Advocate
At last week’s release party for the disc, Boughton suggested the irregularities Walton’s editors combed out of his scores might have been, in fact, aesthetic choices, but his primary interest in consulting the handwritten copies seemed to be in seeing how Walton’s working process manifested itself on paper before being depersonalized by the printing press. Whatever difference this scholarship might have made in the finished product is for more discerning ears than mine to detect, but look, whatever he did, it worked. These are sensitive and dramatic interpretations of a grossly underrated body of work. --Daniel Stephen Johnson
Boughton To Lead NHSO Through 2017

BY David Brensilver | JUN 1, 2012 3:49 PM
E-mail the Author

William Boughton, who began his tenure as music director of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra five years ago, will remain in that position at least through the 2016-2017 season, the organization has announced.

"Boughton joined the NHSO during the 2007-2008 season after a 25 year tenure with the English Symphony Orchestra which he founded," according to a press release issued by the organization on Friday.

Among the organization's most significant accomplishments under Boughton was the release in 2010 of the orchestra's first commercial recording in 30 years, a collection of works by William Walton.

The NHSO's press release points out that "Gramophone magazine named the NHSO's Walton recording a "Critic's Choice.""

In 2011, as the New Haven Independent reported, the organization was "recognized by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) and the League of American Orchestras for its dedication to new music. ... the New Haven Symphony was last recognized by ASCAP with an "Adventurous Programming" award three decades ago."

The orchestra's press release indicates that "a new contract naming Boughton music director for five additional years, through the 2016-2017 season, will be signed on June 12, 2012."

Burton Alter, president of the organization's Board of Directors, was quoted in the press release as saying, "The entire NHSO family is thrilled that this world-renowned talent will be with us for five more seasons. We have seen tremendous growth on stage since his arrival and look forward to continued artistic excellence in the years to come."

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Reflecting on the grandeur of 'Pomp and Circumstance'

J.J. Abernathy

Music Times

One of my favorite parts of traditional commencement ceremonies remains the time-honored music to which graduates march.

Just hearing the melody brings back memories of my own high school graduation day, when all the young women marched in their brand new high-heeled shoes and all graduates wore their best dress clothes beneath navy blue gowns on a day we thought would never arrive. I cannot remember the message of the speakers, but I remember the music.

We were deliberate in our movements by stepping forward with the right foot and bringing the left foot to the side of the right foot, then stepping forward with the left foot and bringing the right foot to the side of the left foot. We continued in perfect precision as we found our way to our seats, eager and ready for the future. For the moment, however, it seemed an effort to contain our uncontainable enthusiasm.

Listening to "Pomp and Circumstance" is like entering a soothing respite. Within a single musical line, Edward Elgar, the composer, seems to blend emotions of triumph with feelings of melancholy, capturing the bittersweet sense of excitement for the future mingled with sorrow of leaving the present and the past.

Actually, it feels a little like romancing history when one considers how "Pomp and Circumstance" became de rigueur at graduation exercises in America.

According to the Elgar Society, amongst the many works written by Sir Edward William Elgar (1857-1934) were five pieces known as the "Pomp and Circumstance Marches." In 1905, Elgar's American friend Samuel Sanford, a Yale professor of applied music, invited Elgar to the United States to receive an honorary Doctorate of Music.

In New Haven, Conn., on the edge of the Yale campus, Sanford hosted the Elgars in his beautiful home on Hillhouse Avenue, a place Charles Dickens in 1842 had called "the most beautiful street in America."

At the commencement ceremony the academic procession entered Woolsey Hall to Mendelssohn's "Ruy Blas" overture, but as a tribute to Elgar, everyone left the hall with "Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1" played by the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. So stirring was the work that shortly thereafter other prominent universities, such as Princeton, Chicago, Columbia, Vassar and Rutgers, adopted the work in their graduation ceremonies.

Within a decade, it was embraced by many others. Today it is a rare occasion when a graduation procession marches
to anything else.

Of the five "Pomp and Circumstance" marches, No. 1 remains the most popular, and although the work is performed sometimes at a bombastic level, when Elgar introduced the tune he marked the dynamics "pianissimo" (softly) for the first part, then distinct markings "fortissimo" (loudly) for what follows. The contrast seems to suggest Elgar's ability to express prayer, praise and applause within a single work.

One small note of trivia: Some people have suggested that Elgar took the title "Pomp and Circumstance" from a speech by Othello in Act III of William Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice" with the phrase "Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!"

The "pomp" in "pomp and circumstance," according to Webster, means "a stately or brilliant display; splendor." Its origin is from the Latin "pompa," meaning "procession," based on a Greek root meaning "to send."

"Circumstance" comes from the Latin "circumstantia," meaning "standing around," but in modern usage it means in this sense, "ceremony" or "show." Thanks to Shakespeare - and to Elgar the meanings behind these grand words have been preserved.

While the graduates today are just as eager and ready to graduate as we were so many years ago, I wish in these modern times we could go back, just once, to the conscious, deliberate march of the past, rather than seeing how expeditiously graduates can be seated. It might slow time, just enough, for us to savor the shining moments of the hour, the joy and splendor of the pomp and circumstance.

JJ Abernathy is an educator and musician. Contact her at jjabernathy@myway.com. Portions of this article were published previously on May 27, 2007, and May 22, 2009.
Kavafian Plays Mozart at the New Haven Symphony Orchestra

by Isaac Kifile | November 16, 2011
Campus News and Events, University of New Haven

On Thursday, November 10, the Music Department and Honors Program organized a trip to the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. A bus packed with students, led by Music Chair Michael Kaloyanides and Honors Program Coordinator Lynne Resnick, went to Woolsey Hall in New Haven to watch a concert titled Kavafian Plays Mozart, featuring violinst Ani Kavafian.

Before the concert started, students had the chance to go to Yale University’s Oral History of American Music a short walk away from Woolsey to listen to a brief lecture by Libby Van Cleve, the director. Cleve spoke on Charles Ives, the composer of The Unanswered Question (1906), one of the other pieces included in the concert. Adding to the lecture were several recordings by close friends and associates of Ives, who gave insight into Ives’ brilliant and quirky personality, which helped give the audience a better understanding of his piece when it was heard later that night.

Following the lecture, students preceded into Woolsey Hall for the concert. It began with Music Director and Concert Composer William Boughton giving a brief introduction and overview of the concert, then beginning with the first piece of the night: Le tombeau de Couperin (1914-17) by Maurice Ravel. Despite the title (referring to Baroque composer François Couperin) translating to “Couperin’s grave,” the four-movement piece seemed to dance off the page and possess a very whimsical yet elegant presence in the concert hall.

The second and primary performance of the concert was Mozart’s Violin Concerto no. 1 in B-flat Major, K.207. This three movement piece featured soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician Ani Kavafian, who has performed with the New York Philharmonic and the symphony orchestras of Philadelphia and San Francisco, among many other America’s other leading orchestras. The audience burst into applause the moment Kavafian walked onto stage, yet was mesmerized with silence once the performance began. Kavafian’s performance on her violin was stunning and the accompaniment consisting of the other strings perfectly complimented Kavafian’s solo parts. The final result was the highlight of the entire night.

After the concerto concluded, a brief intermission took place, followed by The Unanswered Question. Describing this short piece, Ives said that the strings represent “the silences of the Druids, who know, see, and hear nothing” while the trumpet poses “the Perennial Question of existence.” Ives also explained the flutes as the “Fighting Answerers seeking the Invisible Answer” to no avail and the trumpet posing “the Question” one more time. It is difficult to describe this haunting piece otherwise as it is something that has to be heard to be understood.

The finale of the night was the “London” Symphony no. 104 in D Major (1795) by Franz Joseph Haydn. This symphony marked a return to the full orchestra from Le tombeau de Couperin, but with added percussion and louder notes, resulting in a big, booming finale to the night. Regardless of how many times you hear a piece of music, hearing it performed live is a unique and unforgettable experience, especially when performed by a group as talented as the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. A big thank you to the Music Department and Honors Program for organizing this trip!
An Act of Creation, Laid Bare

By PHILLIP LUTZ

SEEKING to woo audiences, some symphony orchestras have been opening rehearsals to the public. But on Sept. 12, the New Haven Symphony Orchestra will go further, supplementing the open rehearsal of a new work with a public discussion and performance that will involve the composer, who will also be the soloist. The format will be a first for the orchestra under the conductor and music director William Boughton.

At the event, scheduled to unfold over two hours on a Sunday afternoon in Yale’s Sprague Hall, Mr. Boughton and the composer and pianist Stacey Rose, who is also on the orchestra’s board of directors, will wear microphones as they engage each other, the audience and the 60-piece orchestra in a give-and-take that will accompany a first reading and full performance of Ms. Rose’s concerto “Raisons D’Être.”

The piece, Ms. Rose’s first large work, had its premiere on July 31 with the National Repertory Orchestra in her native Denver. It draws on Prokofiev, Brahms, Saint-Saëns and, most heavily, Rachmaninoff. A standard three-movement concerto, it should be assimilated relatively easily by both the musicians and the audience, Mr. Boughton said.

That was by design, Ms. Rose said. While the motivation for producing the piece was partly personal — the act of writing provided something of a catharsis as she mourned the death of someone close to her — she made every effort both to avoid self-indulgence and keep the style from straying outside most listeners’ comfort zone.

“The one thing that I hoped would come through is that this is accessible on the first listening,” she said.

Mr. Boughton said that the piece’s accessibility should make it easier for the audience to follow the rehearsal as it proceeds. Though some disagreements about tempi and dynamics arose at rehearsals for the Denver performance, Ms. Rose said, the issues were amicably resolved. She expects the same to occur in New Haven.

Mr. Boughton, who came to New Haven in 2007 with a reputation for championing new composers in his native England, said that the event might lead to other sessions that feature more demanding material. He cited as a model sessions held by the Society for the Promotion of New Music, at which he helped introduce challenging works in England.

“They were opportunities for composers to learn about their own writing, and how their writing sounded,” he said, “and for audiences to hear what the latest developments in composition were.”

Discussion, rehearsal and performance of “Raisons D’Être,” a new work, with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, 3 to 5 p.m., Sept. 12, at 470 College Street, New Haven. Tickets: adults $20, students $10, under 18 free. Information: newhavensymphony.org or (203) 865-0831.
NHSO to debut classical series in Shelton, New Canaan
Phyllis A.S. Boros, Staff Writer, CT Post
Published: 11:21 a.m., Monday, August 9, 2010

Orchestras, like corporations, need to continually reassess and redefine their goals and priorities in order to survive and prosper -- in good times and bad.

Such is the philosophy at the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, which has announced that it will continue its push into Fairfield County during the 2010-11 season by inaugurating a Sunday afternoon three-concert classical series in Shelton, where its three-concert pops series has been popular for many years. And in New Canaan, the orchestra will debut a two-concert Saturday evening pops season and a two-concert Wednesday evening orchestral season.

The orchestra, which kicks off its 117th season in New Haven on Sept. 16, will continue to present a seven-concert season at its longtime home, Woolsey Hall, on the Yale University campus. As is its tradition, all concerts will be offered on Thursday evenings. Season highlights include the performance of all four symphonies by Johannes Brahms and Gustav Mahler's monumental Symphony No. 2 in C minor, known as the "Resurrection" symphony, in honor of the 150th anniversary of Mahler's birth and the 100th anniversary of his death.

The Shelton and New Canaan orchestral series are a reformulation of last year's inaugural Fairfield County season, in which the NHSO repeated all seven of its New Haven concerts at five different venues: Two concerts at Fairfield University, two at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, one in Shelton and two in New Canaan. Fairfield (which traditionally provides the Greater Bridgeport Symphony with a large portion of its patron base) is no longer included in the mix for regular season or pops/holiday concerts.

In all, the NHSO will present 20 concerts next season: Eight pops concerts (including a three-concert series in Hamden), all under the baton of NHSO Associate Conductor Gerald Steichen; and 12 classical concerts, all but two under the baton of Maestro William Boughton, who is now entering his fourth season as the orchestra's music director.

Boughton said last week that the orchestra decided to concentrate its efforts on Shelton and New Canaan because they evinced "the strongest response to our pilot project in Fairfield County" last season.

"It just makes sense to develop those areas, rather than dissipate our energy in areas that weren't quite as responsive," he said.

Last year, when the English-born conductor announced the expansion plans, he said that arts organizations "should never stand still; I have always agreed with the idea of extending one's footprint" in order to grow and thrive.

NHSO is the fourth oldest orchestra in the nation (only New York, Boston and Chicago, in that order, are older).

Boughton added that he is confident that the public always will be receptive to live orchestral performances.

For as Boughton writes in the new season brochure: Attending a concert is a life-enriching experience, noting that the philosopher Goethe maintained that "'No benefit is temporary, because the impression, which it leaves, is everlasting.'"

SHELTON'S SYMPHONY, POPS SEASONS
Here's a look at Shelton's 'Classical Romance' Symphony Series, on Sundays at 3 p.m. at the 584-seat Shelton Intermediate School, 675 Constitution Boulevard North in Shelton.

"Italian Flair" on Oct. 24 will be under the baton of Italian guest conductor Aldo Sisillo; pianist Andrew Von Oeyen will be featured on Robert Schumann's Concerto in A minor, Opus 54. Also on the program is Brahms' Symphony No. 2 in D major and Giuseppe Martucci's "Nocturne and Novelleta."

"Kavafian Plays Mozart" is the Dec. 5 program, featuring concertmaster Ani Kavafian performing Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 ("Turkish"). Also slated is Augusta Read Thomas' "Daylight Divine" and Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3 in A minor, known as the "Scottish" symphony. Boughton will conduct.

"Classic Brahms," with Boughton on the podium, concludes the season on April 10, featuring Richard Strauss' "Metamorphosen" and Brahms' Symphony No. 4 in E minor.

Tickets are $35 for individual concerts; $52.50 for all three concerts for the inaugural season (a savings of 50 percent over the individual ticket price).

The Shelton Pops Series, also on Sundays at 3 p.m. at Shelton Intermediate School, will feature:


Tickets are $35 for individual concerts; $52.50 for all three concerts for first-time pops subscribers; $90 for returning subscribers.

IN NEW CANAAN

Unlike Bridgeport, Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk and Ridgefield, affluent New Canaan does not boast a professional orchestra of its own -- which makes it a perfect Fairfield County town to support a sophisticated arts organization like the NHSO, orchestra officials say.

The two-concert Symphony Series will take place on Wednesday evenings at 7 at New Canaan High School:

"Lyrical Romance" on Sept. 15 will feature Brahms' Symphony No. 1 in C minor and Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, with Elissa Lee Koljonen as soloist. "Mysticism Unleashed" on Feb. 2 showcases Brahms' Symphony No. 3 in F major and works by Richard Wagner and Augusta Read Thomas, an NHSO composer-in-residence. Soprano Hana Park will be the soloist.

Boughton will conduct both; tickets are $35-$45, $10 for students.

The pops series will be offered on Saturdays at 8 p.m. at Saxe Middle School; tickets are $35-$45, $10 for students. "Big Band Salute" is planned for Oct. 9, while "Celtic Dreams" is on the bill for March 12.

WHEN YOU GO

To order tickets and subscriptions, or for additional information on the New Haven, New Canaan, Hamden and Shelton series, call 203-865-0831 or visit www.newhavensymphony.org.
From *The Sunday Telegraph*
August 1, 2010
by Michael Kennedy

If William Walton's music has rather gone out of fashion since his centenary in 2002, performances like this make one wonder why. The Violin Concerto is surely one of the 20th century's finest romantic concertos, and is marvellously well played here by the American violinist Kurt Nikkanen with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra under its music director William Boughton. The orchestra has access, via Yale, to a very large number of Walton's original scores and these will be used in future recordings of his works. If they are all as good as this savage performance of the First Symphony, fashion will doubtless swing back his way.
Orchestra has ‘new level of precision and excitement’

(Edited by published in the New Haven Register on Sunday, May 2, 2010)

The Register has been paying attention to the New Haven Symphony lately, and it should.

The April concert was spectacular, including Jin Hi Kim’s wild drumming as she played her own piece and the overwhelming Fifth Symphony of Beethoven, which brought an emotional audience to its feet.

It has taken a couple of years for word to get around that William Boughton is drawing out of the symphony a level of precision and excitement that we’ve never heard before, but now people are hearing this news, and the audience is growing.

I usually hear symphonies on the radio and at each concert I’m amazed again at the brilliance of a live orchestra as the sound of horns soars over Woolsey Hall from one direction, flutes from another.

The symphony will play Beethoven’s Ninth on May 13 with the Hartford Chorale. This promises to be an even more exciting evening, if possible.

Alice Mattison
New Haven
NHSO at its ‘inspired best’ in generous program

Sunday, April 25, 2010

By David J. Baker

NEW HAVEN — Familiarity does not always breed contempt. Many schoolchildren can hum the four-note “fate” theme from Ludwig van Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, and Walt Disney’s 1940 animated feature “Fantasia” exploited that composer’s tuneful Sixth, the so-called Pastoral Symphony. Yet at Thursday’s New Haven Symphony Orchestra concert in Woolsey Hall, both of these perennials seemed not just hardy but fresh.

Continuing the season’s survey of the Beethoven Nine, the orchestra and conductor William Boughton were at their inspired best in a generous program that contrasted the Fifth Symphony in C Minor and the Sixth in F Major.

With aggressive tempos and strongly accented phrasing, Boughton maintained a sense of adventure and boldness in both symphonies without sacrificing refinement. He was above all flexible, alert to the frequent contrasts between stentorian force and a gentle, plaintive solo, or the sudden switch from darkness to humor.

The orchestra’s giant staccato “fate” chords were bullet-like, and the choir of strings poured out billows of cushioned sound in lyrical passages. The dramatic flourishes by individual instruments – sometimes a signpost, at other times like a plea or a dramatic warning signal – always rang out clearly against the passing stampede.

Amid the general excellence, maybe a special nod should go to the often unsung double bass players, who mustered such dense tone and precision in the breakneck string fugue in the Fifth Symphony. They brought similar energy to staccato passages in the Sixth, suggesting growling thunder in its fourth movement.

Some might have wished for a bit more mellowness early in the Sixth Symphony to offset the pounding storm that follows. But the gleaming layers of string tone in the final movement provided ample compensation.

Tucked in between the program’s two giants was a brief recent work, “Monk Dance,” written and performed by Jin Hi Kim. On elaborate Korean drums and smaller rhythm tools, Kim offered three extended, varied solos that make her rich collage into a miniconcerto for percussion and orchestra. The dynamic piece’s high-pitched curling melodic fragments had an evocative Asian flavor. “Monk Dance” was a reprise after the 1997 premiere of the piece by this orchestra. Its color and temperament were not out of place on this mostly Beethoven menu.

David J. Baker of North Haven is a freelance writer.
NHSO precise, compelling under Boughton’s baton

By David J. Baker

NEW HAVEN — The music of Arnold Schoenberg can scare people, as New Haven Symphony Orchestra Music Director William Boughton acknowledged in a brief comment to the audience at the start of Thursday’s concert in Woolsey Hall.

“So I commend you for showing up this evening,” he continued, before explaining that the orchestra was about to perform one of the least frightening compositions by the 20th century master of atonality and alienation.

“Verklärte Nacht” (“Transfigured Night”), Schoenberg’s 1899 symphonic essay for strings, precedes the 12-tone method that earned him a unique chapter in music history. It is also an example of program music, that is, a work on a specific subject. The composer took his inspiration from a German poem by Richard Dehmel about a couple taking an evening stroll that leads to a painful confession.

In Boughton’s hands the late romantic-styled work unfolded as a moody evocation of a moonlit night and a stirring emotional drama. The NHSO strings excelled at delicate shadings to evoke the tension of the nocturnal atmosphere, disturbing references to the woman’s past and a transfiguring acceptance on the part of her husband, in a burst of expansive emotion.

The “voices” of the two characters, portrayed hauntingly by violinist Artemis Simerson and cellist Steven Thomas, conveyed both apprehension and affirmation. The conductor led a precise and focused performance, while maintaining an unusual degree of intensity. Unlike some recorded versions of the work, this conductor never allowed the complex intertwined lines of violins, violas and cellos to sound abstract or academic.

The second half of the evening offered a more limited approach to program music. Ludwig van Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major acquired a nickname, the “Eroica” or heroic symphony, and was even dedicated to Napoleon until the composer objected to the Bonaparte imperial ambitions.

Musicologists continue to argue whether music can mean or express anything beyond its own sounds, but this symphony can inspire thoughts of heroism — not associated with any historical individual — because of its expansive scale, lofty tone and original remaking of classical symphonic structure.

Boughton seemed to approach the music in this vein, in a forceful, exuberant performance that moved at a speed that was both risky and exhilarating. In the first movement, the long chains of imitative fragments, first by woodwind solos, then horn and finally massed strings and brass, sounded a little reckless rather than completely poised. But the conductor melded the repeated figures into a unit — not only keeping each voice on track, but also managing both a crescendo and an acceleration to round off the segment with a bang.

The high point was the effective playing of the dramatic second movement. Beethoven encourages thoughts of heroism by labeling it a funeral march, making it the longest section of his sizeable work, and stretching the emotional arc with enormous variety to suggest despair, hope, resistance, resignation and other shades of feeling.

Here, as in other sections, the conductor’s special accents in key phrases had an effect that both steadied the playing and compelled attention. The French horns in particular have a grueling series of fanfares in the “trio” section that can make or break the third movement (Beethoven’s “scherzo”).

Boughton did not slow down, as many conductors do for the challenging trio, and yet the NHSO horns came through reliably on the four repetitions of the theme, digging incisively into the accented notes in a way that gave shape as well as force to the flourishes.

David J. Baker of North Haven is a freelance writer.