

weather's grounding Allied air forces.)

The larger decisions dependent

failure was to get inside Hitler's mind and think like him. The problem was insoluble: How could one

Annan's characterizations of people make this book, despite its forest of small details, sparkle as lively,

nesses able to write about it as if it had only just ended. Noel Annan is one.

Timid ensemble undermines violinist's bravura solo

By Richard Dyer
GLOBE STAFF

Over the past few seasons the Boston Chamber Ensemble has developed a level of programming that could make it competitive in Boston's most crowded field of performance.

What it has not yet developed is a comparable standard of playing — there are some good musicians in the group, but the ensemble often sounds underrehearsed and insecure. This must be why this group does not yet draw the audience its programs ought to attract.

Saturday night's concert, for example, brought the premiere of a work by a West Coast composer, Richard Festinger, which featured a guest appearance by the estimable violinist Bayla Keyes; an opportunity to hear Wagner's "Wesendonck" Songs sung by a lyric soprano instead of a weight lifter; and the premiere of an orchestration of the Toccata from "Le Tombeau de Couperin," which Ravel omitted from his own orchestration.

Festinger, who must be in his 40s by now, was a student of Andrew Imbrie and one of the founders of the San Francisco new-music ensemble Earplay. His "Violuminescence," which won a composition contest sponsored by the BCE, is a work for violin and chamber orchestra in four interrelated sections played without interruption. It is not quite a concerto — the composer writes that the orchestra creates "a world in which the solo violin is the chief inhabitant," which sounds about right. The piece is full of interesting effects — unusual groupings of violin with solo instruments or groups of instruments; at the very beginning a crescendo by the violin is seamlessly taken up by the whole string section. But the

piece is more than a string of effects; it is music, colorful, closely argued, dramatic and interesting. If there is a flaw, it is that the violin part is so short-breathed: Keyes played with such assurance, bravura and sensitivity that one wanted to hear her violuminesce a little more. The performance around her sounded better rehearsed than anything else, but tiptoe-cautious.

Wagner composed the "Wesendonck" Songs for soprano and piano (the orchestrations of four of the five songs are not by Wagner, but by Felix Mottl). He was working on "Tristan" but there's no reason to suppose he intended them for Isolde — or if he did, that he meant for Isolde to be a weight-lifter. Tiana Lemnitz, a lyric soprano, left some of the most rav-

BOSTON CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
S.M. Clark, music director
At: Longy School of Music, Saturday night

ishing recordings; Kiri te Kanawa should try them. Clara Sandler has a dark, attractive timbre and, apart from a few scoops upward, vocalized the songs very well. As interpretations, however, they scarcely existed, though it was hard to see how anyone could create a different world out of each song when surrounded and insufficiently supported by such slack, insecure accompaniments.

In 1928, Ravel came to America, where a young French pianist named Paul Dognereau served as his interpreter. Dognereau asked Ravel why he had not orchestrated the Toccata from "Le Tombeau," and Ravel responded he was afraid it would be too noisy, but that he would think about it again. The idea has intrigued Dognereau ever since, so he recently commissioned S. M. Clark,

music director of the BCE, to tackle the job. Any reliable assessment of his work will have to wait for a better performance, but it seems he's made a good start. Having the trumpet play the repeated notes at the

beginning sounded thoroughly Ravelian, and there were convincing moments later on, too. But the melodic sections need more notes — they lack support — and the end seemed more vulgar than exciting.

YOUR TICKET TO THE ARTS

THEATRE

ALL THE KING'S MEN

Written by American master Robert Penn Warren, this is the Pulitzer prize winning saga of Willie Stark. A raucous, hard hitting and gripping tale of politics in action which is melodramatic, but all too true. Tu 10/1-Su 10/6. Laurie Theater, Spingold Theater Center, Brandeis University. 617-736-3400.

CABARET

North Shore Music Theatre presents the Tony Award-winning musical, "Cabaret." This bold new version is a fresh, provocative work that examines the dark side of life in pre-war Berlin with a classic Kander and Ebb score. Mon-Sat Oct 7-26 at 8pm. Mats Oct. 9, 12, 16, 19, 23 & 24 at 2pm. Group rates. 508-922-8500.

HOT N' COLE

A dazzling new musical devoted to the Great Cole Porter, with a slick, sophisticated, contemporary spin. This professional touring company perform no fewer than 50 of Porter's great songs, inc some rarely performed gems. We 10/16 - Su 10/20 at Beigel Theater, Spingold Theater Ctr Brandeis Univ. 617-736-3400.

HUNTINGTON THEATRE COMPANY

Tom Stoppard's ARCADIA. Through Oct. 6. Hailed by the New York Times as "Stoppard's richest, most ravishing comedy to date," ARCADIA covers everything from landscape gardening to Lord Byron to the effects of love and sex on Newtonian physics. Call 266-0800 or Ticketmaster 931-ARTS.

ITALIAN AMERICAN RECONCILIATION

Merrimack Repertory Theatre- From the author of the Oscar-winning film Moonstruck, "ITALIAN AMERICAN RECONCILIATION" by John Patrick Shanley. A hot-blooded comedy set in Little Italy. "Racy, warm, enormously funny." One of the area's finest professional theatres, winner of 3 1996 Boston Theatre Awards. 50 E. Merrimack St., Lowell. 508-454-3926.

NEW REPERTORY THEATRE

THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP. This hilarious send-up of the gothic melodrama is a comic tour de force featuring a sympathetic werewolf, a vampire and an Egyptian princess! 54 Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands. One block from D-Green Line. SEPT. 26-OCT. 27. Tickets \$19, \$23, \$27. Call 617-332-1646, V/TTY.

NUNSENSE

RIVERSIDE THEATRE WORKS presents the musical comedy NUNSENSE Thurs. Fri. Sat. Thru October 12. Curtain 8pm, Cocktails 7pm. \$15 adults, \$8 children. Fri. is senior citizen night \$10. Thurs. bargain night all adults \$10. French's Opera House, 45 Fairmount Ave. Hyde Park 617-361-7024.

THE ORPHEUM THEATRE IN FOXBORO

OPENS THIS WEEK: "GOBLIN MARKET" - a strange and wondrous musical. Two sisters retell the childhood story of a magical encounter with goblins when one is cast under a deadly spell. "...musically and visually, the production is stunning," says the Hartford Courant. Tickets & info., call toll free 888-ORPHEUM.

SAY IT WITH MUSIC

By Irving Berlin. Presented by Reagle Players- The 3rd edition featuring a cast of 40 along w/Broadway guest artists. Robinson Theatre, 617 Lexington St. Waltham. Fri 10/11, Sat 10/12, Thu 10/17, Fri 10/18, Sat 10/19, 8 PM. Mats Sat 10/12 & Sun 10/13, 2 pm. Adu \$20, sen \$19, child \$14. Tix 617-247-1300.

SUGAN THEATRE COMPANY

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY. Brian Friel's most overtly political play. Three Catholics on a Civil Rights march in Derry take refuge from the British Army in the Lord Mayor's Center. Terrorists, pawns or victims? Thurs-Sat, 8 pm. Sun, 3 pm. Thru 10/19 at Boston Harbor for the Arts. Tix \$15. Call 617-426-0320.

MUSIC

THE ALL NEWTON MUSIC SCHOOL

THE JUBILEE TRIO performs The Great American Songbook: African-American Composers and Classical Song, Sunday, OCTOBER 6, 1996 at 7:30 PM for the benefit of All Newton Music School, 321 Chestnut St., West Newton, MA. Tix \$15; students & seniors \$10 includes champagne reception. 617-527-4553.

MOVIE TIMES

Allston: "Tin Cup," 1, 7, 9:40; "Maximum Risk," 12:30, 7:10, 9:25

Assembly Square: "Extreme Measures," noon, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10; "2 Days in the Valley," 11, 3:20, 5:40, 8:20, 10:40; "Emma," 12:20, 3, 5:30, 8, 10:30; "The First Wives Club," 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:20; "Last Man Standing," 2, 4:30, 7:30, 10; "Maximum Risk," 2:10, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30; "The Rich Man's Wife," 2:20, 5, 7:20, 9:40; "Fly Away Home," 1:10, 3:50, 6:25, 8:50; "Bulletproof," 1:30, 3:30, 6, 8:30; "First Kid," 1:20, 4:10; "Tin Cup," 6:40, 9:20; "A Time to Kill," 12:40, 3:40, 6:50, 9:50; "Independence Day," 12:10, 3:10, 6:10, 9:20

Brattle: "Three on a Match," 4, 6:45, 9:30; "The Mask of Fu-

re Measures," 2:20, 5:10, 8, 10:50; "Beautiful Girls," 1:50, 4:30, 8:20, 10:40; "The First Wives Club," on two screens, 1:30, 2:10, 3:50, 4:50, 7:20, 8:10, 10, 10:30; "Last Man Standing," 2, 4:40, 7:50, 10:20; "A Time to Kill," 2:30, 5:30, 9; "The Rich Man's Wife," 4, 7:30; "Independence Day," 1:20, 9:40; "Maximum Risk," 4:10, 10:10; "Tin Cup," 1:10, 7:10; "Fly Away Home," 1:40, 4:20, 7, 9:20

Harvard Film Archive at Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Cambridge: "October," 5:30; "Enthusiasm," "Kno Pravda," 8

Harvard Square: "Sweet Nothing," 12:30, 3, 5:15, 8, 10:05; "American Buffalo," 12:45, 2:45, 4:45, 7:30, 9:35; "Basquiat," 1, 3:50, 7, 9:15; "Emma," 1:45, 4:30, 7:15,