

Leon Reimer's programme for the City of Carlisle Orchestra was relaxing and very good fun for the audience. For the players I hope it was fun, but it certainly wasn't relaxing. Right from the start, with the Thieving Magpie, everyone has to be on top form, strings, wind, brass. Indeed they were: vigorous and precise and, where Rossini can often seem merely clever, giving him a sense of urgency and point.

The following items were a delightful combination of lively and lyrical, and I select some moments which particularly caught my attention. In *Spartacus* the woodwind passage which leads up to the last recapitulation of the main theme. In *Lieutenant Kijé* the lovely offstage trumpet at the beginning, the saxophone in the wedding scene, the horn solo at Kijé's burial. The blues section in *An American in Paris*. Glenys Braithwaite's marvellous intensity in *Gabriel's Oboe*. And, still on Morricone, while I did moan about oppressively dominant timpani in a previous concert, and still do to some extent, I was prepared to forgive it all for the sensitive support the percussion offered here.

The concert ended with the Nutcracker suite. In this - the staccato syncopation in the overture; the excellent control in the Trepak; the interplay of strings and wind in the Arabian dance, especially in the minor/major interplay at the end; the uninhibited enjoyment in the waltz. To guide us through this Leon Reimer had produced an excellent set of programme notes, entertaining and clear. The orchestra thoroughly deserved its large and highly appreciative audience.

Keith Maclennan