

Salazar impressive in role as substitute conductor

By Peter Lefevre

You're going out there a guest conductor, but you're coming back a star!

OK, so maybe it wasn't that dramatic, but Hector Salazar's last-minute substitution for Dr. Frances Steiner in Saturday's performance of the Carson-Dominguez Hills Symphony Orchestra was impressive enough.

Steiner, originally scheduled to conduct the "pops" concert, broke her leg late last week, and Salazar, with barely a day to prepare, strode on stage to lead the symphony with a considerable amount of panache.

There were a few difficult moments, but Salazar made a good

MUSIC REVIEW

account of himself and the symphony as they presented a mixed collection of light fare.

By far the most exciting performance of the afternoon was provided by the gifted Kelley Hart-Jenkins, who delivered a stunning, intensely satisfying performance of Robert Muczynski's 1981 "Concerto for Saxophone and Chamber Orchestra."

Hart-Jenkins is an instrumentalist worthy of note. With the ascension in recent years of such groups as the Amherst Saxophone Quartet, the sax is finally receiving the attention it ought to in the formal concert hall. The

saxophone is an instrument capable of considerable expression, which Hart-Jenkins admirably demonstrated.

The Wilmington Middle School Orchestra joined the CDHSO for a run-through of several sea-themed songs and brought honor to its school in doing so.

Copland's ubiquitous "Fanfare for the Common Man" was disappointing. Balances were off between competing brass sections, and the percussion section apparently was under the impression the brass was there to act as a frame for their fortissimo outbursts.

Also curiously amiss was the performance of Rosza's "The Jungle Book," narrated by Glenda

Wina. Whether by composer's intent or by the orchestra's execution, Rosza's piece came off as long, and the narration had little momentum.

Two dances from Copland's "Rodeo" also appeared on the program, enhanced by the spritely and poised balletic efforts of the Dominguez Hills Dance Repertory Ensemble.

The concluding piece, selections from "The Sound of Music," came off as a really long overture. The arrangement seemed choppy and awkward on several occasions. Transitions sounded arbitrary, but the symphony gave the piece its best shot, and Salazar brought the work home.

His willingness and ability to step into the conductor's role for the rest of the program gave him a chance to do a little more than beat time for "My Favorite Things."

■ Peter Lefevre is a free-lance writer specializing in classical music.