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Quintet does 'splendid' job

By Shirley Zoernig

The Sioux City Concert Course, in its third offering of the 1981-82 season, brought the Annapolis Brass Quintet to Eppley Auditorium Sunday afternoon with a splendid performance representing four hundred years of brass ensemble music. The Quintet, America's only full-time performing brass quintet, was making its second Sioux City appearance.

The program opened with the brisk "Canzona" of Giaches de Wert, a 16th century Flemish

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composer, and demonstrated the performers' virtuosity which never faltered. The Spanish Renaissance composer, Antonio de Cabezon was heard in "Two Spanish Variations" transcribed from organ, a stately "Galliard" and the "Song of a Cavalier".

Moving to the early twentieth century, the next selection featured the two trumpeters playing silver cornets in "Willow Echoes" by Frank Simon, cornetist with the John Philip Sousa Band. This was followed by "Partita No. 2" by Robert Lichtenberger, composed for the Annapolis Brass Quintet in 1980. The second movement, building beautiful layers of sonority, showed the mastery of the performers in blending and balancing with true artistry. Another contemporary selection, "Encounter" by Alen Molineux, was introduced by the performers as "frenetic perpetual motion", a valid description.

The first half of the program concluded with two 16th century pieces written originally for strings, "Galliard" and "Canzona" by Samuel Scheidt, who, the performers surmised, would surely not have written them for strings if he had heard them played by brass!

Following the intermission, the performers, entering from various doors, treated the audience to the very new and effective "Canonic Fanfare" of George Heussenstam, a 1981 Christmas gift to the Quintet.

Returning to the 16th century for transcriptions of vocal works, next was heard the lovely "Spring Returns" by Luca Marenzio, an Italian madrigalist, and the contrasting "Revecy Venir du Printemps" of Claude LeJeune.

"Three Sketches On A Southern Hymn Tune" by Elam Sprenkle, commissioned by the Quintet in 1981, is based on the hymn "My Shepherd Shall Supply My Need", and the second section again displayed the beautiful sustained harmony of the instruments. This was followed by an entertaining "Dixieland Medley" arranged by C. Warren Kellerhouse.

The group then arranged themselves in street corner band style for "Three Dances" by Thielman Susato, a Flemish composer and music publisher of the 16th century. Their versatility was evident as everyone but the horn player doubled in percussion.

The masterful "Contrapunctus 7" from the "Art of Fugue" by Johann Sebastian Bach was played in a very precise and elegant manner and was warmly appreciated by the audience. As an encore, the quintet presented "Billy Boy", arranged by C. Warren Kellerhouse.

