

**MUSIC REVIEWS**

## Eclectic, Engaging Recital by Nauman

John Nauman, a Peabody- and Juilliard-trained musician of tremendous facility, pleasant stage manners and an unspoiled sense of communication, gave an impressive recital when he opened the Gold Medal piano series at Ambassador Auditorium Monday.

The pianist from Maryland, who was born in 1962, seems typical of keyboardists of his generation.

He gets around the instrument—in his case, a Baldwin—with great ease and authority, plays a wide variety of music confidently and gives every sign of caring about reaching his listeners. His very fuzzy ideas about different musical styles are also typical.

He engages his observers thoroughly.

His program, eclectic to a fault, helped: it began with Giovanni Sgambati's Gluck-based "Melodie d'Orfeo," offered an English Suite by Bach, three "Songs Without

Words" by Mendelssohn, brief sonatas by Scriabin and Janáček, and three pieces by Liszt. From this sampling, one would hesitate to call Nauman either an elitist or a specialist.

On the contrary, his playing, never less than competent, showed the pianist a homogenizer, a one-style performer. Everything on this program, Bach's music included, emerged post-Romantic in feel, personalized in articulation, whimsical in rhythm. This approach may sometimes clarify Liszt, certainly does no harm to Scriabin and Janáček, but becomes questionable when applied across the board. It certainly flattens out the positive impact of Nauman's genuine virtuosity.

His strongest success came in the three Liszt pieces that closed the program: the familiar transcription of Schumann's song, "Widmung," the 12th Transcen-

dental Etude ("Chasse-neige") and the Tarantella from "Venezia e Napoli." In the latter, especially, the pianist's abundant command of color and dynamics demanded admiration.

Thereafter, his single encore became the Prelude in D-flat, Opus 8, by Scriabin. —DANIEL CARLAGA