

Music*Here's a double dose
of melodic excellence*

FEW soloists of any age can match Georg Solti in drive and energy output, but last night it took only a measure or two of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto to certify Kyung-Wha Chung as one of them. The comely Korean violinist still in her mid-twenties, took those familiar old melodies and made them sing as if their life depended on it—as indeed it does. There are more accurate players in the thinning ranks of true virtuoso performers, but only a handful with her ability to sustain listener interest and communicate the feeling behind the notes.

I missed her debut at Ravinia two years ago in the Sibelius Concerto and am sorry for it, tho I suspect that the Puck and Ariel of Mendelssohn fits her temperament better than Finland's pride. Miss Chung takes fullest advantage of her instrument's ability to breathe life into a sustained tone and has an actress' sense of phrase and pacing. Sometimes she would draw back into the music, slowing the tempo for emphasis and discovering a propulsive accent pattern. In the second movement she settled on tears without sobs. For the Scherzo, she started each dialog with the orchestra from a feline crouch, and completed the exclamation with an underplayed flicker of staccato.

THERE are those who frown on such forthright playing because it sometimes produces as much sc r a t c h as tone, and forces the sound of the lower strings. Given a choice, I'll take the likes of her any time. It has been years since I attended a performance of this work which seemed too short. She left me wishing for more.

This is the time for double



Violinist Kyung-Wha Chung

dosing us with English music — Walton last week, Tippett and Britten to come, and last night Elgar's "Enigma" Variations. It is easy to see why Solti likes this colorful, dynamically varied, and skillfully written music.

His affectionate performance had moments of unexpected tenderness and numerous passages which exploited the orchestra's individual excellences. Among them were Frank Miller's far from amateur aria portraying Elgar's favorite amateur cellist, an Intermezzo of super-fine sparkle, and a true British bulldog bark.

Solti chose Bartok to open this first concert of his two week midwinter engagement. The Divertimento for String Orchestra is mature middle period music, exhaustively contrapuntal, harmonically advanced enough to float an almost independent line above the rest of the musical texture, and including a sudden smile as things are getting serious. The performance could have been better, tho not much.

Thomas Willis