

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

presents

ANTHONY BEAULIEU

pianist

Sunday, May 24, 1964 at 8:15 in the Carriage Barn

PROGRAM

Suite Francaise

Francis Poulenc

Sonata, Opus 31, No. 2 in D minor

Ludwig van Beethoven

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Three Etudes

Frédéric Chopin

Opus 10, No. 1 in C Major  
Opus 25, No. 6 in C $\sharp$  Minor  
Opus 10, No. 4 in C $\sharp$  Minor

Improvisations, Opus 20

Béla Bartók

(Mr. Beaulieu is a Junior at Dartmouth College)

## Music Review

# Two Offerings at the College; Beethoven and Homespun Blues

By LISA TATE

**NORTH BENNINGTON** — A student from Dartmouth College, Anthony Beaulieu, who has somehow found his way to the musical offering at Bennington College, presented a fine piano recital in the Carriage Barn Sunday night. This was not his first public appearance at the college, for he accompanied impressively a Bennington student in a program last fall.

Beaulieu's playing was marked throughout by a keen sense of timing and phrasing, which became immediately apparent in the opening piece, Francois Poulenc's Suite Francaise. It fell down perhaps only once, in the andante movement of Beethoven's Sonata Opus 31, No. 2 in D major, where the grand lines did not sound as though they had the sustained support needed to give them shape.

But the rest of the Beethoven, and the rest of the program for that matter, had a kind of brightness to hear and dexterity to see that gave its listeners real pleasure. Three etudes by Chopin, full of wide - ranging arpeggios and runs, came off rather effortlessly at the pianist's hands, result-

ing in moments of cascading sound. His interpretation of Bartok's Improvisations was forceful and well - stressed, making pattern emerge from music that might otherwise sound like so much noise.

Beaulieu seems already to have a mastery of the keyboard, an external ease of playing which combines nicely with a sensitivity to the styles of the composers he chose to perform. There is little that is mannered in his playing, leaving the listener without obstacles between his ears and the sound that emerges. All in all, it was an evening of musical pleasure, though Beaulieu himself could not muster a smile to meet the audience's enthusiastic response.

Earlier in the day the pianist could be found among countless others on the lawn of Jennings Hall, soaking in the sun to the sound of the blues. A very different experience from a formal recital, and one that could not be expected to stand up under any formal musical expectations.

Joe Williams sang the blues as he knows them and feels them accompanying himself on a rather homespun guitar, with filling-in from a companion referred to as

"Short Stuff." The two natives of Mississippi cannot be considered performers in the usual sense of the word, though they have just completed a singing engagement at the Cafe Lena in Saratoga Springs. They sing as their spirit moves them, in a traditional blues pattern, so set that it soon becomes monotonous — the same key, the same chord patterns, even the same basic words (part of which are always swallowed). Only the rhythm changes, and in several numbers the rhythm gripped with exciting pulse.)

Once one settles for the monotonous, which took me a while to do, then the blues begin to live. You hear them, feel them in a sensual way, the mind relaxed, if not absent, yet the sensory attention focused and fulfilled. Then you experience something non - arbitrary, spontaneous, unpretentious in its presentation, and you come up knowing that you are in the presence of living expressed musically, rather than music as a conscious extension of sensitivity and intellect. There is a crudeness, even a carelessness to the blues, combined with a particular form of deep sophistication which is not refinement but rather the un-selfconscious expression of the complex forms and feelings involved in living.

Joe Williams' voice is neither polished nor powerful, but it is surely expressive. Short Stuff was equally natural but with an entirely different quality of voice that hardly concealed the pathos of the blues despite its flat almost nasal quality. Both get what is to be gotten from a guitar, not because of playing it.

The afternoon was an adventure in folk music, in the primitive sources of jazz before the days of recording, before the days of the jazz band, before the often hideous modifications of it that we hear so much of today. In many ways this lawn-sing was an important carry-back in time, as well as an imaginary trip to Mississippi.