

# ways with classics of Picnic Pops

## MUSIC REVIEW

**GRAND RAPIDS SYMPHONY** with Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble, Thursday evening at Cannonsburg Ski Area. The NBD Picnic Pops concert repeats at 7:30 tonight. Tickets \$28 and \$30 for reserved table seats, \$18 reserved chairs. General admission lawn, \$12 adults, \$10 students and senior citizens. Family pass, \$34. Call 454-9451.

they played, "Tampico," was named for a Mexican town "whence came the best marijuana in the early 1920s."

Familiar to Calvin College's January Series, the Louisiana Jazz Repertory Ensemble plays toe-tapping jazz that's guaranteed to put a smile on the face of anyone with a pulse.

The venerable ensemble, all with impressive jazz

pedigrees, were superlative soloists.

Clarinetist Joe Muranyi, who played with Louis Armstrong, delivered a sweet solo in "Dixieland Express" that was as flowing and effortless as a waterfall. Trumpeter Willie Singleton, who grew up in Chicago as a youngster playing with the aging greats from the early days of jazz, gave up a penetrating yet mellow version of Louis Armstrong's playing on "Potato Head Blues."

Cornetist Lewis Green's muted solo on "Perdido Street Blues" was wicked as sin. With "Over the Waves," a Mexican waltz, trombonist Fred Lonzo — a real ham on the bandstand — grabbed a plunger mute, growled into his horn, and sounded just like the gravelly voice of "Satchmo" Armstrong singing.

The LRJE offered a brief version of a New Orleans

## JAZZ

### One treat was jazz-orchestra suite from 1920s

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funeral march in memory of banjoist John Chaffe, who died earlier this month.

Guest banjoist Dave Huxtable capably filled in for him.

The orchestra was in terrific form under Varineau, with crisp and precise playing of Berlioz's "Hungarian March" and a shimmering, glittering string sound with Strauss' Viennese Waltz "Wiener Blut."

Varineau conducted an impressive reading of William Walton's "Facade" Suite No. 2, a version of a piece he conducted earlier this month at Shelbyville's Fontana Festival.

But the orchestra was at its best in Michigan composer William Bolcom's "Ragomania."

A creative and challenging work to play, the Grand Rapids Symphony gave a rollicking interpretation of an evening of music in a 1920s dance hall.

A special treat was an unusual dance suite for jazz band and orchestra from the 1920s written

*Less like Gershwin than Kurt Weill, the jazz-orchestra dance suite by German composer Edward Kunneke captured the flavor of 1920s and 1930s film noir.*



PRESS PHOTO/DIANNE CARROLL BURDICK

**Walter Payton** of the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble plays tuba Thursday night for the Picnic Pops concert in Cannonsburg, by a German composer, Edward Kunneke.

Less like Gershwin than Kurt Weill, the "gross concerto," as Starr dubbed it, captured the flavor of 1920s and 1930s film noir. Sort of like an early "Batman" movie with the caped crusader tooling around Gotham City in a high-powered Dusenbergs.

### Making an entrance

At several points during the concert, LRJE members made several entrances playing, which was fine to watch.

But until the ensemble members caught up with a live mike, it probably was frustrating to hear for most of the thousands seated on the lawn.

But when they all came back to close the program with "Dixieland Express," ending with a snappy "When the Saints Go Marching In," it really brought the outdoor house down.