

A day in park with Georg

By K. O. Dawes

Saturday in the park with Georg will be just a prelude to many moments of repose in Lincoln Park with a new statue of Georg Solti, music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The knighted conductor will help celebrate his own 75th birthday at the noon unveiling tomorrow of a triple life-size bronze bust. It will stand more than 8 feet tall in the formal gardens in front of the park's conservatory at Fullerton and Stockton Drive.

"It will gaze [south] across the gardens and [stork] fountain toward Orchestra Hall, which is as it

Bust unveiling to mark Solti's 75th birthday

should be," said Park District Commissioner Walter A. Nelsch, who will welcome Solti tomorrow.

The statue is a gift to the city from art patron Geraldine Freund, who also donated a bust of Beethoven that stands outside the boxes in Orchestra Hall.

"I can't think of anyone more important than Sir Georg," she

said. "He's the best cultural ambassador Chicago and the United States has. He has brought the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to a pinnacle, and he's taken it on its triumphant tours abroad."

Freund commissioned the bust for an undisclosed fee from British sculptor Elisabeth Frink, who has done a similar, but not identical, statue of Solti for the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, London, said Freund.

The new Solti monument can hardly go unnoticed set among brilliant flowers, spacious lawns and open sky in the midst of the urban hustle. The gardens are adjacent to the zoo, which annually attracts some 4 million visitors who often stroll the glorious gardens.

The statue's art deco stone pedestal—rescued from Park District storage—is described as a "real hunk" by district design engineer Edward Uhlit.

It needs to be ponderous, because "we know monuments can walk," said security-conscious Uhlit. And the bust itself will be anchored with theftproof epoxies, he said.

A Beethoven statue in the nearby "Grandmother's Garden" did



Sir Georg Solti
City's 'cultural ambassador'

"walk" some 25 years ago, he said. Unlike the Solti, its pedestal could be tipped and the bust snatched.

It's hoped that this immovable Georg "will be as graceful as his conducting . . . and part of every Chicagoan's cultural quotient, which resides in our parks' monuments," said Nelsch.