On the Aisle
Votto, Novaes, and Orchestra a Compatible Trio in Orchestra Hall Concert

BY CLAUDIA CASSIDY

WORD gets around. It was not surprising after Tuesday afternoon's success for Antonio Votto and Guiomar Novaes, who returned to the Chicago Symphony orchestra that they returned last night to a sold-out Orchestra hall. If you are among empty seats, there were a few, they belonged to subscribers unable for one reason or another to make it. It was their misfortune, for this was another rewarding concert by a compatible trio.

It turns out that Mr. Votto was Arturo Toscanini's assistant 30 years ago, while he would not necessarily mean a thing except that Toscanini was no man to tolerate dullards. But it also turns out that Votto is a man to respect a score, an orchestra and a soloist. When you add that to knowing your business and you work with other musicians on a high level remarkable things can happen. Such as: orchestral equilibrium, a sense of proportion in displaying a soloist, a mounting excitement on the stage and in the audience. In other words, quite a concert....

Where on Tuesday the classical arch of Haydn's "London Symphony" had led to the Mozart, this time it was Weber's brooding, stormy overture to "Der Freischütz," a big performance in a turbulent romantic mood. And such is juxtaposition that while the concert was no less fresh, limpid and silvery than it had been before, its darkling aura was more in evidence, and its recurrent swirls of little storms. It was a lovely thing to hear as Mme. Novaes and the orchestra played it, with Votto and Mozart's liaison.

Where on Tuesday "Pictures at an Exhibition" had made a stunning climax, this time it was Ravel and Debussy—usually it would have been the other way around. But the Ravel was the "Alborada del Gracioso" played to the prickling hilt of its never quite suppressed excitement, and the Debussy was that formidable seascape, "La Mer."

You can take a man's measure by "La Mer," and an orchestra's. Only virtuosity, poetry and power need apply. Here was a huge, surgent performance all shifting depths and moods and colors, a powerhouse of a performance with that queer, bewitched radiance that now and then sweeps aside the waves, and shows a pirate's chest of jewels, gold and coral far below.

Robert Shaw, who conducts next week's "Missa Solemnis," arrives this evening to sing with the Orchestra for the last time. He can stay for the full week because his own Cleveland orchestra will make a rehearsal Monday. Evening will be taken over by Margaret Hillis, who directs our orchestra.

Fritz Reiner's guest conducting engagement with the New Philharmonic will be taken over by Aaron Copland and Carlos Chavez. Mr. Copland conducts Nov. 10-13, Mr. Chavez, Nov. 17-20.

Opera Notes
In the realm of operatic headaches and heroics struggles to survive, New York's Metropolitan had an operating deficit of $870,251 for the season of 1959-60, and cut it to $40,547 by contributions. Meanwhile, Joan Sutherland, who sings with the Dallas opera next month and in Chicago concert March 3, has been signed by the Met for 1961-62. She sings the "Judas Alcina," Nov. 16 and 18, and appears in "Don Giovanni" Nov. 20 and 23 with two more of the Lyric's stellar "Figaro" cast, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Eberhard Waechter. Waechter sings the Don, and his debut here has Chicagoans looking even more hopefully at Dallas plans schedules. When Dallas opens its season Nov. 4 with the Peralmino production of "The Daughter of the Regiment," Lily Pons will be there to see Eugenia Ratti in her old role. Before and after events will be televised with Norman Ross as master of ceremonies, but not the opera itself.