

Vo Ta Han enthralls the crowd at the Chapel

At noon on the fourth day of spring, Vo Ta Han gave a classical guitar recital in the MIT Chapel to a crowd so deep that it pressed against the walls and spilled off the rush chairs onto the floor. In a short introduction, Professor John Cook expressed the hope that Han's application to remain at MIT for a further year might be successful.

Han played eight pieces and as he finished each the applause grew progressively louder, culminating in a giant crescendo after the finale, "Malaguena." It is not hard to understand the approval his audience gave to this piece. What is hard to understand, however, is how human fingers can move so quickly, so flawlessly and so deftly as Han's.

But although the audience in general was moved most by "Malaguena," the piece which pleased me the most was a rarely heard caprice by Tarrega. "Capricho Arabe" was probably the most difficult work in the recital, although deceptively simple to the ear. Or was it just the delicacy and sensitivity of execution that made it appear so? Whatever the reason, there in those two words, delicacy and sensitivity, I believe, lie the key to the success of the recital. The impression conveyed by Han's fingers as they stroked, plucked and coaxed the strings, was one of understanding and tenderness for each piece in its own way. Combined together the eight pieces, "Feste Lariane" by Mozzani, "Aria con Variazioni" by Fescobaldi, "Sarabande" by Handel, "Leyenda" by Albeniz, "Ori-

ental Dance" by Maravilla, "Capricho Arabe" and "Malaguena," plus a new composition by Professor Donald Sur of the MIT Music Faculty, amounted to an original and varied program.

In the whole of Han's 40-minute performance there existed one small drawback. I do not know whether it was caused by the narrow cylindrical shape of the Chapel or by the height of its ceiling, but something in the building robbed the guitar of a measure of its true depth and power. For a lesser guitarist it would have been a serious problem; in Han's case it was simply a pity that such should have hovered over an otherwise delightful performance.

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