

His Beethoven beat can't be beat

By BILL ZAKARIASEN

Daily News Music Critic

SWEDISH-AMERICAN conductor Herbert Blomstedt came to Carnegie Hall Sunday night for the first time in his new position as music director of the San Francisco Symphony.

As he showed during his 10 years with the Dresden, Germany orchestra, Blomstedt's beat is among the clearest in the business, his feel for correct tempo seems irreproachable, and he is able to impart to his players that sense of musical exultation which he so obviously feels.

From the downbeat of Sibelius' tone-poem "Tapiola," he captured the score's imagery and awesomely mythic presence, while never trying to rush the climactic passages.

Moreover, the orchestral playing had a splendid incisiveness and transparency—virtues which would continue in a broadly-paced yet exuberant rendition of the Beethoven Seventh Symphony. This performance accomplished the near-miracle of making this familiar masterpiece sound completely fresh and full of suspense.

THE PROGRAM ALSO included a New York premiere—"Movers and Shakers" by the San Francisco Symphony's new composer-in-residence, Charles Wuorinen—already a notable figure in our city's contemporary musical life.

This work, dedicated to the Cleveland Orchestra, was inspired by O'Shaughnessy's poem "The Music Makers," and pays tribute to the music-loving Ohio public who put their money and efforts to service of the art.

Not surprisingly, there's a lot of moving and shaking in "Movers and Shakers," and this, perhaps more than any other work of his, shows Wuorinen's mastery of the orchestra to its fullest. There's a lot of clangor to be heard, but more than a modicum of poetry as well, plus a nice sense of wit—punctuated by some virtuoso writing for the tuba.

Considering his recent compositions, the tuba is maybe Wuorinen's favorite instrument nowa-

days, and Floyd Cooley's amazingly agile playing must have made the composer very happy.

Another notable Carnegie premiere got a bit lost in the shuffle last week. On March 3, The Yale Symphony under Leif Bjaland gave the first U.S. performance of Franz Schreker's 1927 song-cycle "Vom Ewigen Leben." Based on Walt Whitman poems, the cycle is simply gorgeous in every way, and the performance was grand in the extreme—particularly by young Met Opera soprano Dawn Upshaw, whose radiant, urgently involved singing really made one sit up and listen.