

L.A. PHILHARMONIC AT UCLA

By DANIEL CARIAGA
Music Critic

The Los Angeles Philharmonic's regular Music Center season does not begin for another eleven days. Its playing year started last week, however, with in-school concerts around the county.

And Sunday afternoon, in huge Pauley Pavilion at UCLA, the Philharmonic, led by Lawrence Foster, celebrated two 50th birthdays — its own and UCLA's — with a special event climaxing Sunday's open house on the West-

wood campus.

A 90-minute, intermissionless program, beginning at 4:30, was planned. With a large number of latecomers, the resulting late curtain, plus an over-generous soloist, the concert ran until just past 6:30 — which would have been fine, had we been given an intermission. Without one, one left the indoor amphitheater somewhat sore.

About the general level of the orchestra's playing, no complaints were possible, though there were some few accidents in the finale, Copland's "El Salon Mexico." Foster, looking more authoritative and relaxed than ever, led the program neatly. One appreciated in particular his Bach (the Third Suite, in D), which was elegantly frank — it avoided the precious as it avoided the

blunt, and one felt no ego intruding upon its continuity. It was refreshing, honest Bach.

Similar virtues marked Charles Ives' "Three Places in New England," which Foster had also conducted last March on a regular subscription concert. At that time we noted a lack of detail in his reading; he obviously finds this music post-impressionistic rather than programmatic and cumulative. This approach is valid, as Foster showed again Sunday; nonetheless, the opposite approach, as personified by Pierre Boulez's performance in Ojai 29 months ago, remains our preference. Incidentally, Foster's October reading was all of four minutes shorter than the one he gave in March.

Bullfighter Joni Mitchell,

one of today's folksingers who writes her own material, was the soloist of the day, singing three songs with the orchestra, and a fascinating group of nine encores afterwards. This minority listener appreciates the quality of Miss Mitchell's lyrics more than the hollow, untrained whang of her voice. But then, I'm funny that way.

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