

# Music, lights don't mix well

By Leon Cohen

Collaborations between classical music ensembles and rock bands tend to be either moderately entertaining at best or an embarrassment at worst.

Concerts with light shows can range from awe inspiring to yawn inspiring. Both were more in vogue in the late '60s than they are now.

Nevertheless, an audience of about 80 saw an attempt to make something fresh of these ingredients Sunday afternoon at the War Memorial Center. Local rock musician and composer Sigmund Snopek III, the Milwaukee String Players and light artist Scott Marshall joined forces to present "Wheels of Light" as the climax to an afternoon of baroque and modern music.

As it stands, this third movement of a Snopek ballet-in-progress sprawls like a lazy bloodhound. "Wheels" is much too long; its music is diffuse and lacking in confidence and direction; the light display rarely appears connected to the music and steals the show from everybody else.

Yet there is enough of interest here for one to hope that the artists will continue to work on it. Snopek's score avoids the embarrassment potential by having the two ensembles play characteristically different musics that alternate or converge. Occasionally, this produces fascinating sounds. The light show taken by itself is pretty, but the few times its changes matched the music revealed the potential power of the combination.

Before their collaborative effort, Snopek's band and the Milwaukee String Players each had a chance to perform independently.