

Musician puts her art into perspective

"I was born with this ability," said Mrs. Alice Haidostian of Bloomfield Township.

"When I was four, my parents brought a piano into the house. I played immediately—by ear—playing the left and right hands together."

To nurture this talent, her parents gave her a formal musical education that began at the Ganspel School of Music when she was six and ended at the University of Michigan where she took a masters in music literature.

Ironically, she didn't become the famous musician in the family. Her brother did. Ara Berberian, educated as a lawyer, is a nationally known basso profundo while she became the wife of Dr. Berj H. Haidostian and had three children.

"I lacked the nervous discipline to be a performing artist and I didn't want to narrow my life down to music."

MUSIC IS STILL a dominant element in her life. She is a performing pianist in the Detroit area and the secretary of Pro Musica, a 50 year old classical music society that brings artists and composers to Detroit.

"A great deal of money was put into musical education. Somehow, I had to share that background with the community in which I live," said Mrs. Haidostian.

There is any ebony Steinway grand piano in her living room. The lid is stacked with books of classical scores, particularly by 18th and 19th century composers like Chopin, Schubert, Poulenc, Hindemith and Barber.

Mrs. Haidostian's hair is as glossy black as the piano, and her eyes are direct and frank. Everything about her—posture, movement, talk—is purposeful, except her hands which reveal great subtlety.

"MUSIC IS EVANESCENT. I practice hours for a performance. Then it's over. Nothing is left. But if you asked me what I like to do most, it's to sit down at the piano."

In February, 1977, she appeared as guest soloist with the Oakway Symphony, performing Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" for suburban audiences. Since 1960, she has performed three times yearly at Tuesday Musicales, the grandparent of Michigan musical organizations.

At the beginning, she said, she was a reluctant performer. It took the encouragement of her husband and Detroit teacher-composer-performer Gizi Szanto to get Mrs. Haidostian to audition for Tuesday Musicales.

"I never felt I was good enough to perform by myself. I had Tuesday Musicales up on a pedestal. I thought one aspired to it, but one never

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reached it. Gizi encouraged me to try out. I told her I would practice first. She replied no, I was ready then. I did audition and was accepted."

Actually, she auditioned for all three performance categories—solo, accompanist, and ensemble—thus qualifying to perform three times a year.

The historical Tuesday Musicales, created in 1883 by 12 well-to-do young women educated in music, had helped to found the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Then, angry with an act of then Detroit Symphony conductor, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, they turned around and created Pro Musica.

GABRILOWITZCH HAD TURNED DOWN what Tuesday Musicales members considered an excellent proposal. When the symphony's harpist, Dina Ostrowska, learned that Maurice Ravel was coming to the United States on tour, she asked Gabrilowitsch about the possibility of Ravel's appearing with the symphony.

Reportedly, Gabrilowitsch replied, "That upstart! Nothing doing."

Miss Ostrowska talked to her friends in Tuesday Musicales and they established a Detroit Chapter of Pro Musica to bring Ravel to Detroit. They also invited Bella Bartok to perform at Pro Musica the same year.

At that time, Pro Musica was a national organization created to present modern composers performing and discussing their own works. But shortly after the Detroit chapter was formed, the depression swept away all other chapters.

Only Detroit's Pro Musica has continuously presented concerts at the Detroit Institute of Arts since 1927.

"I was thrilled when I joined Pro Musica in 1966 because of the society's reputation for inviting composers," said Mrs. Haidostian. "I heard composer Leon Kirchner at Pro Musica."

She believes there are many composers today who deserve a hearing. However, she admits that new music is difficult to listen to since part of the pleasure of music is anticipation.

She is also proud of the soloists and ensembles that Pro Musica brings to Detroit.

"Pro Musica has the reputation of being one of the most discriminating audiences in the country. The musi-

cians who perform for us know that, and they perform their best for us."

Mrs. Haidostian was invited to join the board of Pro Musica in 1966. She said she was awed.

"THE OTHER BOARD MEMBERS were so knowledgeable. They had supported the cause of music in Detroit for years and years. Several were also on the Detroit Symphony board. These

The 1977-1978 season will reach midpoint with the second concert featuring the Marlboro Trio, 8:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 3, at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Mrs. Haidostian calls them "one of the finer chamber music ensembles in the country."

The final concert of the season will be 8:30 p.m., Friday, April 7, when soprano Valeria Girard will perform. Among the concerts she has attended, Mrs. Haidostian calls Pro

Musica unique, for it combines a formal concert atmosphere with a relaxed, informal artists' reception afterwards.

While she gives active support to music in Detroit, she also participates in other community organizations.

She is past president of the Detroit Armenian Women's Club and the Wayne County Medical Society Auxiliary. She has also served as chairman of U-M's alumnae council.

"Music is not the beginning and end of my life, but it brings the most pleasure of anything I do."

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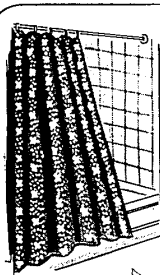
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