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# Josh, at 16, composes symphonies

By SUSAN TALBER KLEIN

Three works by Southfield composer Josh Cheek will be performed tonight at 8 p.m. at First Methodist Church, 2200 West 13 Mile between Greenfield and Coolidge in a concert sponsored by the Southfield Democratic Club.

Violinist Lenora Ledwon and pianist Isabelle Tull will perform works by Cheek, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Liszt.

Mr. Ledwon, a freshman at Oakland University, is a 1974 graduate of Southfield Lathrup High School.

Mr. Tull is a former Southfield resident who teaches and plays piano professionally. She has often accompanied Cheek in concerts.

Cheek selected the performers for the concert. He has been composing for the last eight years—since he was eight years old.

A 16-YEAR-OLD junior at Southfield Lathrup High School, he lives in Southfield with his mother, Tobias, his father Eugene, and his Shetland dog, Sebastian.

Composing comes naturally to Josh. "No one ever told me I couldn't do it. I started composing after he learned to read music and play the violin."

Growing up in a musically-oriented household helped inspire his interests.

Josh studies violin and plays the piano and violin for fun. They are the two instruments his mother used to play.

His brother can play any wind and finger-board instrument made. Josh said.

ALTHOUGH JOSH is a self-taught composer, he does turn to his teacher Richard Brown and other experts for the finer points of composition.

He writes whatever takes his fancy, from classical to ragtime pieces.

One of his string quartets has a section on the 1907 Detroit riots which greatly affected Josh.

"I was raised in pretty shoddy times," he said.

And he is not beyond writing a western following piece an incidental music for his high school's production of Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors.

Josh explained effortlessly how he composes music, describing the saxophone quartet he is writing for Schockcraft College in Livonia where he studied last summer with Robert W. Jones on a scholarship.

"First, Josh said, 'I conceive of what I want to do. Then I try to find the unique local characteristics about the instrument. I learn its limitations, separate sounds. Lastly, I follow a path which exploits the instrument musically.'"

He does research, talks to experts, and listens to all types of music.

JOSH'S BROTHER taught him many of the finer points of the saxophone. He learned it usually doesn't perform the same note repeatedly. The results are a quaking sound.

"So I am using repeated notes in the first movement of the quartet to exploit that unusual characteristic of the sax," he said, giving verbal examples.

Charles lives an insurance man and composer of the early 1900's as the composer whose music most influences Josh.

"I've wasn't a super-intellectual. Can you imagine anyone using t-a-r-a-boom-de-ay in a string quartet? I've did it!" Josh takes lives because his works imply something in addition to the music. "The music doesn't separate itself from reality," said Josh.

HIS OTHER MUSICAL hero is Michael Renney who wrote the musical score for such movies as Citizen Kane, Three Worlds of Gulliver, Fahrenheit 451, and The Day the Earth Stood Still.

Josh hopes to eventually compose musical scores for films and television. He believes he has the ability to write music which evokes visual and dramatic images.

"A job like that would pay me enough so I wouldn't have to worry about money and could write and get paid for it."

Josh described himself as not being an ivory-tower intellectual who locks himself up. He knows a composer needs a good salary to be able to compose freely.

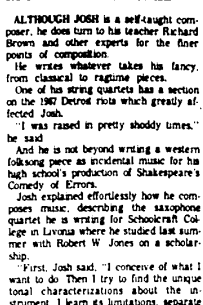
"However," he said, "I have to write music. I don't care what kind it is."

Josh is aware of the effect of living in a metropolitan area.

"The city influences me artistically, socially, politically, scholastically, and romantically. I don't believe one can separate himself from society and be an active, healthy part of it," he said.

UNLIKE MOST 16-year-olds, Josh's social life revolves around his music. He

admits to being an intense person who may overwhelm or frighten anyone he dates.



JOSH CHEEK

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