

# Festival marked by excellence

By GRETCHEN McHUGH

One of the characteristics of Detroit's Schubert/Vienna Festival has been the variety of concerts, and composers represented.

It hasn't been just Schubert, just symphony, just solo or just chamber music.

To illustrate, let's look at three of last week's concerts. On Monday, the Marlborough Trio—Charles Libove, violin; Mitchell Andrews, piano; and Charles McCracken, cello—played Schubert's E Flat and B Flat piano trios.

Tuesday found us in Ford Auditorium listening to three types of pieces—straight orchestra, songs with orchestra, and the Berg Violin Concerto, a 1938 composition played by Itzhak Perlman. Thursday, back in Orchestra Hall, pianist Murray Perahia performed another all-Schubert program.

**THE MARLBOROUGH TRIO CONCERT** was such a fine performance that to "review" it really could best be accomplished by saying, "I'm sorry you weren't there." Since the audience was absolutely soundless for the performance's hour and 50 minutes, the following musical refinements could be heard.

Beginning the development section of the first movement of the E Flat Trio, there is a long crescendo. It begins "triple piano," which in Orchestra Hall means triple piano—as quiet as you can get.

Through the strings' arpeggios could be heard the piano, Mitchell Andrews articulating melodic material with the beautiful clarity his playing showed all evening. His Schubert "touch" indeed,

was sublime, another example being the repeated notes, and octaves, of the B Flat Trio's Rondo.

He produced a lush effect seemingly effortlessly in passages of great difficulty. At another spot, in the first movement of the E Flat Trio, he played some molten scales that never dominated the strings.

String playing by Libove and McCracken, too, showed nobility and finesse, as in contrasts between tenderness and sforzando, and between brave unison passages and singing of solo lines such as the cello passage in the B Flat Trio's Rondo.

The tender four-note theme of this trio's Andante movement—simply itself—contained 100 million sweet sounds to give the most ardent Schubert lover a wintersworth of music.

Maestro Dorati himself attended this concert, taking the time from his whirlwind of concerts, rehearsals and appearances to enjoy the gemmlichkeit of Orchestra Hall.

Dorati's conducting of Schubert, Schwartz, Wolf, Schoenberg, Webern and Berg in Ford Auditorium the following night likewise was of the best quality. The program, however, wasn't of such sustained beauty. The purely orchestral works, such as Schubert's Rosamunde Overture and D Minor Minuet, came off rather as filler pieces.

They were restrained, even elegant, but relatively uninteresting compared to the solo-featured works of the evening. These were led by Schubert and Wolf, and the Dove's song from Schoenberg's "Gurrelieder," all sung by contralto Maureen Forrester, as well as the Berg Violin Concerto.

**IN MASTERFUL PROGRAMMING,**

Dorati included not only Romantic songs, with their beautiful melodies, but also to quote the program notes, "The apotheosis of all Romantic elements . . . all in the best Wagnerian tradition" in the form of the song from "Gurrelieder," and finally a Schubert work which is the antithesis of melody because it uses the 12 tone system—the Berg concerto.

All of this in one night was something like a music history class, and it made an intelligent reprieve, if that was needed, from pure Schubert. Only Elisabeth Soderstrom's lieder recital and last Sunday's "Concert Eleven" varied, also, from all-Schubert evenings.

Miss Forrester's sensitive contralto voice and heart-felt interpretations lent dignity to "Du bist die Ruh" and passion to "Trauen von Gurre." However, Ford Auditorium's acoustics swallowed the sorrow and passion of a lady whose refrain is "I flew far, I sought / And I found heavy sorrow."

The interpretation as a whole was rather more sedate than magic. Alban Berg's violin concerto combines the most gothic sort of programmatic romanticism—"The death of a beautiful maiden," as Edgar Allan Poe would say—with the most abstract of all music composition types, the dodecaphonic system. This is taking all 12 notes in a chromatic scale, setting them down in what sounds like any old accidental order, and using the resulting pattern in various ways.

**ITZHAK PERLMAN DID MORE** than play this incredibly complex work—he communicated it. With the timing, technique and tone that have made him famous, he gave a stunning reading—one of the world's most difficult violin works.

In some beautiful solo playing of his own, concertmaster Gordon Saxles complemented the virtuosity of the formidable Perlman. It was a powerful and moving performance with Dorati and the rest of the orchestra, too, at their best.

In Orchestra Hall Thursday, pianist Murray Perahia played four Schubert Impromptus and the A Major Sonata. Perahia is an irresistible performer. With a noble profile, a shock of black hair and a mystical air about him, he comes on as a highly individualistic player, much as Liszt was said to have been.

Not as fiery as Liszt, who regularly caused ladies to swoon (however thought that started with Elvis?), Perahia is, however, essentially a passionate musician, complete with elaborate gestures at the end of phrases and a kind of concentration that spells immersion, a "gestalt" approach, and romanticism. His playing, however, was controlled, disciplined and beautifully crafted.

**OF THE IMPROMPTUS**, the G Flat Major was perhaps the weakest, coming across without too much flexibility in the melodic line. This is supposed to float dreamily out over shimmering arpeggio accompaniment. But when Perahia came to the A Flat Impromptu, a piece played by most pianists, the melody soared, the inner section rang and the whole piece conveyed Schubert at his most ravishing.

Something happens in Orchestra Hall where a sensitive performer can hear clearly the results of his musical intentions. Listening to the crystalline clarity of his own sounds, he surpasses himself. It's a kind of magic, given the humdrum acoustics of many modern halls, and it happened in this recital.

## OCC plans an art sale

A 7 p.m. reception will mark the opening of Oakland Community College's art show and sale on Friday, Dec. 1.

The event, sponsored by the Royal Oak Campus, is being planned under the direction of Leo Dworin, professor of arts and humanities and faculty sponsor of the Arts and Humanities Club.

The sale will begin at 9 a.m. on Dec. 1 and continue through Dec. 14. Hours for viewing are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday Through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday.

Located in B Building of the OCC Camps at 825 S. Washington, the show will be presented with no admission charge. For more information call Dworin at 548-1233, ext. 86.

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