

Haas explains the genius of Mozart

By Avigdor Zoromp
special writer

Last Sunday we were treated to the second part of "Viennese Classics," a lecture-recital by Karl Haas at Orchestra Hall. He is a one-man, walking encyclopedia who has been sharing his vast reservoir of music knowledge with his radio audiences over the past 25 years. Even if one doesn't completely agree

review

with every statement he makes, his contributions toward the enhancement of music appreciation can't be minimized. This program featured the life and piano music of Mozart. By Haas'

Mendelson wins award from American Legion

Michael V. Mendelson has been selected by a staff vote to be the recipient of the American Legion School Award. The senior at Harrison High School will be presented with the award when the school stages its Swing Out on June 10.

The award is made to a senior based on qualities of leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service.

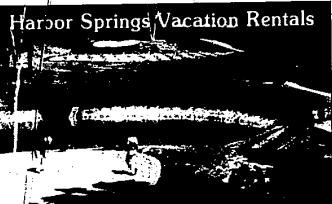
Mendelson played a lead role in the school's spring musical production of "Oklahoma!"



Michael Mendelson



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own admission, such a topic is far too wide to be adequately covered by a single program.

As Haas pointed out, Mozart's music doesn't quite fit into the category of "Viennese Classics," or any other category, for that matter. Mozart's music stands alone, and is stylistically and musically separate from anything else.

According to Haas, Mozart was the only true genius in musical history. It's easy to agree on the "genius" part, even if the "only" aspect is contested.

That Mozart was a true genius was demonstrated here beyond any doubt with the presentation of some of his early astonishing achievements. These compositions were written between the ages of 5-8. While they might not sound overly impressive to the casual viewer who isn't familiar with their background, the illustration of some of the fine structures, including the use of deceptive cadences, made the point abundantly clear.

AS HAAS STATED, even a person old enough to be the grandfather of the 5-year-old who wrote some of these pieces would have to practice them thoroughly in order to play them well. But Haas failed to take his own advice on this occasion. While these early pieces don't demand technical virtuosity, he repeatedly stumbled through them as if he were sight-reading them for the first time.

Admittedly, while these works represent astounding childhood achievements, they are hardly the type to inspire a major undertaking by a professional pianist.

This reasoning can't be applied to the most substantial compositions in the program. In several instances, in addition to the flawed notes, the clarity of the more rapid passages was obscured by excessive use of the pedal.

In the charming Fantasia in D Minor, the scales and arpeggio interludes in the adagio part were uneven and erratic. The other Fantasia on the program, the somber C minor composition, fared better, except for a brief, fast episode before the return to the original theme.

AMONG THE BETTER presented compositions were the Adagio in B Minor, K. 540, and the Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 330, which concluded the program. The first of these isn't very well known, and it was put into the proper context by Haas, who discussed the famous rivalry between Mozart and Salieri which inspired this composition.

Flaws notwithstanding, the program was informative and entertaining. If anybody is curious about the meaning of a deceptive cadence, as well as some other fascinating concepts, one would be well advised to attend Haas' next presentation. These programs, however, are directed towards music lovers in general, regardless of formal musical education.

The next three programs will feature the works of Beethoven and are scheduled for October, November and December.



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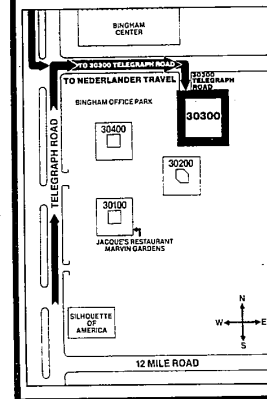
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