

Classical artists excel on record

By Avigdor Zarnop
special writer

For those record collectors who are interested in something other than yet another recording of the standard pieces by a known conductor or artist, there are two records available by artists from our midst.

These feature delightful selections that are seldom heard. The quality of the musical performance on these recordings is uncomparably high.

Shaul Ben-Meir has been a flutist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra since 1967. Considering the fact that he was a student of the celebrated flutist Jean Pierre Rampal, one may conclude that he must have been a very good student.

But, more importantly, he has his own statement to make. On the Golden Crest record, he is accompanied by Muriel Kilby, who has appeared as soloist with some leading orchestras. Presently she is a keyboard player with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (as a Orchestra solo orchestra member), and she participates in many local chamber events.

THIS RECORDING features compositions by Hindemith, Elton Burton, Michel Blavet, Philippe Gaubert, and Honnegger. If the three middle composers aren't well known, their compositions on this record are no less delightful.

Eldin Burton is an American composer, currently residing in New York. I find his Sonatina for Flute and Piano far more interesting and rewarding than many compositions by better known contemporary composers.

Blavet (1700-1765) was a French baroque composer and flute player. His Sonata No. 4 provides an interesting insight into the capabilities of the early 18th century instrument.

Philippe Gaubert (1879-1941) was a French composer known primarily for his flute compositions and arrangement of flute works by some of his more famous predecessors. The Hindemith sonata and the Honnegger Danse de la Chevre are helpful in revealing the skeptic that there is musical life after the three Bs.

The high level of performance of both flute and piano of these compositions makes it quite special. The only

review

drawback is the relatively weak signal, which necessitates a high level of volume, causing a higher level of static noise. While the noise is audible, it isn't above acceptable level and the recording as a whole is very enjoyable.

The Megido record features, in addition to Ben-Meir, harpichordist David Wilson and pianist Michelle Cooker. Composers featured are C.P.E. Bach, Louis Ganne, Sigfried Karg-Elert, Franz Doppler, Saint Saens, Krantz and Fontbonne. The latest of these works is by Karg-Elert (1877-1933), with the familiar title Sonata Assonata.

While it is no match for the more famous Beethoven work with the same title, it is a rather articulated work for solo flute. The rest, with the exception of Bach's "Hamburg" Sonata, are rare romantic-era treats.

THE FLUTE sound in this recording comes through clearly and convincingly. The keyboard, however, tends to be underplayed, in particular, the harpichord in the "Hamburg" Sonata is barely audible.

The piano part is also occasionally too suppressed. But it comes through with vitality in the "Air de Ballet d'Assonata" by Saint Saens and in "Whirlwind" by Krantz.

The flute in this short selection is likely to whip up a gust in your own bone. The zest and spirit in the concluding brief piece, "Chasse aux Papillons" by Fontbonne make a second subsequent listening almost inevitable.

Wilson and Cooker, both University of Michigan graduates, appear here frequently in chamber events. Cooker has appeared many times on Nightcap with Mozart and was the accompanist for Misha Rachlevsky's April 5 violin recital at Orchestra Hall.

Shaul Ben-Meir will appear this coming Sunday with the Center Orchestra at the Jewish Community Center playing Mozart's second flute concerto. We are fortunate indeed to be blessed with such artistic mastery in our own domain.

For ticket information, call the Orchestra Hall box office, 833-3700.

String quartet to play

The Chamber Music Society will present the Filawillam String Quartet at 8 p.m. Saturday in Orchestra Hall.

The musicians, Christopher Rowland, first violin, Jonathan Sparey, second violin, Alan George, viola, and Joan Davies, cello, have performed together for almost a decade. Their repertoire is based on Viennese classics.

The program will include the Tchaikovsky Quartet in B Flat Major, the Shostakovich Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 122 and Beethoven's Quartet No. 13 in F Flat Major, Opus 130 and Grosse Fugue, Opus 133.

For ticket information, call the Orchestra Hall box office, 833-3700.



Second runs

Tom Panzenhagen

WHAT'S IT WORTH?
A ratings guide to the movies

Bad	\$1
Fair	\$2
Good	\$3
Excellent	\$4

classic films or don't expect many viewers.

MEANWHILE, at Ch. 50, Sonny Elott has become solidly entrenched as host of that station's 1 o'clock movie. It is difficult to compare Sonny with Bill Kennedy, his predecessor, because it is like comparing popcorn with licorice. But there is no doubt that Sonny has taken command of the situation.

He's especially good during the phone-in sequences, often displaying a knowledge of film trivia that surpasses that of his predecessor. However, it's occasionally painfully obvious that Sonny is being fed answers to questions from a stagehand while pretending that the answers come off the top of his head. Bad, Sonny.

The films on 50 still outclass the competition, which is a good reason for watching the afternoon movie whoever the host may be. And, almost as a bonus, we still get to enjoy all Bill on Sundays, on tape from sunny Florida, and Kennedy hasn't looked so vigorous in years.

The other stations deserve no comment but they do warrant one bit of advice: Run a vintage film at 11:30

weeknights and see how quickly viewers turn you on.

ADDENDUM: The winners of the Oscars on Monday will be "E.T.," best picture; Richard Attenborough, best director; Paul Newman, best actor; Meryl Streep, best actress; Louis Gossett, best supporting actor; and Jessica Lange, best supporting actress. Happy Anniversary!

Fourth Street changes show

"Beyond Therapy" by Christopher Durang will open April 15 at the Fourth Street Playhouse, 301 W. Fourth, Royal Oak. The production replaces the originally scheduled "G.R. Point," which has been postponed indefinitely.

Performances of "Beyond Therapy" will be presented at 8:30 p.m. Thurs-

days-Fridays, 9 p.m. Saturdays and 7:30 p.m. Sundays through May 28.

The play is a comedy about psychotherapy and its effect on modern relationships. Durang also is the author of "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You."

For more information, call the playhouse at 543-3666.

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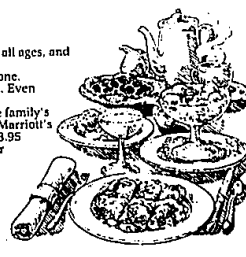
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