

Scoreboard: Musicians — 10 Audience — 0

By Avigdor Zaronp
special writer

review

Places of worship have traditionally provided musical entertainment since biblical times, even though the traditional classical masters do not date that long.

While during the past few centuries such events were primarily associated with churches, the custom has been adopted also by Jewish Reform and Conservative synagogues.

The latest concert, featuring violinist Joseph Silverstein, and pianist Andrew Wolf, at the Shaarey Zedek Synagog in Southfield was the third such concert I have attended in recent weeks.

This one, which was free to the public, drew a tremendous crowd, estimated to be in the thousands. Fortunately, the structure proved to be large enough to accommodate this enthusiastic audience.

Silverstein, born in Detroit, is, of course, a very fine and renowned violinist. He is the concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, as well as its assistant conductor.

THUS, HIS career involves him with solo appearances as both violinist and conductor with major orchestras, as well as his usual obligations as a concertmaster.

He is also remembered by Detroit area audiences for his benefit concert with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra during the orchestra's strike. It is these roots with Detroit, along with ties to Congregation Shaarey Zedek, which were partly responsible for the large turnout.

With all the well-deserved acclaim, there was another star of the event who was undeservedly lost in the shuffle. The failure to mention pianist Andrew Wolf in the numerous (perhaps too numerous) introductions and speeches was a serious, albeit an unintentional oversight.

Wolf, currently director of the All Newton Music School, is a seasoned pianist, who has appeared with masters of the stature of Isaac Stern and Leonard Rose.

His active role in this night's music, in particular in the Brahms Sonata in A Major and the Franck Sonata for Piano and Violin, also in A major, was indispensable for the high quality of the performance of these popular compositions.

Besides these major works, there were shorter selections by Kreisler, Bloch and Wieniawski on the program. The least familiar among these was the only Jewish-oriented piece titled "Nigun" by Ernest Bloch.

The title, which roughly means "melody" in Hebrew, refers to the work's style, which is based on Jewish cantorial themes. In the capable hands of Silverstein, with his rare Guarneri instrument, this piece sounded like a true masterpiece.

The Kreisler and Wieniawski selections, which are considered to be pieces that primarily highlight virtuosity, didn't lack in substance either.

In addition to the excellent technique, there was a refined articulation and expression, without an over-indulgence in emotionalism, or "schmaltz," which is the common Jewish term.

THE MUSICAL orientation of the audience didn't match, for the most part, its initial enthusiasm. Many of them, evidently, were accustomed to a formal concert atmosphere.

This was apparent from the applause between movements in the Brahms and Franck sonatas, on the one hand, and a perfunctory applause at the end of the compositions, which didn't reflect any truly genuine appreciation and enthusiasm on the other.

Moreover, the crowd grew restless during the final portion of the program, whose length was extended by the numerous speeches both at the beginning and after the intermission.

But this isn't a reflection on the quality of the performance, which deserved the highest credit. Even if the caliber of the performers and the compositions seem to be above the heads of many in the audience, this should be no reason to compromise the quality.

On the contrary, it is up to the audience, were it the occasion. If even a small portion of them become converts to classical music, it will prove to be a worthwhile investment.



Summer Theater Festival repertory

Maureen McDavitt (left) is Margot Wendice, the socialite wife, in the suspense thriller "Dial M for Murder," which joins the Hilberry Summer Theatre Festival's repertory Wednesday, July 13. "Dial M" rotates with "See How They Run" on the Hilberry's main stage through Saturday, Aug. 6. (Right) Dennis E. North and Milan Blitt-

ski appear in "The Runner Stumbles," Milan Blitt's courtroom drama opening July 13 as part of the Wayne State University Summer Theatre Festival. "The Runner Stumbles" plays in repertory with "Key Exchange" in the Studio Theatre, downstairs at the Hilberry. For information and tickets, call 577-2872.

'Jazz in July' series continues

The Lenore Paxton Quintet will provide the entertainment for the "Jazz in July" series at 2 p.m. Sunday, July 10.

The concerts are held on the lawn of the Bloomfield Township Public Library, 1099 Lone Pine.

All ages of jazz fans are invited to bring blankets or chairs and relax on the lawn.

For further information, call the library at 642-5800. The library is on the corner of Lone Pine and Telegraph.

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Extension courses at Groves

Oakland University's Extension Program will offer 14 evening courses at Groves High School in Beverly Hills beginning Tuesday, June 28.

Classes will be offered in accounting, economics, business and technical writing systems analysis, marketing, political science and finance.

Birmingham teen dance coming

The "Birmingham Beach Bash" is the name of an upcoming high school dance to be sponsored by The Community House in Birmingham, 380 S. Bates.

Appropriate dress is required, with jeans forbidden. Performing will be The Snaps, a local band, with disc jockey Paul Smith providing additional music. Refreshments will be provided.

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