

Pianist still needs to find his strengths

By Arvid Zarnop
special writer

The name of Leszek Bartkiewicz isn't yet familiar to many people in our area. But this is changing rapidly. In time, many will even pronounce the Polish name correctly, which isn't as difficult as it looks in print. Born in Poland, Bartkiewicz came to this country two years ago. Presently, he is studying for his doctorate at the University of Michigan under Leon Fleischer and Theodore Lettvin. Judging by several other pianists with the same U-M background who have appeared here extensively, Bartkiewicz is in good hands. At 23, he has won several prizes, the latest one being the Grosse Pointe Piano Competition first-place award, which provided, among other things, for his solo recital at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial last week. Some in the audience had heard Bartkiewicz a couple of weeks earlier — at the Nightcap with Mozart series. Two of the compositions were on both programs. The performance itself wasn't as flawless as one would like, but there were some redeeming elements. Hopefully, Bartkiewicz won't be discouraged

review

by this, or any other criticism. Being still at a developmental stage, his style is likely to undergo substantial changes and refinements. THE PROGRAM consisted of works by Bach, Barber, Ron Cooney, Prokofiev and Chopin. The opening work, the Partita No. 3 for Harpsichord by Bach, is one of the least frequently performed among the six parts. The performance of this work was one of the high points in the program. There was a good stylistic approach, with a sparse use of the pedal and appropriate application of non-legato phrasing that accentuated the musical structure. There was still excessive elasticity, with overblown crescendos stretching and distorting the fibers of the music, but it was still a superior performance compared with that of many modern pianists. Another high point was attained with the Sonata Op. 26 by Barber. It is one

of the most significant American compositions of our times in that category. The impressive final movement with its gorgeous fugue received a treatment that was truly excellent and superb. Other works on the program didn't fare as well, however. One short selection by Ron Cooney, whose musical skill didn't match his skill as a poet. Cooney was a local artist and poet who died recently at the age of 26. The program was dedicated to his memory. Some of his poems were read for the occasion and were quite impressive. While it may be argued that one shouldn't criticize the dead, it should be pointed out that even composers of the stature of Beethoven aren't spared the rod of criticism. ANOTHER major selection on the program was a piano suite from "Romeo and Juliet" by Prokofiev. While some of the livelier movements, like the famous march of the Mon-

taques and the Capulets were quite impressive, some of the slower movements tended to be dull and lifeless. The weakest performance was that of the concluding section, the Andante Spianato and Grand Polonaise by Chopin. It came as a disappointment to several listeners, who are inclined to view a superb performance of Chopin by a Polish-born pianist as a fait accompli. The polonaise in the performance, however, lacked the necessary sparkle and grandeur. While nothing is immutable and everything is subject to change, Chopin doesn't reflect Bartkiewicz's strength at this point. Hopefully, in time, Bartkiewicz will discover his true strength and potential, which doesn't necessarily have to be dictated by his nationality. It is far better to be a good Bach player than a mediocre Chopin player, or vice versa for that matter. It is certainly hoped that Bartkiewicz will find his own path to a successful and rewarding career.

'I Can Cope' classes set

A patient education program designed to help people seek strength and resources to cope with the chronic disease cancer and its therapies is being offered in Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, through the efforts of American Cancer Society volunteers. The "I Can Cope" program series which was developed at North Memorial Medical, Minnesota, will be presented at 7 p.m. on eight consecutive Mondays, Sept. 12 through Oct. 31 in Henry Ford Hospital, 2790 West Grand Blvd. in the Research and Education Bldg., Room 2101. Upjohn Healthcare Services is providing additional funding assistance to the "I Can Cope" program in various locations in the tri-county area. The objectives of the patient education classes are three-fold: to increase the cancer patient's knowledge of the disease; to increase the cancer patient's control over his or her life, and to decrease the anxiety the cancer patient feels about the disease.

THE PROGRAM will be led by Cynthia Reynolds, an oncology social worker, and Reverend Charles McMahon, chaplain at Henry Ford Hospital. The weekly class sessions help participants increase knowledge about physical anatomy, cancer, potential health problems that may arise, nutrition, communication skills, stress awareness, physical fitness, utilizing community resources and the essential role patients play in their own treatment. Cancer patients and family members can register for the "I Can Cope" course by calling the American Cancer Society unit office at 923-3144, or American Cancer Society Metropolitan Detroit Area Office at 557-5353. There is no fee but class size is limited and participants are expected to attend every class session. People interested in courses held at other tri-county locations should inquire at the American Cancer Society by calling 557-5353.

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