

Quality musicians need better piano

By Avigdor Zoromp
special writer

Among the many Detroit-area musicians, there are two (but not only two, one might add) who deserve attention. These are pianist Pauline Martin and Nikolai Nikolai Lemberg.

Both of them have made extensive appearances in the area. They command forces for the recent "Nightcap with Mozart" program.

Martin, born in Canada, a University of Michigan graduate, studied under Theodore Levin, who has produced several other prominent disciples in this area.

Lemberg is a recent immigrant from the Soviet Union. During his short stay here he has been instrumental in establishing the Lycee International Acad-

emy of the Arts, of which he is the director.

Martin had appeared on Nightcap just two weeks earlier with a solo recital, consisting of works by Beethoven, Chopin and Scriabin. On the present occasion, the two artists performed works by Corelli, Paganini, Duvernoy and Ravel. While the last two names aren't as familiar, their music proved to be no less exciting.

The Corelli variations on the "Folia" theme proved to be a source of inspiration to Beethoven, Liszt and Tchaikovsky, among others. Here, in their original form, they projected the sparkling beauty which might explain their attraction by the more prominent composers.

THE "LA STREGHA" variations by Paganini were written, naturally, for

the violin with piano accompaniment. One of the major differences between a flutist and a violinist is the fact that the latter has a chance to breathe. This, however, didn't prevent Lemberg from presenting a magnificent performance of these variations.

Alphonse Duvernoy, in spite of his last name, was a French, late-Romantic composer (1842-1897). His Concertino, composed in 1899, provided a rare glimpse to the turn-of-the-century music. The last composition was by the Russian composer Nikolai Petrovich Rakov, born in 1908. This suite, composed during the 1930s, reflects an earlier Russian style.

While in the role of an accompanist, Martin didn't fail to shine in some of the brilliant passages, notably in the faster Corelli variations.

There was one factor, however, that compromised the quality of this performance, as well as Martin's recital two weeks earlier. This was not due to

her performance, which was brilliant and superb. Rather, the problem lies with the inferior quality of the instrument.

THE PIANO at the Birmingham Unitarian Church has been a source of aggravation and disappointment to pianists and listeners for quite some time. While a shortage of funds might be the root of most problems, there should be a better way to cope with this situation. Simply put, the sound of this piano is intolerable and unacceptable. If nothing else, it should be given as a gift to the poor to be used as firewood during the cold winter.

Several top-rate pianists have performed on this instrument, including one who was among the finalists in the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow.

Musicians of the calibre of Lemberg and Martin lend a lot of prestige to this place. Surely, they could use a better instrument.

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