

Pianist emerges as major talent

By Avigdor Zoromp
special writer

While enthusiasm for classical music among the general population could never match the fervent, religious worship of Rock idols, the supply of gifted young artists seems to be plentiful these days.

Thus, the competition for a place at the top, with universal acclaim and recognition, is a fierce and unrelenting contest, indeed.

One talent in our midst who deserves attention and recognition is Polish-born pianist Leszek Bartkiewicz. After having studied at the most prestigious institutions in his native Poland, he came to this country in 1981 and is currently studying for his doctorate at the University of Michigan.

His latest performance was given at the Birmingham Temple. He was joined by another gifted young artist — Borivoj Marinovic-Jerle. This 23-year-old violinist, born in Yugoslavia, came to this country in 1978 and is studying at U-M.

A THIRD talent in this event was William Shapiro, M.D., who combined Borivoj Marinovic-Jerle. This 23-year-old violinist, born in Yugoslavia, came to this country in 1978 and is studying at U-M.

I have heard Bartkiewicz on a couple previous occasions. While great potential was evident on those occasions, my enthusiasm for his performance was less than total.

In view of this latest performance, my evaluation has to be substantially revised. Bartkiewicz is definitely emerging as a talent to be reckoned with.

The program consisted of works by Liszt, Beethoven, Chopin, Kreisler, Brahms and Prokofiev. On an overall basis, the performance in the Beethoven and Prokofiev works was the most impressive.

The program opened with Liszt's Transcendental Etude in F minor, which is an extremely technically demanding piece. Bartkiewicz has conquered most of the technical difficulties, but there were still some rough edges.

The following Sonata No. 7 in C minor for Piano and Violin by Beethoven was one of the highlights of the evening. The roaring piano passages were well integrated with the bright, colorful violin sound. Each of the four movements aptly conveyed its unique mood.

The final movement was easily flowing, with the themes switching most naturally from instrument to instru-

review

ment. Violinist Jerle also participated in two shorter compositions — the Tambourin Overture by Kreisler and the Hungarian Dance No. 1 by Brahms.

He displayed good technique and virtuosity in the Kreisler piece, but ran into some difficulties in the Brahms.

Beethoven was also presented with his short seven piano Bagatelles. While this is not the pinnacle of Beethoven's music, Bartkiewicz's performance gave these pieces meaning and substance.

He was temporarily agitated after having hit a wrong note at the end of one of these Bagatelles, but he regained his composure to pull off a fine performance.

THE POLONAISE in A Flat Major by Chopin is one of the composer's most popular pieces, as well as one of the most difficult. For the most part, Bartkiewicz presented a momentous and brilliant performance of this work, even though it wasn't flawless.

Among the flaws were the parallel, ascending scales. But he handled well the difficult, rapid left hand octaves.

The program was capped with a two piano arrangement of Prokofiev's Concerto in D. Flat Major for Piano and Orchestra. The second piano was played by Shapiro, who displayed a remarkable ability in this role, which was only one on the program.

The sparkling and spirited performance for both pianists did justice to this youthful composition. The cascading piano passages with the sprightly duets were most refreshing. The substitution for the second piano for the orchestra didn't seem to detract substantially from the charm of this work.

Bartkiewicz was the dominant performer in this program and we should be hearing more of him in the future. The ability of his colleagues shouldn't be underestimated. They deserve more exposure, whereupon their potential can be more accurately appraised.



In 'Nutcracker'

Julio Pollack of Southfield is a Spanish dancer from the Kingdom of the Sweets in the Oakway Symphony Orchestra production of "The Nutcracker" ballet at 3 p.m. Sunday at Mercy High School Auditorium in Farmington Hills. James Dunne will be guest artist, dancing with the Contemporary Civic Ballet Company directed by Rose Marie Floyd. Tickets are \$7 for general admission, \$4 for students and older persons. For more information, call 478-6544.

Ehrling conducts excellent program

By Ruth Zoromp
special writer

This week we had the opportunity to see Maestro Sixten Ehrling at a level of greatness that we haven't seen for the last couple of years.

On Thursday evening, he was a spry, slender, agile conductor, who showed complete control of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and provided us with an excellent musical program.

The first piece, Howard Hanson's Symphony No. 2, written in 1930, was nicknamed "Romanian."

In comparison to some of the music which was written in the 1930s, this is extremely tonal.

It has extremely rich orchestral properties which enhance the depth of polyphonic music. Classical harmony is used throughout. The symphony represents escape from the rather bitter type of modern musical realism which occupies so large a place in contemporary thought. Much contemporary music seems to be showing a tendency to become entirely too cerebral.

THE MELODIC themes in this music were based on ideas that one might find in the accompaniments of predecessors, such as Mozart, Haydn, or Handel, but these accepted depth when provided with richer harmonies and substance by the orchestra.

The intermingling and the discourses among the different types of instruments was superb. It is my opinion that this piece of music should be presented to the audience on a more frequent basis.

The second and major piece of music performed was Wagner's Act I of "Die Walkure." This, of course, was done within the limitations of the orchestra and singer without the addition of scenery and explicit acting.

Even so, the part of Sieglinde, performed by soprano Siv Wennberg, was done with the action in mind.

This was evident in the make-up, the facial expressions, the actions, as well as the singing itself. Wennberg was a very convincing Sieglinde, her voice indicating delicacy of expression as well as delicacy of spirit.

James King, who portrayed Siegmund, on the

other hand, gave a beautiful vocal presentation, but didn't show as much acting ability as Wennberg did.

Arthur Korn portraying Hundung, again didn't portray much action although his voice was in excellent form. This is basically a thing to be expected in an orchestral presentation of an opera.

However, at least at one point, when Siegmund and Sieglinde were supposed to embrace as the finale and focal point of finding each other, the action was clearly missed.

The orchestra performed excellently, integrating with the singers and reiterating the main themes in between the acts. Notable was Tulo Babini's cello solo after Sieglinde's part offering water to Siegmund.

Providing entertainment information

News releases, photographs or other information for the entertainment pages can be sent to: Ebel Simmons, entertainment editor, at 1225 Bowers, P.O. Box 503, Birmingham 49012. The phone number of the Birmingham office is 644-1100.

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