

Vienna Octet builds a global continuity

By Avigdor Zoromp
special writer

For those of us that weren't fortunate enough to attend the Vienna Philharmonic in Ann Arbor a short time ago, there was some compensation in the recent Chamber Music Society of Detroit program at Orchestra Hall.

This program featured the Vienna Octet, a group of eight top musicians from that renowned orchestra. It should be added, however, that the two events are not interchangeable by any means.

In this program, the group performed works by Brahms, Mozart and Schubert. Among these, Brahms seems to be in vogue these days. One day earlier, I had just heard an all-Brahms program with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Not too long before that, I had attended a performance of Brahms Piano Quintet by the Lyric Chamber Ensemble. But there is no sign whatsoever of becoming tired from too much Brahms.

MUSIC by Brahms, in addition to its spiritual wealth, may be analogous to material wealth as well. While some might claim that an excessive amount of either may be a drawback, so far I have never felt close to reaching that point.

The Brahms work featured this time

was another quintet—the one for clarinet and strings. It is one of the few works for clarinet that Brahms wrote in dedication to Muehlfeld, a prominent clarinetist of his time.

The major orchestral works were already behind Brahms. The serene nature of this work was highlighted in this performance.

Clarinetist Peter Schindl played in a restrained manner that was vastly different from the more intense nature of Brahms' earlier works, but with ample descriptive expression.

Only in the adagio was his instrument more out of place. The tranquil surroundings of the mountain resort, where this work had been written a century ago, came back to life on this occasion.

The Mozart composition on the program should be familiar to regular chamber music audiences in the area. The Divertimento in D Major, K. 136 had been performed by the Renaissance Chamber Orchestra on several occasions. Misha Rachlevsky was also in the audience, which made comparing notes unavoidable. The one sure winner that can be declared, however, was the audience.

This work, played by the five string players of the group, was more subdued than the version for a larger string orchestra. There were some harsh and rough aspects in the final movement, but the decision about the winner still stands.

review

THE FINAL work on the program was the fascinating Octet in F Major by Schubert. The five strings were joined by the clarinet, horn and bassoon. While this work isn't obscure, the opportunities to hear it in a live performance are rare. The impact of this moving performance can't be matched by a recorded version. Among the outstanding features of this performance, was the refined sound of the horn, which blended naturally with the other winds, without its typical harshness. The part was played by Gunther

Hogner, solo born with the Vienna Philharmonic.

Each instrument was featured in turn with clarity, then blending in the background again to make way for the next one.

Even though the themes in the six movements are unrelated, there was a global continuity. The final, full-bodied allegro seemed to have sprung naturally from the previous material. Here, the staccato figure wasn't merely an accompaniment of the main theme, but rather had its own dimension of a moving force.

As some of the players pointed out afterwards, this music was an integral part of their environment. We were very fortunate to have been able, at least briefly, to share it with them.



To give concert

Elizabeth Marshall, pianist, will be the artist on Music at the Gallery at 3:30 p.m. Sunday in the Gallery on the campus of Orchard Lake Schools. The series is presented by St. Mary's College and the Friends of Polish Art. After studying at the Vienna Music Academy, Marshall studied at Manhattan School of Music and made her debut at Town Hall in New York. She has toured Europe three times and appeared as guest with chamber ensembles and symphony orchestras in many countries.

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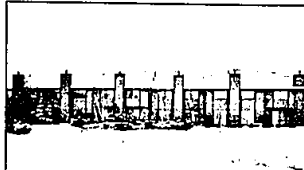
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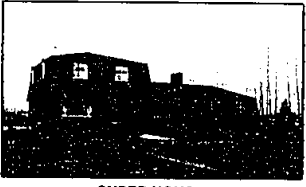


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