

## Sculptor's work at UN

Michigan people and institutions have been in the spotlight in New York City this spring with folk art from the collection of James and Ruth Keene of Birmingham at the Museum of American Folk Art and "Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925-1950" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

On the heels of these comes another event with a Michigan, i.e. Cranbrook, connection. A sculpture by Napoleon Abueva — masters, Cranbrook Academy of Art, 1955, installed in permanent space just outside the delegates entrance of United Nations General Assembly Building — will be officially dedicated Tuesday, June 12.

The sculpture was given by Carlos P. Romulo on behalf of the Philippine government.

Romulo, last living signer of the United Nations Charter and first Asian president of the U.N. General Assembly, was foreign minister of the Philip-

ines until his retirement last January. Among Abueva's close friends from here are Irene Murphy, her daughter, Sharon Murphy Keyes, and Manuel and Violetta Dumlaog.

Murphy, who refers to the sculptor by his nickname, "Billy," said, "Our family and the Abuevas have known each other for three generations."

The association developed through her brother-in-law, the late Frank Murphy. Former mayor of Detroit and governor of Michigan, he later became governor general of the Philippines. She became deeply involved in the life of the Philippines, first as director of the war relief program there after World War II and later as director of craft projects to start cottage industry.

One of these involved taking a group of Philippine artists to the Philippines to develop ideas and procedures for a crafts industry.

## Program deserved larger audience

By Avigdor Zaromp  
special writer

The name of Khachaturian as one of the major composers of our time is well established. However, very little of his life is common knowledge even among musicians, except for his Soviet Armenian background.

For many, he is primarily known for his famous "Sabre Dance." The more attuned listener would also be familiar with his piano and violin concerti and a couple of ballet suites.

The Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul recently presented a program celebrating the 80th anniversary of his birth. Actually, it was closer to the 81st birthday of Aram Khachaturian, 1903-1978. This program went a long way towards filling the gap in the average person's knowledge about the composer's life and music.

The event took place at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield. In view of the fact that Armenians and Jews have a lot in common, both hav-



Avigdor Zaromp

ing suffered from devastating holocausts and both having contributed substantially towards the enrichment of mankind's spirit, the choice of the place was most appropriate.

ALMOST ALL of the audience was Armenian, evidenced by the prevalence of that language (with the exception of my Hebrew).

While such an Armenian presence was expected, it is regrettable that this illuminating program didn't find more interest among people from other ethnic backgrounds. After all, the greatness of Khachaturian's music is in its appeal to people of all backgrounds.

The program consisted of a lecture about the composer's life, with musical selections in between. The program notes were in both English and Armenian. The narration was presented by Thomas M. Kuras, director of music and organist at St. Joseph's Church in Detroit. Kuras, a composer and pianist, also played the piano for part of the program.

Other performers on the program were Gracyna Skowron-Herter, a Polish born violinist, Theresa Jenkins-Bryce, clarinet player with a degree from the University of Tennessee, and dramatic soprano, Nenette Merametzjian, who studied in Vienna

and is a member of Tuesday Musicals.

THE SELECTIONS weren't among the composer's more familiar masterpieces. They were a Chant-Poem for piano and violin, three concert arias for high voice and orchestra, with the choral part arranged for piano by Kuras, two recitatives and fugues and a trio for clarinet, violin and piano.

These works, which I had never heard before, provided a new perspective about this composer. Merametzjian's singing was inspiring and didn't fail to communicate with those who didn't understand the Armenian text. Kuras' explanation also helped in that respect (he isn't Armenian).

One aspect that I found surprising was the keen ingenuity in the structure of the piano fugues, which transform Bach's style into modern settings.

Few programs offer as much educational experience in addition to the rare musical content. Such a program should appeal to a larger audience.

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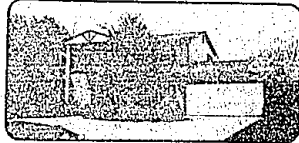
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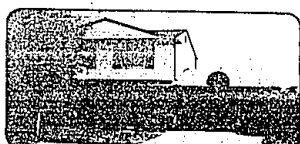
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