

# Humidity damages sound

By Avigdor Zaromp  
special writer

One of the major fears of audiences at the Meadow Brook Music Festival is rainy weather. And we managed to beat the odds in all but one program — so far.

Another source of major discomfort, however, is extremely hot, steamy weather. Such was the case last Thursday.

Musical instruments become very human under such conditions by displaying adverse symptoms.

The guest conductor was Masetro Varujan Kojian, whose name underscores his Armenian descent. The soloists were violinist Dylana Jensen and, on the Thursday program only, organist Berj Zamkochian, also of Armenian descent.

In terms of musical selections, the Sunday program was Armenian oriented. In both programs, most of the selections were off the beaten track.

The first portion of Thursday's program consisted of a suite from "The



**Avigdor Zaromp**

Adventures of Robin Hood" by Erich Korngold and the violin Concerto in A minor by Karl Goldmark.

The Korngold suite was exactly what one could expect — film music with all the typical descriptive sound characteristics. It is the type of music that tends to pass me by without leaving a lasting impression — especially if the movie is sufficiently entertaining. Out of context, the music does have entertainment value, and it brings to life scenes from movies on similar subjects, but in itself it isn't profound.

THE GOLDMARK concerto is one of the handful of works for which this composer is still vaguely remembered.

While it has some attractive melodic themes, a live performance tends to sound less attractive than a recording, in which sound engineering techniques can cover up some of its deficiencies.

This work suffered the most from the humidity. The orchestral performance was sluggish and the sound of Jensen's violin didn't carry through for the most part.

In addition, her instrument would become noticeably out of tune after a few passages. She repeatedly turned away from the audience and tuned her violin during the pauses. This, however, is no reflection on her talent.

She fared much better on Sunday's program with the violin concerto by Sibelius. While the weather on Sunday was still uncomfortable, the humidity wasn't as bad and the instrument responded better. On this occasion, Jensen demonstrated impressive musical and technical skills. Her refined, silvery sound was pure and immaculate.

The most significant work on Thursday's program was the Symphony No. 3 by Saint Saens ("The Organ"). Organist Zamkochian, who produced lavish sounds in the final movement, provided

refined and reverberating sounds in the earlier movement as well.

Technology helped in this instance, for the amplified sound in the second movement could be actually felt, while it is hardly noticeable on most recordings.

The Armenian component on Sunday's program consisted of works by Yerdumian, Hovhanness and Khachaturian. Richard Yerdumian was present for the performance of his Armenian Folk Suite, which he composed at a young age.

THE SYMPHONY No. 2 by Hovhanness, titled "The Mysterious Mountain," is an impressive work. For the most part it was performed with care and precision. The modalities used in the first and third movements are reminiscent of the Fantasy on a Theme by Thomas Tallis by Vaughan Williams, with an Armenian twist.

The closing work by Khachaturian was a suite from Gayane Ballet, opening with the extremely popular Sabra Dance. The performance of most of the movements was very high spirited, sometimes at the expense of strict orchestral discipline.

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