

Chamber ensemble program is high quality

Traditional chamber music is only one of the areas of specialty of the Chamber Ensemble. Another component of this series consists of ethnic programs, designed to acquaint Detroit-area audiences with the rich cultural heritage.

The latest program in that series, "Viva Italia," took place Saturday at the Community Arts Auditorium at Wayne State University. The person behind this series, pianist Fedor Horvitz, is one of the most gifted pianists in our area.

The fact that Italian composers did not produce major masterpieces for the piano did not diminish the high quality of this program.

Other instrument players on the program were cellist Haden McKay and violinist Geoffrey Applegate, both members of the Detroit Symphony Or-

chestra, and pianist Joseph Jackson, who is the organist of the First Presbyterian Church in Detroit. The latter accompanied the vocal portion of the program, with tenor Gordon Finlay and soprano Ernestine Nimmons.

The instrumental part of the program consisted of works by Boccherini, Tartini, Paganini and Donizetti. The opening selection, a sonata in A Major by Boccherini, is one of his less-familiar works, but it is reminiscent of his cello concerto in B flat major.

The performance projected its smooth classical style with the expressive quality of the cello, which was the composer's favorite instrument.

TARTINI'S "DEVIL'S TRILL" sonata is one of the most challenging baroque works for the violin. Jeffrey Applegate has undertaken this challenge



Avigdor Zaromp

head on, mastering successfully the intricate passages with the multiple stops.

This was followed by pieces by Paganini — Cantabile and the last of the 24 caprices for violin, arranged by Auer. Applegate was convincing in bringing out the singing quality in the Cantabile, and daring in the Caprice. In the latter, he was overwhelmed by some of the most fiendish variations, but there are very few violinists alive

who are able to conquer this piece.

In the other variations he demonstrated a dazzling virtuosic ability. This program has shown that Applegate is an extremely able and talented violinist who deserves attention.

The Donizetti trio on the program is a pleasant work, which offers the piano some role beyond routine accompaniment. While his operatic skill was more substantial, this was a logical selection

to make up for the fact that Beethoven was not Italian.

The vocal part of the program consisted of music at which the Italians are at their best. These were famous operatic selections by Puccini (La Bohème) and Verdi (Rigoletto and Traviata), and folk songs by Tosti and DeCurtis, the latter known for his famous song "Torna Sorrento."

FINLAY AND NIMMONS were truly brilliant in their roles. Their full and rich voices filled the auditorium. Both of them would act out their roles on stage even when only one of them was singing.

One would wish to hear them in major roles in a complete opera in view of that performance. Both have appeared with the Michigan Opera Theatre, as well as with other regional companies.

Both pianists performed with spirit and flair, emerging beyond their roles as accompanists whenever the opportunity presented itself.

A small portion of the program was dedicated to reading of Italian poetry by Tonino Corsetti, an active member of the Italian community. Unfortunately, his English explanation was inaudible and his Italian, while considerably louder, did not enlighten those who do not speak the language.

This, however, lasted only a very minor portion. As a whole, this was a very inspired and well presented program.

A future event in the ethnic series scheduled for Jan. 20, will be an all-Polish program. For those who wish to witness Fedor Horvitz demonstrating his pianistic skills, Chopin should provide a perfect opportunity. Folk songs and dances will also be featured.

DSO's mostly baroque concert doesn't prove appealing

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Baroque music is almost non-existent in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra regular program. Part of the reason is, of course, the fact that baroque compositions were not written with the modern orchestra in mind. The Orchestra Hall series tries to fill this gap.

Last week the DSO presented two mostly baroque programs under Christopher Hogwood, an English conductor widely recognized for his interpretations of baroque music.

While there can be no denying that Maestro Hogwood is successful in terms of pure appeal, I do not feel inclined to share in this general enthusiasm. Having attended the Friday program, I found his style unorthodox, but not in the positive sense.

There were six works on the program. These included two 20th century

works by Frank Martin and Bohuslav Martinu, each of which was sandwiched between two baroque sections in each half.

As anyone who studied history would note, the relations between England and France were marked with tensions and wars through several centuries. This might explain the reason that sev-

eral English conductors are in the consistent habit of fleeing French overtures.

THE FRENCH OVERTURE con-

sists of a slow introduction, followed by a lively fugue. Under Hogwood, however, the introduction turns into a fast, jerky sequence of contortions. This was

the case in the opening and concluding Handel works — the Concerto are based on themes from Handel's oratorio, mostly from Esther, but one familiar movement from the Messiah.

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