

Synagog continues classical tradition

By Avigdor Zoromb
special writer

Among the distinguished pianists appearing in our area, few can match the appeal and charm of Menahem Pressler. He is best known for his long career as the pianist of the Beaux Arts Trio. Pressler appeared here with that group, as well as with the Emerson String Quartet.

Last week area audiences had the opportunity to hear him in recital at Shaarey Zedek Synagogue of Southfield. The fact that the event was free to the public made it a rare bargain. This was the annual Peter and Clara Weisberg concert, a magnificent tradition started by the Weisbergs in 1980.

Pressler was joined in some of the works by violinist Lucie Robert. She

started her musical studies in the Conservatoire de Musique in Montreal and is currently teaching assistant to Joseph Gingold at Indiana University.

THE FEW HEAVY selections on the program were interspersed with many lighter pieces. Among the former were Beethoven's "Pathétique" Sonata and Chopin's Andante Spianato and Grand Polonaise. Works by

review

Jewish composers fell into the lighter category.

Pressler has a refined tone texture and an impressive sense of continuity. There are no loose or isolated notes in his approach. Each note is part of the whole, with each almost perfectly related to the other notes in the phrase. In rapid passages, there is a feeling of continuous sound pattern. Within these patterns, themes and nuances are clearly defined.

In the Pathétique, there was a sense of richness and suspense even to those who know the notes by heart. Even the few lapses in the first movement didn't substantially diminish the general sense of completeness.

While it is rather difficult to listen to the second movement without thinking of Karl Haas, this performance was more likely than any to wean us from that habit.

The cohesiveness and continuity was to some extent a detriment in Ravel's Scarbo from "Gaspard de la Nuit." Pressler coped impressively with the work's fierce technical demands, but the notes sounded too tightly clustered to let the music breathe. Even with these drawbacks, the piece didn't fail to convey a sense of artistic beauty.

The one work in which Pressler fell short of his typical high standard was in the Polonaise part of Chopin's famous work. There, he invariably was bogged down by chasing the notes. Those many listeners who were enthusiastic with this work as well as welcome to ignore this paragraph.

ROBERT JOINED PRESSLER in some of the shorter selections, most

of which were by Jewish composers. Two pieces by Bloch, "Vidui" and "Nigun," are occasionally performed. They are based on Jewish cantorial idioms.

Two other selections, Hebrew Melody by Joseph Achron and Sephardic Melody by Paul Ben Haim are frequently heard in Israel. The inclusion of the Hungarian Dance in G Minor by Brahms made me conjure up images of this occasion.

Robert, who was playing on an early 18th-century Amati instrument, produced a delicate, silvery tone in these selections. She is a gifted young artist.

Several encores were given in response to the warm applause, but the audience took the hint when Pressler started playing Brahms' lullaby.

Fortunately, Pressler will visit us twice in the coming season, on the Chamber Music Society of Detroit series. Many of us are looking forward to these events.

exhibitions

GADE GALLERY

Saturday, June 28 — Mixed-media paintings by James Poole, color woodcuts by Carolyn Swift Armitage and furniture by Don Eifert will be on exhibit through July 23. Reception for the artists 3-7 p.m. Saturday. Hours are 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. 214 W. Sixth, Royal Oak.

TOWN CENTER GALLERY

Tuesday, July 1 — Paintings with non-traditional materials by Luz Ines Mercier. Southwestern images by Jean Richardson and silk-screen metal cats by D. Gerstein along with gallery selections are on exhibit during the month. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, 3:00 Town Center, Southfield.

TROY ART GALLERY

Tuesday, July 1 — Landscapes, cityscapes and flowers by Troy Art Group of Troy. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, Oakland County Executive Building, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

day-Friday, until 3 p.m. Saturday. Closed Saturdays in August, 755 W. Big Beaver, Troy.

D & J BITTKER GALLERY, LTD.

Wednesday, July 2 — Contemporary and Antique Japanese Textiles plus regular gallery collection of 18th- and 19th-century Chinese furniture continue through Aug. 3. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. 536 N. Woodward, Birmingham.

COUNTY GALLERIA

Wednesday, July 2 — "Mostra D'Arte," an exhibit of Italian-American artists, continues through Aug. 14. Reception to meet the artists 3:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 9. Exhibit sponsored by Oakland County Cultural Council and the Italian Study Group of Troy. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, Oakland County Executive Building, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

CANTOR LEMBERG GALLERY

Constantly changing summer exhibit will include works by John Beardman, Catherine Widgery, Jim Adley, D.K. Semlun and Craig Carver along with new prints by Jim Dine and Julian Schnabel. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 538 N. Woodward, Birmingham.

PEWABIC POTTERY

Student show will continue through July 26. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 10125 E. Jefferson, Detroit.

I. IRVING FELDMAN GALLERIES

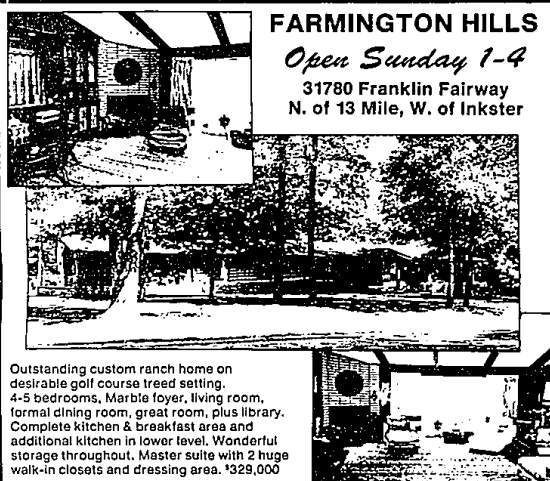
Pattern and trompe l'oeil paintings by Jeanne Norman Chase continue through July 19. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 6917 Orchard Lake, West Bloomfield.

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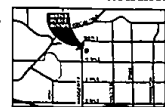
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