

Concert tribute to Americana

By Avigdor Zarembo
special writer

Fourth of July celebrations were the order of the day, every day last week. Meadow Brook Music Festival was one of the many scenes of celebration. The classical series, given on Thursday and Sunday, consisted of works by American composers.

For those who, like myself, are partial to music created by the European masters, the items on the program were not overly attractive in terms of classical standards. But other factors suggested a high entertainment value. Prominent among these factors were the scheduled fireworks at the end of the program. While this could partially explain the enormous crowd that turned out for the event, there must have been other reasons as well, reflecting a sense of pride in the American national heritage.

The visiting musicians made sure, however, that the event was not reduced to a flag-waving demonstration. The visitors, Maestro David Zinman and pianist David Golub, proved to be two winners on the Thursday program which I attended. Zinman, who is currently the music director of the Baltimore Symphony, had conducted the DSO on several previous occasions. On each of these occasions, his keen ability had impressed audiences and musicians alike. Golub, who is a distinguished pianist with an international reputation, may also be remembered by some as the pianist who accompanied Isaac Stern on his trip to China. The resulting documentary film, "From Mao to Mozart," was shown at Wayne State University last season. On the present occasion Golub performed the piano solo part of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue."

Other items on the program were "New England Triptych" by William Shuman, the Symphony No. 3 by Charles Ives and four dances from "Rodeo" by Aaron Copland.

Musical tastes and attitudes vary, of course. While in my opinion most of this program constituted second and third rate music, there are undoubtedly many in the crowd who would disagree with that assessment. And the right to have diversified opinions is one of the most important traditions established by the event celebrated. There was little doubt, however, about the profound impact of this performance. This was manifested not only by the high entertainment value but in the musicians' attempts to extract as many artistic aspects from this music as possible.

The popular Gershwin piece received one of its most meticulous performances that I have heard. Clarinetist Laurence Liberson was outstanding in the opening first solo as well as in several chortling sounds in latter segments, featuring sounds that are untypical of the instrument. Golub had a clean and refined technique, showing control even in the most difficult passages.

The Schuman work, which I heard with the DSO on a couple of previous occasions, revealed one of its brightest performances. The one work on the program that failed to impress me was the Ives symphony. This work, written around 1904, is more tonal and accessible than most subsequent works by this composer, but if this work demonstrates high musical inspiration, I failed to notice it, in spite of the convincing performance.

Some of the peaks of musical entertainment were reached in the Copland suite. Here, Zinman was literally playing games with the audience by presenting the slippery rhythms and deceptive endings so convincingly that people were applauding in the wrong places on a few occasions. Zinman's dancing on the podium was no mean feat, either. All this proved to be a suitable atmosphere for the colorful fireworks display that followed.

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Hugh Gallagher

"Brannigan" (1975), 1 p.m. Sunday on Ch. 50. Originally 150 minutes. TV time slot: 111 minutes.

John Wayne takes his tough guy show on the road in this story of a Chicago cop who goes to London to catch a mobster. This is one of several lesser Wayne efforts made in his later years. But this has some redeeming features, especially the London setting and Wayne's fish out of water attempts to deal with British law.

Rating: \$2.50.

"Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" (1975), 1 a.m. Sunday on Ch. 7. Originally 113 minutes. TV time slot: 135 minutes.

This was hailed as some sort of feminist film when it was released, but that view hardly holds up. Alice is widowed with a young son and dreams of being a singer. She gets as far as Phoenix and a job in a diner. But Alice doesn't really find happiness until she meets a strong gentleman in the person of Kris Kristofferson. In other words, this movie is a sop but a darn good one. Ellen Burstyn, for whom this film was made, gives a bravura performance as Alice and won an Oscar for it. Diane Ladd (the original Flo) and Kristofferson are also first-rate. Martin Scorsese directed and does well with a subject so foreign to his usual work. As everyone knows, this was the inspiration for an insipid situation comedy notable only for wasting the considerable talents of Linda La-

WHAT'S IT WORTH?
A ratings guide to the movies

Bad \$1
Fair \$2
Good \$3
Excellent \$4

tion comedy notable only for wasting the considerable talents of Linda La-

vin in the Alice part.
Rating: \$3.

"It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" (1963), 8 p.m. on Ch. 50. Originally 184 minutes. TV time slot: 180 minutes.

How can a movie with Milton Berle, Sid Caesar, Edie Adams, Buddy Hackett, Jonathan Winters, Phil Silvers, Jimmy Durante and Mickey Rooney not be funny? Well, here it

is, a movie with all those people that isn't funny. Director Stanley Kramer, who was noted for producing and directing socially concerned films, had no sense of style or humor. He was the wrong person to bring this much comic talent together. Even the presence of the great Spencer Tracy doesn't help. The film was originally shot for Cinemascope, so small screen owners beware.

Rating: \$2.

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