

Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



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'Music at 8' Pianist opens GMSO series

THE GREATER Michigan Symphony Orchestra, sponsored by the Arts Alliance Group, will open its winter '88-'89 schedule with three concerts — all of them on Sunday evening.

The series, entitled "Music at Eight," follows the successful and well-received inaugural concert of

the GMSO last June. Under the direction of conductor Carl Karapetian, the Greater Michigan orchestra will perform at the Mai Kai Theater in Livonia for all three Sunday evening concerts, Nov. 2, Jan. 18 and March 15 and will feature outstanding soloists.

The opening concert will have as guest soloist, pianist Alan Chow, per-

forming the Grieg Piano Concerto in A Minor.

CHOW CURRENTLY is completing his doctoral degree at Indiana University where he studies with the distinguished pianist, Menahem Pressler. He has performed with numerous orchestras throughout the U. S. A prizewinner in numerous competitions, Chow most recently was the recipient of the Gold Medal in the International Piano Recording Competition.

Joseph Goldman will be featured in the Jan. 18 performance with his presentation of Brahms's D Major Violin Concerto. Goldman is the associate concertmaster of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and also served as the GMSO concertmaster. A veteran of solo appearances, Goldman's talents have been widely acclaimed by the reviewing press.

The March 15 concert will showcase the talents of pianist Jonathon Bass in the Beethoven "Emperor" Concerto, one of the most well-known pieces in classical literature. Bass was educated at the Juillard School, Oberlin College, the Moscow

Conservatory and is finishing his doctoral work at Indiana University.

BASS HAS GIVEN recitals in many cities of the U.S. and Europe and has won prizes in numerous competitions, most notably the first prize in the Third American Chopin Competition.

Tickets for individual concerts are \$12 at the door. However, advance tickets are \$10 each, or \$24 for the series of three. Ticket reservations may be obtained from: The Arts Alliance Group, P.O. Box 2412, Livonia 48151. Advance ticket sales are also available through AAA and Ticket World outlets. Ticket or concert information may also be obtained by calling ticket chairwoman Mary Ann LaForest, 525-3010.

The Greater Michigan Symphony Orchestra is the state's newest, fully professional orchestra. It is the fifth music directorship that director Karapetian has held in his native state. He previously served as the music director of the Port Huron Sarnia and Grand Rapids orchestras, the Opera Association of Western Michigan and the Detroit Association for the Performing Arts.



Joseph Goldman
2nd in series



Jonathon Bass
'Emperor' concerto



Alan Chow
will play Grieg concerto

Japanese painting a fragile beauty

By Manon Meilgaard
special writer

NEARLY HALF the works in the "Of Water and Ink" Muromachi Period Paintings from Japan 1392-1568 exhibition are designated important cultural treasures by the Japanese Government.

Before their arrival at Detroit Institute of Arts, they had never been presented together in one location.

So precious and fragile are these Japanese ink paintings that DIA curator of Asian art, Suzanne Mitchell, prudently pointed out that museums exhibit their works for a brief period each year, access to private collections is rarely granted and temples exhibit publicly only on the one to three annual airing days.

Consisting of more than 100 hanging scrolls, folding screens, sliding-door panels and hand scrolls executed on paper and silk, these exquisite works portray the contemplative, aesthetic side of Japanese life in meticulously observed studies of flowers, birds and animal life, misty mountain landscapes and seascapes, waterfalls, legends and deities.

Plans for the exhibition began five years ago, during which time Mitchell made several journeys to Japan, selecting work from the various sources. Again, because of the fragile nature of the exhibits, they will be displayed in two rotations—from Oct. 16 to Nov. 9 and from Nov. 16 to Dec. 14.

AS A BRIEF background, the Muromachi period is named after the quarter of the city of Kyoto where the Ashikaga shoguns (members of the warrior class known as samurai) ruled Japan from the mid-14th to the mid-16th centuries. The Ashikaga greatly encouraged the arts, which to a large degree were carried out by Zen monk-artists — especially painting. (Two thirds of the painters in the present exhibition were monks.)

These Zen artists saw the speed with which a painter using brush and ink could communicate his vision as an example of the flash of enlightenment following meditation. Subokuga or monochrome ink painting, an extension of calligraphy, flourished. The technique, which does not permit corrections or deletions, took its model from Chinese painting and during the Muomachi Period artists moved their focus from purely religious subjects.

Often they are a collaboration between a painter and a poet (or poets) combined in a single work. In a hanging scroll in the exhibition, (attributed to the monk-artist Shubun who was active in the first half of the 15th Century), the painting is confined to the lower third.



Sesshu dominated late 15th century Japanese ink painting. This scroll, "Hui-k'o Presenting His Severed Arm to Bodhidharma," contains brushwork hauntingly similar to such modern masters as Dali.

The rest is devoted to a form of poetry known as renga, or linked poetry, which although less economically has some similarities with the more familiar haiku: *You depart, Tears wet my robe.*

Notwithstanding the 81 painters represented from the entire period (including important early artists such as Mincho, Joeschi and Shubun), the exhibition centers around the two great masters, Sesshu (1420-1506) and Zen (ca. 1504-1589).

SESSHU, A MONK, is considered one of the greatest of all Japanese artists. With his nervous vitality and powerful brush-strokes, he was one of the first to legitimately apply the lessons of Chinese monochrome painting to the Japanese idiom.

One of his most striking works is "Hui-k'o Showing His Severed Arm to Bodhidharma. Hui-k'o, who is intent upon becoming a disciple offers his self-severed left forearm in a gesture of supplication to Bodhidharma (the Indian missionary who brought the Zen teachings to China in A.D. 520, from whence they spread to Japan). The severing of the arm is proof that Hui-k'o is willing to undergo any sacrifice to study with the holy man.

In his posture of seated meditation before the wall of a cave, Bodhidharma is portrayed as a white-cowled, swarthy figure, whose expression of intense de-

voutness contrasts with the more finely drawn features of Hui-k'o, who has the look of a martyr.

Two extraordinary aspects of this scroll are the almost abstract lines of Bodhidharma's body and the modern surrealist, Dali-like depiction of the cave.

Attributed to Sesshu is a pair of sixfold screens "Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons," (a detail of which is used for the exhibition poster). The mood of tranquility here is beautifully portrayed with mountains, bamboo, water lilies, small birds and cranes.

BUILDING ON the work of Sesshu, Sesson, who lived and worked away from the artistic center of Kyoto, became the foremost painter of the later Muromachi Period. His hanging scroll "Stormy Wave" exploits the dramatic economy of line possible in ink painting, but adds an atmosphere and movement — violence even — rarely found in Chinese painting.

A Lilliputian boat with frail sails runs before the wind. Swathes of light and rain illuminate the scene and fierce waves crash against the rocks. Boat, hut, bamboo and trees brace themselves — all seemingly resolved to endure the onslaught of the storm. This is a masterpiece of minimal brush work and assured technique.

Two hanging scrolls, "Hawks and Pines" is an example of Sesson's contrasts between violent action and harmonious nature; a predatory hawk in search of prey is posed among peaceful pine trees.

To enhance the feeling of contemplation which these paintings evoke, the DIA's resident architect, Louis Gaeul, has created a series of small, labyrinthine galleries where the works are presented in single or limited groupings.

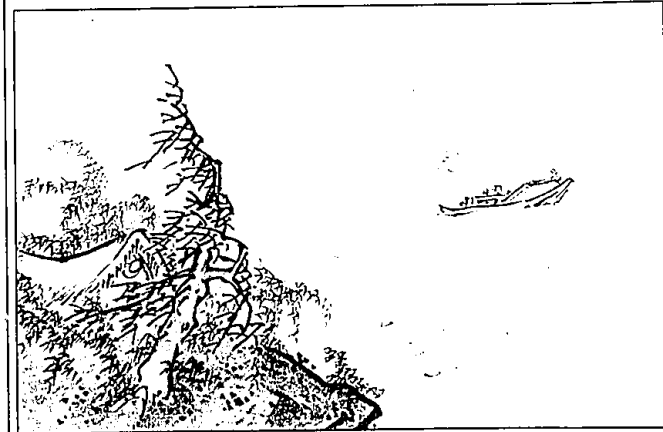
Dimmed, low-key lighting casts a luminous glow on the priceless works highlighting the muted tones of charcoal black, soft greys, browns and greens, and honey gold. To complete the serenity of this "mise en scene," Gaeul has interspersed three Japanese garden effects with polished stones and running water.

As the birth of the Noh theatre and the tea ceremony took place during the Muromachi Period, demonstrations of these will be presented, together with public tours on selected works from the exhibition, a course on Renga poetry, documentary films and a series of films by the renowned director Akira Kurosawa (at the DIA auditorium).

"Of Water and Ink" is free to the public and is open during regular museum hours, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday and to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays.



Two hanging scrolls, "Hawks and Pines" are the work of Sesson, a master of gile brushwork featured in the exhibition of Muromachi period paintings at the DIA.



Turbulent weather was the inspiration of this hanging scroll by Sesson, "Stormy Wave." The piece is noteworthy for its minimal brushwork.