

Young artists show signs of greatness

By Avigdor Zarembo
special writer

The Annual Artists Concert of the Music Study Club has been around for more than 50 years. This event is designed to encourage young, promising artists in their careers.

The two artists featured on a recent Sunday at Orchestra Hall were pianist Yuval Fichman and violinist Ian Swensen. The program was dedicated to the memory of Miriam Meckler, who was very active on behalf of this series and other musical endeavors. Mrs. Meckler was the mother of the internationally acclaimed pianist, Ruth Laredo.

The one flaw in the special presentation and acknowledgment of Mrs. Meckler's contributions was the lack of a microphone on stage. Even the fine acoustics of Orchestra Hall couldn't overcome that.

It is sometimes difficult to appreciate the struggle involved in becoming a recognized artist. When listening to a mediocre performance by an established artist, an amateur may be deceived into feeling he could do as well or better with just a bit more training. Even a superior artist can't be expected to be a superman with

every single note on every occasion. But on those rare instances where truly superior talent and ability are demonstrated, the enormity of the achievement becomes evident. The truly gifted is, in essence, a different species, not merely somebody who practices more hours.

The two artists on this program illustrate this. Fichman's playing was a combination of precision and inspiration. The Haydn Sonata in F Major, Hoboken XVI NO. 23 is a familiar one. Having heard it several times with a sluggish, lukewarm approach, I never thought much of it until this performance. The crisp phrases brought out nuances that many other performers leave hidden.

He displayed impressive technical skill with the Schubert Symphonies Etudes Op. Post 13. Even though there was an occasional flaw of musical penetration, the overall quality indicated that a more comprehensive approach was within reach.

Fichman concluded his portion with Three Pieces for Piano, Op. 6, by the contemporary Argentinian composer, Ginastera. His masterful execution of these technically and rhythmically intricate pieces elevat-

ed the stature of this seldom heard composer. Following overwhelming applause, Fichman played Debussy's "Clair de Lune" ("Moonlight") as an encore.

Equally impressive was the violinist Swensen. Starting with a fiery performance of Bartok's Humana Dances, he proceeded with the chal-

lenging E Major Violin Partita by Bach. While some of his phrases showed some post-baroque traces in their shaping, much of the ingenious architecture of Bach's style was there.

The contrapuntal phrases were occasionally bent without being broken. The Ravel Sonata for Piano and

Violin, less known than the other works, received a performance that underscored its right to be performed more often.

Special recognition also should be given to pianist Vivian Hornick-Weilerstein, who played the piano part in the Ravel and Bartok works. An accomplished pianist in her own

right, Hornick-Weilerstein is the wife of Donald Weilerstein, Swensen's teacher at the Eastman School of Music.

Artistic perfection is something that one strives for but is never completely achieved. This program gave us a few close glimpses to help us appreciate some of music's fascinating challenges.

Junior League holds lively holiday benefit

Joel Hickey will bring a special exhibit of African art collectibles to Jacobsens for the Holiday Benefit Preview 7-9 p.m. Wednesday.

This fund-raiser, hosted by the Junior League of Birmingham, will have a variety of guests and activities ranging from a live show of holiday fashions for men and women, a show of holiday table and mantle decorations and a number of local luminaries.

Chef Duglass will demonstrate in the kitchen shop. John Wanger, former University of Michigan quarterback will talk to admirers as will Tim Briody, noted pen and ink artist

while Ellie Cloutier will do some fancy floral arrangements.

Jeanne Hackett will show her share scarf tying tricks and Chanel makeup artist, Rom Fanes doing some holiday makeovers.

Musical background will be provided by the Junior League of Birmingham chorus and the Andover Jill Bell Ringers.

All proceeds from the \$15 per person preview will go to the many metropolitan area services the Junior League supports — an Alcohol Abuse/Community Education pro-

gram with Henry Ford Hospital; Alzheimer's Disease Volunteer Family Service Project; Birmingham Bloomfield Families in Action; Cass Corridor Youth Advocates; Help Against Violent Encounters Now, HAVEN; an Oakland County perinatal program; and Women's Survival Center of Pontiac.

Troy musician 'Quest' winner

The winner of the fourth round in the Macebees "Quest for the Best" talent competition is Bradley

Neldeck, a 15-year-old marimba player from Troy. On Dec. 15 Bradley will join the other final-

ists at Orchestra Hall for the grand finals where \$5,000 in scholarship prizes will be awarded.

A student of Norman Fleckett of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Bradley attends Troy High School.

Band playing Sunday

Oakland University Concert Band's first concert of the season will be at 3 p.m. Sunday, in Varner Recital Hall. It is free and will be conducted by James Dawson of the department of music, theater and dance.

The featured work will be Arnold Schoenberg's Variations, Op. 43a, considered one of the masterworks of the 20th century for band. Although the work came late in Schoenberg's career, it nevertheless reflects a Romantic style in both tonal flavoring and variation technique.

The band will perform two other standard works, John Paynter's adaptation of Four Scottish Dances by Malcolm Arnold and the First Suite in E-Flat for military band by Gustav Holst. The Holst work will be directed by assistant conductor Daniel Iannaci, a graduate student in instrumental conducting.

Rounding out the program will be Grainger's "Australian Up-Country Tune" and "Mars" from "The Planets" by Holst.

"The Holst work has become a favorite of the band literature and is an excellent adaptation of the original work for orchestra made by the composer," Dawson said.

For details, call the Center for the Arts box office at 370-3013 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

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