

Ehrling always makes concert special

special writer

Sixteen Ehrling is impossible to dismiss or ignore. His association with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra is of long standing — the program last week marked the 25th anniversary of his debut with the orchestra. He was DSO music director from 1953-1973 and has regularly appeared here as guest conductor since.

In Ehrling's relationship with the

musicians, there were always elements of strain and controversy on one hand, respect and admiration on the other. Whatever one's view of Ehrling, a program he conducts is always an event. Even those who disagree with his style and approach must concede that performances under him are never boring.

Ehrling's appeal and magnetism may be less immediate than that of some other conductors, but with each additional performance I find



Avigdor Zaromp

myself more impressed with his penetrating knowledge and approach.

In this latest program, the dominant feeling was of respect, with little of the controversy reaching to the surface, not always the case in the past.

The program consisted of the Symphony No. 3 by Prokofiev, the Cello Concerto in D Major by Haydn, and the "Festa Romane" ("Roman Festivals") by Respighi. It was challenging and inspiring without the boost of the usual war horses.

The cellist in the Haydn concerto, Russian-born David Geringas, appeared with the DSO two years earlier and subsequently with the Renaissance City Chamber Players.

Prokofiev's Symphony No. 3 is perhaps his least performed. Based on material from his unsuccessful opera, "The Fiery Angel," it features crushing themes and the composer's typical impressive orchestration.

some slips of intonation and runaway notes, but his keen musicianship compensated for these occasional technical flaws.

The small-size orchestra chosen by Ehrling provided effective, authentic support. While lack of resources of 18th century composers is frequently used as an excuse to augment the scores with much larger modern orchestras, this performance tended to support the notion that Haydn knew what he was doing after all.

Respighi's music, highly descriptive and programmatic, can easily be made to sound like cheap film music under less experienced leadership.

Disney movies bargain-priced for holidays

By Louise Okrutsky special writer

In the late fall, marketing strategists' thoughts turn toward their version of the Olympics, the holiday shopping season. In the video biz, that generally means a slew of seasonal sales and new releases at somewhat lower prices.

Disney has marked down a group of movies aimed at the holiday shopping frenzy. This includes "Dumbo," "Pinocchio," "Pollyanna" and "Mary Poppins," all available for less than \$30.

In the same price group is a Disney release new to the VCR market, "Sleeping Beauty." The 1959 cartoon feature took Disney six years to produce. When it was finally released, it was considered a box-office disappointment.

Disney animators based the style of the movie's drawings on early Renaissance artwork. Unfortunately, the results exhibit a certain flatness and angularity that doesn't translate well to the movie screen. The film lacks the three-dimensional effect

for which earlier efforts such as "Snow White" are known.

VISITORS TEND to remember "Sleeping Beauty's" secondary characters, such as the three dotty fairy godmothers, Flora, Fauna and Merryweather. This trio comes off like the Golden Girls with magical powers. The heroine, Princess Aurora, never comes into her own as a full character.

The film has some nice moments, however. "Someday My Prince Will Come" makes for a sweet musical interlude. Disney animators know how to draw one heck of a fire-breathing dragon.

It isn't terrible Disney, but compared to the painfully bad "My Little Pony" feature-length cartoons and Saturday morning superheroes, this one is worth having around to pop into a tape deck.

Among the new releases for adults is Roman Polanski's "Pirates" with Walter Matthau. To actually fork over money to buy this movie is to become a victim of price-fixing. This

second runs

attempt at bawdy bucaniers is boring. It's no accident that the movie, which opened in theaters last July, is making such a quick appearance on the video counter.

Polanski's been better. Matthau certainly has been better. This misbegotten effort includes such scenes as a rat-eating sequence that literally goes on ad nauseum. Rent this if you must, but be warned. It's not for those with sound minds or queasy stomachs.

ALFRED Hitchcock's films are not new to the video market, but prices on them have been slashed by almost 60 percent. Available for gift giving at under \$25 are such Hitch

favorites as "The Birds," "Psycho," "Rear Window," "The Trouble with Harry" and "To Catch a King." Also available in this series is the 1955 version of "The Man Who Knew Too Much" with James Stewart and Doris Day. Day sings what became her signature song, "Que Sera, Sera," in this movie. But the story of an average couple who learn more than is good for them about an assassination plot was better told in 1934's black-and-white version, when Hitchcock used British actors Leslie Banks, Edna Best and Peter Lorre. If you can ferret out the early version, you'll get a better deal, seasonal discount notwithstanding.



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