

Segovia—an uncommon artist

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Among those who become legends in their own lifetime, few can match the stature of guitarist Andre Segovia. For him, immortality seems to take on an almost literal meaning — he turned 94 recently.

Segovia is responsible for turning the guitar into a respectable classical instrument by presenting the most sophisticated music, starting with Bach, to audiences while many lesser artists used it for accompaniment with simple, repetitious chords.

When Segovia's special recital at Orchestra Hall was announced, it was an immediate sell-out. He probably could have filled the Silverdome. As it was, extra seats were put on the stage, a mea-

sure that didn't even come close to stemming the tide.

There are some signs of Segovia's age, to be sure. He walked to his seat on stage with a cane and his guitar was brought to him. But there is an unmistakable aura of authority and alertness about him.

For Segovia, music is a pure, uncompromised art. This point may sometimes be pushed to extremes. For example, he not only shuns the electric guitar, but he would have none of the other electronic amplification techniques. His instrument was heard in its natural sound — undistorted by modern technology. This made listening strenuous even in acoustically perfect Orchestra Hall.

While Segovia is a cherished legend, there were some factors that made this performance less leg-

endary. A great deal of it had to do with the artist himself — in too many instances he wasn't quite with it.

He got lost on many occasions. In some instances, such as the Haydn minuet, he seemed to forget the key, modulating into the wrong one. The Bach arrangements suggested only a shadow of his Bach performances of the past.

He felt more comfortable with some of the Spanish selections. In the collection of pieces by Tarrega, there was more of the element of the old glory. Otherwise, the problems were aggravated by the coughing audience (in spite of the fact that cough drops were offered by the ushers before the performance).

While not all of the faulty performance could be blamed on the audience, its uncivilized behavior choked off most of the frail sound that was left. Any adoration of a celebrity means little if it isn't accompanied by the proper respect during the performance. This sense of respect should be there even if the performer falters.

One of the hallmarks of a truly great person is the recognition of shortcomings. Segovia is one of those few who is capable of such.

At the end of the concert, he apologized to the audience, declaring that the applause was undeserved in view of the inferior performance. He promised to be here next year to perform for Detroit's favorite charity.

While the performance left something to be desired, Segovia is worthy of all the tremendous applause he received for his contributions to our world.

Program covers Chinese art

A film and lecture program, "Appreciation of Chinese Art," with Wang-wang Wong, professor, author, film maker, collector of and scholar in Chinese art and history, will be held 2-4:30 p.m. Saturday at Henry Ford Centennial Library of Dearborn.

The program is sponsored by the Chinese American Educational and Cultural Center, CAECC, of Michigan and the Educational Services Center, College of Education of Eastern Michigan University.

The professor's topic is "The Search for New Chinese Painting." He will give an analysis of trends in contemporary Chinese painting as well as his opinion on the future of Chinese painting.

Two of his films, "The Enduring Heritage," and "Coming of the West," will be shown. The first

summarizes Chinese history from its beginning to 1911, film that despite pressures from within and without, there is an enduring quality and presents a detailed look at China's contributions to the arts, sciences and technology.

The second covers the confrontation between modern Western civilization and ancient Chinese civilization through artifacts, documents and art materials. Wong has lectured on Chinese art at many leading universities and items from the Wong collection have been exhibited at leading museums around the world.

Tickets for the program are \$10 and \$8 for Friends of CAECC. For information, call 769-2353 or 487-3134. The library is at 16301 Michigan Ave., Dearborn.

Thursday, March 20, 1987 O&E

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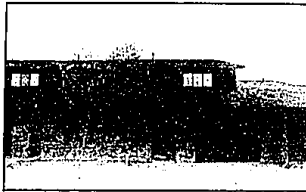
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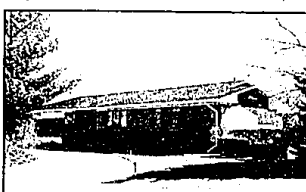
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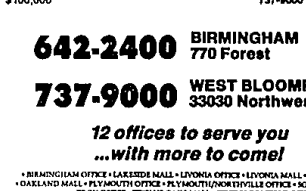
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