

Jarvi does Brahms twice

By Avigdor Zarembo
special writer

Guest conductor Neeme Jarvi is familiar to regular Detroit Symphony Orchestra listeners. He has conducted here on numerous occasions and his name is frequently mentioned as the prime candidate for new music director to succeed Gunther Herbig, who will be leaving after next season.

Many of Jarvi's selections in the past fell outside the mainstream repertoire. This raised questions about his ability to cope with massive works by the top masters.

Some answers were provided last week at Meadow Brook, when Jarvi conducted the Symphony No. 4 by Brahms on Thursday and Saturday.

It was performed in the second part of both programs. The first part of the Thursday program was the overture, "Benvenuto Cellini," by Berlioz, a poem for violin and orchestra, Op. 25 by Chaussou, and the Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso by Saint Saens. Joseph Goldman, assistant concertmaster of the DSO, was the soloist in the

Chausson and Saint Saens pieces.

SATURDAY'S PROGRAM featured two short overtures by Weber - Turandot and Abu Hassan, and the Flute Concerto No. 2 by Mozart, performed by Jean-Pierre Rampal. That program was followed by a spectacular display of fireworks, an annual tradition at Meadow Brook.

These events may illustrate the point that an evaluation of any performance by a critic is, at most, one person's imperfect attempt to assess the quality of a performance at one point in time, and can't reliably project future quality.

The performance of the Brahms symphony, only two days apart, quite distinct and substantially different levels. Only a small part of this can be attributed by the fact that I was listening from different seats. Most of the difference was, confirmed also by those musicians that I talked to.

Had I attended only the Thursday program, which would have been the case if the programs were identical, I would have felt disappointed. That performance, while considerably better than

the one I heard with the Munich Philharmonic recently with its Bruckner approach, still fell short in significant ways. The build-up toward the climaxes, the intense counterpoint and the dramatic tensions generated by simultaneous triple and double meters — much of this was significantly absent on Thursday's performance, but came to life with vigor on Saturday.

The final movement, in the form of a chaconne — a set of variations based on a short pattern — encompasses a universe that summarizes all of Brahms four symphonies. Only Saturday's version, however, sounded monumental, compared to the relatively mundane performance on Thursday.

GOLDMAN WAS POLISHED and articulate in his solo roles. He brought out the lyricism of the Chausson piece, which is seldom heard, and made a convincing case for its musical value.

The tempo in the Rondo part of the Saint Saens piece was on the slow side, but still within acceptable range. The shiny phrases sounded melodic, with occasional minor flaws in some of the fast turns. The agitated coda was even more dazzling following the slower tempo of the main part of the Rondo. Overall, Goldman's performance had more consistency than that of the more famous Rampal.

The legacy of Jean-Pierre Rampal is so substantial that no single performance can take it away. In this performance of the Mozart D Major Concerto, Rampal showed some of his legendary quality. It was present in his intonation, expressiveness, color and phrasing. The one thing that seems to have deteriorated is the technique. The sixteenth note runs in the outer movements were frequently uneven. At one point in the third movement, Rampal got completely derailed. At other times, his uneven runs clashed with the more steady rhythm of the orchestra. Even so, Rampal still has a lot to offer and he should be able to sustain his reputation if he doesn't substitute past laurels for hard work.

Jarvi will be performing with the DSOH during the regular season.

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Chopin Foundation sponsors a major piano competition

The Chopin Foundation Council of Metropolitan Detroit was recently established under the leadership of president Zofia Drozdowska-Kafarski of Bloomfield Hills. The announcement was made by Blanka Rosenstiel, chairman of the board of the national organization.

The Chopin Foundation, of which Drozdowska-Kafarski is a board member, is a national non-profit organization whose programs are designed to encourage America's future master musicians. The network of regional councils, such as the new one here, are already operating in New York, San Francisco, south Florida and Tampa, Fla.

The councils provide financial support and performance opportunities for talented young musicians in their regions and encourage them to participate in the National Chopin Piano Competition of the United States, one of the foundation's major programs.

The national Chopin piano competition will be Feb. 16-23 in Miami, Fla. More than \$35,000 in prizes will be awarded. The first prize includes \$12,000 cash, a debut recital at Lincoln Center and 10 concerts.

The second prize is \$8,000 and 10 concerts. The first four winners, sponsored by the Chopin Foundation, will automatically be accepted for the International Chopin Competition October 1990 in Warsaw, Poland.

The international competition, one of the most prestigious in the world, is held every five years in Moscow.

Applications for the national Chopin piano competition in Miami must be filed by July 15. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, born between Jan. 1, 1962, and Dec. 31, 1973.



Zofia Drozdowska-Kafarski

For applications, write the Chopin Foundation of the United States, 1440 79th St. Causeway, Suite 117, Miami, Fla. 33141 or call 1-305-888-0524.

Drozdowska-Kafarski is well-qualified for this new leadership role. She said her group is planning a variety of musical events for the coming season.

She is chairwoman, Art of Poland Associates, an auxiliary of the Founders Society of Detroit Institute of Arts; trustee, Michigan Opera Theater; trustee, Detroit Science Center; board member, Friends of the Krege Library at Oakland University; life member of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and of the Symphony League; and founder, along with Dexter Ferry, of the Associates of the Detroit Science Center.

Formerly she was a member of the Oakland County Cultural Council and vice president of the Bloomfield Republican Women's Club.

For information on the Detroit Council, write her at 740 Chesterfield, Bloomfield Hills 48013 or call 642-2730.

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