

Orchestra prevails over humidity

By Avigdor Zarembo
special writer

Music director Gunther Herbig was back in town last week to conduct the final two programs of the Meadow Brook season.

Herbig's return was marked by an increased attendance, making the lawn area look encouragingly crowded. This was in spite of the oppressive heat and muggy weather that took its toll on performers and listeners alike.

Guest soloist Richard Stolzman, one of the most acclaimed clarinet players, treated the audience to Weber's second Clarinet Concerto in E Flat Major. Stolzman proved capable of turning this into fine music for most part, with some limitation imposed by the uncomfortable weather.

Some of the runs in the outer movements were weighted down



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with soggy texture and the agile passages in the coda to the final movement came out significantly distorted.

However, the relatively fresh romps in the first movement and the expressive singing in the slow movement were as much as anybody could have done under the circumstances.

Herbig opened the program with Mozart's Overture to "Don Giovanni," which had the right notes, but lacked fire - much like trying to start a car with wet spark-plugs. His

full attire during the first portion of this program evidently had a detrimental effect on the performance.

ALTHOUGH Herbig isn't one to throw in the towel, after intermission, he did throw in the jacket, freeing himself to concentrate better on Dvorak's Symphony No. 8. This symphony is considered one of Dvorak's best; some even prefer it to his "New World" Symphony.

The profuse sweating by both conductor and musicians was noticeable from the front rows of the pavilion.

But this intense effort resulted in an impressive rendition of this masterpiece. The winds came through with fresh clarity in spite of some unavoidable rough overtones. The strings in the third, lyric movement sounded polished and refined. The brass, and especially the opening fanfare in the final movement, sounded vigorous and energetic, without compromising the overall sense of balance.

For at least some brief periods, it was possible to get one's mind off the weather and pay attention to Dvorak's inspired music. This, in itself, was a noteworthy achievement.

HERBIG will also conduct this week's final program. The soloist will be pianist Flavio Varnati of the Oakland University faculty and a frequent performer in our area who has just returned from a tour in Europe. He will perform Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F Major.

Music Hall has successful year

Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts completed its 60th anniversary season with near sell-out audiences for Dance Theatre of Harlem and the most successful Grand Prix Ball ever.

Dance Theatre of Harlem's week-long residency, May 2-7, drew more than 8,000 people and received rave reviews for performances including "Firebird," "Bokaku" and "Douglas." A special Arts Exposure Program was given for more than 900 Detroit school children.

The 1989 Music Hall Grand Prix Ball on June 14, chaired by Glenda and Jerry Greenwald, was a success with twice as many funds and double the attendance of last year.

Michigan dance companies, presenters and funders met at Music Hall Center for the "We Dance In Michigan" conference, June 9-10. The conference, sponsored by Detroit Dance Collective, included talks with Liz Thompson of Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival and Judith Jamison of the Jamison Project. A PANEL of major funding and

touting organizations discussed funding opportunities and Harbinger Dance Company, Happendance, Ann Arbor Dance Works and other companies demonstrated the quality of dance available in Michigan.

Music Hall Center was chosen by the League of Historic American Theatres as the site for the beginning of its 13th annual conference and tour. Music Hall hosted conference participants at a breakfast reception, June 20, with a keynote address by J. Jackson Walter, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

A \$25,000 Hudson Webber Foundation Grant was awarded to Music Hall to develop a new comprehensive business and financial plan.

Music Hall Center has been selected again for a Neighborhood Opportunity Fund Grant. The \$27,000 grant will be used to improve handicapped accessibility in the building.

Music Hall Center's 61st season will open Sept. 28, with the Jamison Project dance group, co-presented by the Detroit Council of the Arts.

Artists Series plans 20th season

American Artist Series (AAS), marking 20 years in Oakland County, will hold its season opening at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, in Kingsley Auditorium, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Guest artist will be Emmanuelle Bolavert, concert master of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Playing with Bolavert will be ASA Chamber

Players, Hart Hollman, viola; Linda Sneadon-Smith, violin; John Thurman, cello; all Detroit Symphony musicians; and Joann Freeman, AAS artistic director and pianist. Other DSO musicians may join in accordance with program needs.

On Jan. 21, American Artists Series presents the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, three men and a woman

who have enthralled audiences in Carnegie Hall, Hollywood Bowl and abroad, with a repertoire ranging from baroque concert and to fiery Spanish ballet and contemporary. A bonus to early comers is a 2 p.m. preview talk by composer, guitarist and teacher, Michael Bryce, a member of the Classical Guitar Society of Michigan, who was featured in Detroit Monthly, November 1987.

The Feb. 25 concert features Chanticleer, an orchestra of male

voices with a vocal range of soprano countertenor through bass, performing classical, folk gospel and contemporary idioms.

On March 25 and April 22 the Chamber Players will perform with special guests to be announced. All concerts are at 3 p.m. with the exception of the April finale, which is in the evening.

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