

Pianist's speed spoils classical program

Neil Eisenstein, pianist and teacher, presented a recital at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts last Friday.

Eisenstein, who has studied in this country as well as in Germany, has been exposed to some of the better piano methods of teaching and performing. In this area he has studied with Mischa Kottler.

One aspect of Eisenstein's approach that captures the attention of the listener almost immediately is his flashy display of technique. He often plays at supersonic speed. This is so fast that even professional pianists who are familiar with the works would find it difficult to judge the accuracy of the performance. An even more serious drawback in his approach is that the uninitiated speed is present regardless of the composer's intent or even explicit marking of the tempo.

On this program, Eisenstein raced through works by Ravel, Liszt, Balakirev and Chopin. Many of these works present technical challenges. But virtually all have subtle artistic nuances that were sacrificed for the sake of raw technique.

Ravel's "Miroirs" was replete with accelerated outbursts, leaving little of the refined impressionistic texture. The one item on the program that sounded convincing was Balakirev's Sonata in B Flat Minor, which is virtually never performed.

The Chopin preludes and polonaises were especially naked stylistically. The jerky starts and ends rendered the music meaningless. The most familiar phrases often defied recognition, other than their physical presence between given phrases.

In the Polonaise in A Flat Major, "The Grand,"



Avigdor Zaromp

Eisenstein's left hand octaves (which he performed without the mandatory repeat) were among the fastest a human could play, putting even an eminent pianist such as Vladimir Horowitz to shame in terms of speed, but not even coming close to the artistic surface.

AS AN ENCORE, he played Chopin's Andante Spianato and Grand Polonaise. This major work would hardly qualify as an encore in view of its length. But under the fast fingers of Eisenstein the duration turned out to be hardly more than that of the "Miroirs Waltz." The slow, expressive, measured Andante Spianato became "Presto Spaghetti" while the Polonaise sounded like something from outer space.

If the flaws in this performance were the only issue, it would have chosen not to review this event. However, Eisenstein does possess an excellent technique and a significant talent. With the right guidance and discipline, he could learn to harness his technique to serve the ends of the music, rather than the other way around.

Considering his age and strong potential, it isn't too late for Eisenstein to develop these aspects. His performance could become substantially more rewarding and artistically significant. He does possess the right ingredients, but he needs help in putting them together.

Flavio Varani to perform

Brazilian-born pianist Flavio Varani joins the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in a performance of George Gershwin's popular Concerto in F during the final week of concerts at the Meadow Brook Music Festival.

Gunther Herbig, DSO music director, will conduct the concerto as well as Liszt's tone poem "Les Preludes" and a selection of waltzes and polkas by "The Waltz King," Johann Strauss Jr.

Performances are 8 p.m. Thursday and Sunday at the Baldwin Pavilion on the campus of Oakland University. A fireworks display follows the concert.

VARANI was already touring with the Brazilian National Symphony at the age of 10. At 13, he won the Sao Paulo City Award Scholarship to study in Paris. A pupil of the legendary Magda Tagliaferro, he stands in a line of pianistic tradition that can be traced from Frederic Chopin.

At 18, Varani won the first prize of the Chopin International Competition in Mallorca, Spain. Further studies followed at The Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music. He has performed in North and South America, much of Europe and in the USSR. He has given recitals at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. He is presently artist-in-residence at Oakland University.



Flavio Varani

"OVERTURES," THE new DSO support group of young professionals from the metro Detroit area, is planning its second summer event on Sunday. An old-fashioned, all-American picnic complete with fried chicken and corn-on-the-cob will be served at 6 p.m. under a tent on the grounds at Meadow Brook.

For tickets and information about Overtures "Picnic Fest" evening, call 587-1400. For concert tickets, call 377-2010.

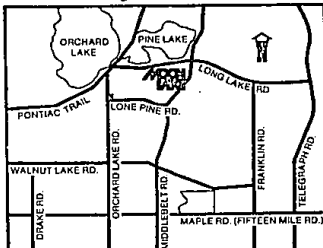
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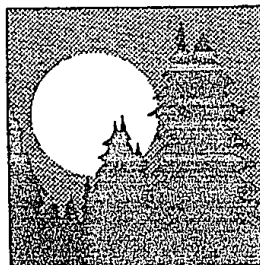
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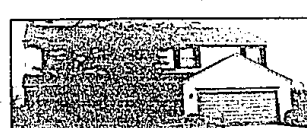
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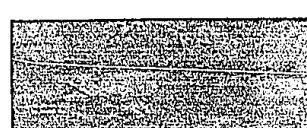
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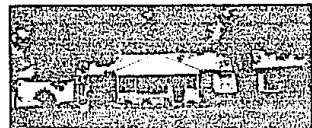
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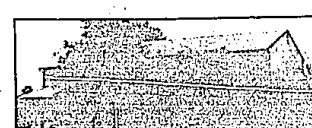
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