

Music director off to auspicious start

The pulse of your community

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

An unusually large audience nearly filled Orchestra Hall for last week's Detroit Symphony concert under Neeme Jarvi. As newly appointed music director of the orchestra, he was given a standing ovation before the program started, a rare tribute to any performing artist. During my years as a critic I have seen this happen only once before.

This program, as well as the one coming up this week, illustrates Jarvi's tendency to pull away from the center of popular tradition. The more traditional Symphony No. 2 by Beethoven was followed by the Piano Concerto No. 3 by Prokofiev and then by Britten's Four Sea Interludes from "Peter Grimes."

As he has done in the past, Jarvi demonstrated that he can conduct even a tradi-



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tional and well-known work unconventionally. Beethoven's Second Symphony is considered to be among the less profound of his nine symphonies. Among main courses it often leaves the effect of a desert, albeit, made of some fine ingredients.

This performance turned this relatively slighted Beethoven symphony into a gourmet main course capable of satisfying even the most voracious appetite. The opening movement, for example, reverberated with the intensity of its main themes. Even the slow introduction had a sense of variety

and motion. In many performances it tends to put the audience to sleep before the main movement even begins.

In the coda of the final movement, Jarvi emphasized the refined humor of the work by unconventional changes in tempo, eliciting some giggles from the audience.

Pianist Jon Kimura Parker gave an impressive performance of Prokofiev's challenging concerto. His meticulous technique was enhanced by his sense of control over a wide dynamic range. Jarvi's conducting made it clear that this was a concerto for

piano and orchestra, rather than piano and orchestral obbligato.

Yet Parker's forceful performance penetrated the lavish orchestral sound when it had to and blended with it on equal terms on other occasions.

The exotic second movement sparkled with the evolving complexity of the ingenious variations. The powerful conclusion of the final movement was a natural culmination of the movement, rather than a demonstration of brute force and knuckle breaking technique.

The vivid performance of the Four Sea Interludes made this music stand for much more than an anemic imitation of Impressionism. The storm scene was truly howling and blowing, but without any chaotic side effects. Britten's sea is far more raging than Debussy's "La Mer." Not every conductor realizes it -- Jarvi is among the few who do.

Chamber Wind to perform at OCC

Detroit Chamber Winds (DCW) will perform works by Beethoven and Mozart as part of its concert at 8 p.m. Friday at the Wallace F. Smith Theatre.

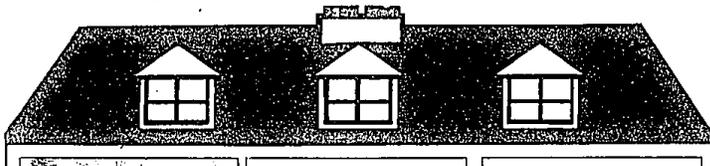
The concert, "The Elegant Octet," will feature Beethoven's octet and Mozart's Serenade No. 12. The program also in-

cludes "Hitmo Jondo" by Surlnach and "Valse" by Teoh.

H. Robert Reynolds, DCW artistic adviser, will conduct that evening. He has conducted at Lincoln Center (New York), Orchestra Hall (Chicago), the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Powell

Symphony Hall (St. Louis), the Academy of Music (Philadelphia), Orchestra Hall (Detroit) and a premiere of an opera at La Scala in Milan.

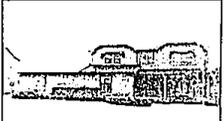
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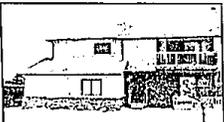
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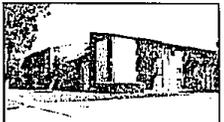
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