

Opening concert starts Festival off well

By Avigdor Zarembo
special writer

Visiting conductor James DePreist who has appeared with the Detroit Symphony before, got the Meadow Brook Music Festival off to a fine start. His Thursday program featured Dvorak's "Carnival" Overture, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24, K. 491 in C minor and the Symphony No. 2 by Rachmaninoff. Pianist Garrick Ohlsson, who is well known to Detroit area audiences, was the soloist in the Mozart concerto.

Thursday's event opened with an unscheduled feature, the "Nimrod" Variation from Elgar's Enigma Variations. This was performed in memory of retired concertmaster Gordon Staples, who died the week before. Staples, who stepped down as concertmaster a few years ago, remained with the orchestra as a regu-



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lar violinist until his death.

Ohlsson, who is over six feet tall and has enormous hands, seems an unlikely candidate for a work that requires refinement rather than brute force. He is a perfect example of the notion that you can't judge a book by its cover, however. His approach to this work was far from timid — he would make the bass thunder on the Bösendorfer instrument that he used, when that was called for.

In the first movement he used a

rare cadenza written by Brahms, which may suggest some of his stylistic choices in this work, but not always. His clean, meticulous runs had the kind of clarity and transparency to them that made the music sound impressively convincing and true to Mozart's style, even though performed on an instrument far removed from Mozart's relatively benign pianoforte.

DePreist, who conducts from a seat due to a handicap, demonstrated that such confinement was no

barrier to effective leadership and control. While the fast rendition of Dvorak's overture had minimized some of its festiveness at the expense of overall balance and organization, DePreist proved to be most thorough with the sprawling, lengthy Rachmaninoff symphony.

This hour-long work, which is frequently performed with extensive cuts, was presented almost intact on this occasion, and yet it managed to sustain the listener's interest. The gradual buildup in the first movement was natural, not contrived. It retained the suspense in spite of the long duration.

Among the unscheduled sounds every Meadow Brook season is that of single-engine planes, which made more daring skirmishes than ever into the performance. Frequently their appearance tends to coincide with that of a pianissimo passage — to

the consternation of musicians and listeners alike. A somewhat better timing occurred between the second and third movements of the Rachmaninoff symphony, prompting DePreist to wait patiently for their overdue departure. This was followed by an exquisite rendition of the nostalgic, expressive third move-

ment, with its clarinet solo passages played most ably by principal clarinet player Theodore Olin.

The crisp, vigorous performance of the final movement brought an intense and prolonged applause, injecting a ray of hope for the series, which is beleaguered by financial uncertainties.



Dodi Sikevitz

Artist takes 1st

Dodi Sikevitz of West Bloomfield, who went from advertising executive to fine arts artist, took first prize for her painting, "The Snail with Bananas," in the exhibit by members of Palette and Brush Club at Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association through June 23.

Robert Wilbert, professor of painting at Wayne State University, was the juror. Second place winner was Janet Storm for "Blue Jay Feathers" and third prize went to Mary Thomas for "Harvest."

Those receiving honorable mention were Minnie Berman, Rose Farber, Jeri Fellwock, Estelle Nelson, Elise Pedersen, Gwen Tomkow, Marcia Tourney and Chris Urwin.

Special mentions were given to Gladys Beall, Lily Dudgeon, Anita Lind and Marilyn Spencer.

Selma Blum was the winner of the Eva Briggs award for her painting "Cosmos III." The Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, 1516 S. Cranbrook, Birmingham, is open 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Art fairs scheduled

The three art shows which make the Ann Arbor Art Fairs, will be held July 18-21. Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday-Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

Together, the fairs will bring nearly 1,000 artists from across the United States to this event to show a vast array of fine arts and contemporary crafts.

The Ann Arbor Street Art Fair will be on S. University, E. University and Church streets. The State Street Area Art Fair will be on S. University, William, Maynard, Liberty and Thompson streets and the Summer Art Fair will be on Main, Liberty and State streets.



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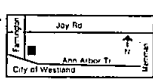


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