

Chamber concerts showcase talented musicians



AVIGOR ZAROMP

There is a wealth of chamber music events in our area. I attended a Chamberworks Series concert on Friday, March 26, and an American Artists Series concert on Sunday, March 28.

At the Chamberworks concert, Thomas Kurus presented a forte piano recital at the Bellan Art Center in Troy. The American Artists series concert at Kingswood Auditorium in Bloomfield Hills featured the American Artist Series Chamber Players and Donald Baker, oboe in a program of rare, but enticing chamber selections.

The forte piano, forerunner of the modern piano, was developed in the middle of the 18th century. Its hammer action, in contrast to the plucking mechanism on the harpsichord, provides for a degree

of dynamic control that was impossible to attain on earlier keyboards.

The instrument Kurus used was built especially for him by a local builder, and patterned after instruments from the Classical period. Its resemblance to the harpsichord caused several in the audience to marvel, before the performance began, where the forte piano was hidden. Kurus' introductory lecture, and subsequent performance, not only settled the issue, but provided the audience with a rare glimpse of this historic instrument.

The first half of the program featured works by members of the Bach family — Johann Christian, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philip Emanuel. Of these, I found the Fantasia in C minor by W.F. Bach to be the most imaginative and inspired.

The second half featured better known works by Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn. Mozart's variations "Ah, vous dirai je Maman,"

based on the theme better known as "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," evoked a sense of déjà vu among the listeners.

Kurus, who is the artistic director of the Chamberworks Series, never fails to impress the audience with his incredible musical knowledge. This made the program a stimulating, thought-provoking event in spite of some technical flaws and sloppy execution of the many trills and embellishments.

J.C. Bach, the "English" Bach, admired by Mozart who incorporated some of his themes into his music, was also featured on the American Artists Series program with a Quartet for Oboe, Violin, Viola and Cello. Other works on the program included works by Eduard Tubin, Jean Francaix and Schumann. All of these works are outside the standard repertoire.

Being a Bach worshiper, I never feel truly moved and inspired by most music of his lesser offspring. The saving grace in the

quartet by J.C. Bach on that program was the fine performance by Detroit Symphony Orchestra principal oboe player Donald Baker who with his capable string colleagues, lent this piece one of the best professional exposures it is likely to get.

High on the list of quality was the Piano Quartet by the Estonian composer Eduard Tubin. This composer, who is virtually unknown in this country, is gradually gaining more acceptance and recognition due to efforts by DSO music director Neeme Järvi.

Contemporary Swiss composer Jean Francaix is another whose exposure fortunes have been rising in recent years. The intricate, multiple syncopated rhythmic patterns in the first movements of this Quartet for English Horn, Violin, Viola and Cello would challenge even those intimately familiar with this work. This ensemble — consisting of Baker, Linda Snedden-Smith (violin), Hart Hollman (viola), and John Thur-

man (cello) coped with this work with undaunted authority.

The next concert on the Chamberworks Series is Music at the French Court featuring music of the French masters of the 18th century including Clerambault, Jacquet de la Guerre, Boismortier and Couperin 8 p.m. Friday, April 23 at Christ Church Cranbrook — Guild Hall, 470 Church Road, Bloomfield Hills. Tickets \$10, students and seniors, \$7. Call 643-7788 for reservations.

American Artists Series will feature the American Artists Series Chamber Players and Ervin Monroe, flute in a program of works by Dmitri Shostakovich, Louise Farrer and Ernest Chausson 3 p.m. Sunday, April 25 at Kingswood Auditorium on the Cranbrook Campus, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. Tickets \$12.50, students \$7.50. Call 851-5044 for ticket information.

UPCOMING THINGS TO DO

CLASSICAL

CLASSIC BRUNCH
Brunch with the Classics features "The Collage Trio," noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, April 4 at the Somerset Collection Rotunda, 2801 Big Beaver Road, Troy. Call 643-6360 for tickets.

TRIO AVENTURA
Trio Aventura will perform Olivier Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time," with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Oakland University faculty member Douglas Comelson, 8 p.m. Sunday, April 10 in the Varner Recital Hall on the campus of Oakland University. Tickets are \$10, seniors \$8, students \$3. Call 370-3013.

OVERTURES
Overtures which brings the area's 20-something to 40-something professionals together for great social gatherings and DSO concerts is hosting brunch at Harlequin Cafe in Detroit 1 p.m. Sunday, April 18 followed by Detroit Symphony Orchestra Concert 3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$35 and include pre-concert brunch and DSO concert ticket. Call 833-3700. For best seats, ticket orders must be received before April 9.

JULIUS CHAIKOVSKY SERIES
Julius Chaiques Music Fund Concert Series presents Brazilian born pianist Flavio Varani in concert at the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit, 6600 W. Maple Road, W. Bloomfield 3:30 p.m. Sunday, April 18. For concert and ticket information, call 661-1000, Ext. 352.

GROUP DU JOUR
Group du Jour, "Farmington's Philharmonic" symphony concert "Back to the Future," 8 p.m. Friday, April 23, in Dublin Hall at Mercy Center, 28600 Eleven Mile Road, Gate 4 in Farmington Hills. Pre-concert coffee and music, 7 p.m. Tickets \$10, seniors and students, \$8. Call 478-2075 for ticket information.

MUSICA VIVALDI
Musica Vivaldi presents classical guitarist Cuban-born Manuel Barrueco, 8 p.m. Friday, April 23, at the Smith Performing Arts Theater on the campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills. Call 473-2228 for ticket information.

VIVACE
Vivace Performing Arts Series features pianist Steven Rosenfeld 7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 25, at the Birmingham Temple, 2801 Twelve Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Tickets \$10 members, sen-

iors and students, \$11 non-members. Call 647-4632.

DANCE

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
Oakland Dance Theatre spring showcase performances 8 p.m. Friday, April 16, and 3 p.m. Sunday, April 18, in Varner Recital Hall on campus in Rochester. Tickets \$8 general, \$5 senior, \$3 student. Call 370-3013.

BALLROOM DANCING
Ballroom dancing has returned to the historic Botsford Inn where Henry Ford and his wife Clara often danced. Traditional ballroom dancing to live Big Band sounds 8-11 p.m. Wednesdays at the inn, 2800 Grand River, at Eight Mile in Farmington. Admission \$4 per person, and for the novice or non-dancer, private dance lessons will be offered for \$2 per person 6:45-7:45 p.m. For information, call 474-4800.

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