

# Oscar Peterson rates high at Meadow Brook

By PATRICIA BEACH SMITH

Oscar Peterson is a soft sell artist who really knows what piano means. He is one of Canada's most famous natural resources who could be called a human player piano. Such an appraisal was concert Friday at the Meadow Brook Music Festival showed the versatility which is his alone. His style is strictly but sometimes freestyle. Peterson is a master of the melody, sometimes playing 18 tunes on a single melody. He uses the other melody lines as improvisational elements within the framework of a main tune.

His best melody was a tribute to the late Duke Ellington. In it he played "Sophisticated Lady," "A Train," "In a Sentimental Mood," "Satin Doll" and many more. It was a sweet tribute to his jazz friend who gave the world and Peterson so much material to play. Another melody was dedicated to a Detroit friend's wife—Laura, with a little of Debussy's "Clair de Lune" thrown in for good measure. He opened his program with "Who Can I

Turn To" but his question was answered by the thunderous applause of an obviously appreciative audience. He played "Misty" with the Errol Garner touch, but never lost sight of his own ability to make a crowd really listen when he plays. His elegant pianismos see to that. "Moon River" seemed transplanted to New Orleans, with a Jelly Roll Morton feel to his rendition. "Body and Soul" was truly soulful in Peterson's capable hands and an unexpected "Back Home Again in Indiana" was also charming. When Peterson is on stage, you know he's really working at his art. He performs probably and, like others including the able Ella Fitzgerald, wipes away his efforts frequently as the night goes on. It's good to see the sparkling beads of hard work. He can boogie down when he needs to, too. It is hard to know what the audience was expecting Friday, but everything they could have wanted from a single piano player was there. His music is not original, but his style decidedly is.

## Meadow Brook in Review

The only thing difficult about the concert was that the intimacy with which he plays

was fairly lost in the intricate sound system which could overshadow any artist of his type. A little more work on the system, to tone it down and not allow the base to be so prevalent, will help with future concerts. It is impossible, with the current set-up to understand any spoken words, for instance. Like so many good things, it came to an end all too soon with a beautiful rendering of "Let There Be Love." Two encores followed to stretch the proceedings a bit farther, but not far enough for this reviewer's fancy.

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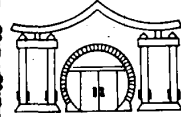
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