



At Meadowbrook

Pianist plays elegantly in concert

By PATRICIA BEACH SMITH
The way Laura de Fusco plays Rachmaninoff, you'd think she was a German instead of an Italian. Anyone with romantic notions about Rachmaninoff's First piano concerto could have lost them upon hearing Ms. de Fusco's rendition, at Meadow Brook Music Festival Saturday.

She played the work in an extremely aggressive manner. Often her aggressiveness got in the way of continuity. She overplayed some of the beginnings of phrases, losing their overall meaning in the process.

However, she mustered gentleness at times, especially in the second movement which she played elegantly and delicately.

The Scriabin Symphony No. 5, let her show her true colors better than in the Rachmaninoff. The lush Scriabin work appears more suited to Ms. de Fusco's athletic style and as a consequ-

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ence her playing in this work was splendid.

Ms. de Fusco was energetic and vivacious in her semi-solo in the Scriabin and the orchestra was well in tune with her and the composer's intentions. The accompanying light show added yet another dimension to the performance, even if the chorus didn't.

Excellent trumpet and generally brass work was tuned in by that section during the Scriabin, but nothing could top the biggest hit of the evening — the Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5.

If anything will please a crowd it's this work and it did just that Saturday. For one thing it is counted among the most played compositions in the orchestral repertoire so it is familiar to many listeners.

The first movement was played very well by the orchestra which appeared to be under dramatic scrutiny by its conductor, Aldo Ceccato. In this movement the French horns and the woodwinds were especially good.

Ceccato handled the first movement's broad crescendo very beautifully and played it to its dramatic hilt. In the second movement he took more than an "alcuna" (little) license with

the markings, but still the pace was good and the overall performance was very cohesive.

Actually this may be one of the best performances the orchestra has given all season. The interpretation was clean, yet dramatic and very musical.

There was no undue milking of the phrases for effect and Ceccato must be praised for that because it isn't something this reviewer would have considered possible at his hand.

Instead, the performance proved that Tchaikovsky is exquisite music, despite what the composer's detractors say.

It is only saccharine and soggy in the hands of a string section which doesn't know what it is doing and a brass section which is inaccurate.

Such, happily, was not the case with the Detroit Symphony orchestra, which with this playing, showed its mettle in a favorable way.

Solo on ivories

Appearing at the Raven Gallery through July 25 is Chicago blues singer Corky Siegel, formerly of the famous Siegel-Swallow Blues Band, playing selections ranging from fast boogies to slow ballads on harmonica and piano. Siegel has recorded a solo album and has played in friend William Russo's experimental symphony, Street Music: A Blues Concerto, with conductor Seiji Ozawa.

'Oklahoma' due in Southfield

David Alderman and Leri Schwartz will head a cast of Southfield youths when the summer musical, Theatre Workshop presents its version of the musical "Oklahoma" on August 11-14.

David Jorlett is producer and musical director of the Summer Workshop sponsored by the Southfield Department of Parks and Recreation.

Ralph Valaska is Drama Director and Carol Kaufman assists as choreographer. Alderman will portray Curly with Miss Schwartz as Lauree.

The other leads are Ken Straus as Will Parker, Nancy Kotton as Ado Anne, Kris Crowley as Al Hakim, Diane Daniel as Aunt Eller and Alan Rose as Jud Fry.

Performances will be at 8 p.m. Aug. 11 through 14 in the Southfield-Ladap High School Auditorium.

The students are learning all phases of theatre production from set designing and costume design to singing and acting. Students will also learn the business acumen of theatre such as sales and publicity.

Further auditions are being held for pit orchestra.

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