

Pooler honored for musical contributions

By Gene Barnes
special writer

For the next-to-the-last program of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra last weekend, Music Director Anjal Dorati chose a rather nondescript group of works by Mozart and Debussy.

Also on the program, a bonus, was the orchestra's former associate conductor, Walter Pooler. He emerged from the retirement, forced upon him in 1970, to conduct a Beethoven overture. Just before this he was given a commemorative plaque honoring him for his contribution to the city's musical heritage.

Pooler's interpretation of the Egmont Overture emphasized its grandiose qualities. The tempo was far slower than the norm, a trait not at all in keeping with Pooler's usual habits, but it certainly didn't have a negative effect on the work. Far from it. Favorable comparisons could be made with the great "slow" conductors of Europe, such as

Jasha Horenstein and Otto Klemperer, but that would be impertinent. Pooler has always been his own man, and he displayed his gifts brilliantly again throughout the all-too-brief overture.

Dorati's opening selection was Mozart's "Linz" symphony, a less adventurous work from the pen of the master with a back-to-basics simplicity reminiscent of Beethoven, but without the latter's flair for displays of awesome power.

DORATI LET THE STRINGS predominate a bit too much here. A more biting, reedy sound would have been preferred and would have been slightly more authentic to boot. The occasional, if unsteady intonation of the violins provided all the more reason to have attempted to bring out the reeds instead.

But, the real surprise of this performance was its lackluster quality. It

should be noted that Dorati has some excellent Mozart recordings to his credit, including a "Linz." Why this particular night's rendition was so flat and dull is anybody's guess.

The symphony was followed by an Oboe Concerto by Mozart. The orchestra's fine principal oboist, Donald Baker, was the soloist. In the outer movements, Baker's playing was agile if somewhat monochromatic. He never made something out of the music, even though his phrasing was always perfectly adequate. He didn't, for instance, exploit the various parts of the rondo for contrasting qualities.

The second movement was another matter, however. The slow melody was quite restful as Baker executed it. And the beautiful tone he produced was pleasingly sweet and rich. The orchestra again proved very supportive of one of their own, providing a soft, but solid accompaniment of the highest professional caliber.

The final work of the program was

Debussy's complete set of orchestral "images." Usually only the final image of the set is heard, the popular "Beria Suite."

DORATI WAS VIGOROUS and forthright in his approach to this music. But, unfortunately, he was also frequently literal and businesslike. Too often the phrasing seemed cut and dried and not from the heart. Dorati is obviously not altogether at home with impressionism, but, nevertheless, his efforts are still clearly superior to many of his Germanic-oriented peers. In fact, the final section of Beria, "The Morning of a Festival Day," was played actually about as well as could be wished.

Tonight, tomorrow night and Saturday night, this subscription season comes to a close with Dorati conducting two masterworks, Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" and Schubert's Ninth Symphony.

Faure and Ravel.

She will analyze in detail the repertoire from the teacher's standpoint, including relative difficulty of the com-

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Piano seminar slated at Oakland University on Thursday

The 20th annual Piano Teachers Institute of Oakland University will be held Thursday with Helen Briggs Crosier featured as performer-lecturer.

Mrs. Crosier will demonstrate and discuss original interpretations of French music that is not generally known, including selections by Debussy,

She will analyze in detail the repertoire from the teacher's standpoint, including relative difficulty of the com-

positions. Teachers are invited to bring their own scores to make notes as Ms. Crosier refers to measure numbers within compositions.

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