

This 'Messiah' turned audience into believers Horticulturist talks

Thursday, April 8, 1982

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By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Metropolitan area audiences were treated to three successive comings of the Messiah in Orchestra Hall last weekend. It was my pleasure to witness the Second Coming, so to speak.

Handel's famous oratorio is among the most frequently played works in the musical repertoire. Every year it is performed during Christmas and Easter at one location or another. Thus, the composition tends to be taken for granted. The most vivid impression in the minds of many listeners is the celebrated "Hallelujah" chorus, even though it lasts only a little more than two minutes in a work that is more

review

than 2 1/2 hours long.

One might well ask what could possibly be gained by listening to one more performance of that composition. But this wasn't just one more ordinary performance, and it turned many of the audience into true believers, at least musically.

AT THE PODIUM was Gary Bertini in his last appearance here this season.

A reduced Detroit Symphony Orchestra was joined by the Kenneth Jewell Chorus, one of the best in the country.

Among the soloists, contralto Claudine Carlson might be remembered from her brilliant performance earlier this season in Mahler's "Resurrection" symphony. On this occasion, there were some weaknesses in her singing. This was especially true in "But, who may abide the Day" in which her voice was given to excessive twirling and indefinite, imprecise notes. There was some subsequent improvement, however.

The most impressive singer was tenor David Britton, whose voice was not only rich and clear but showed superb expressiveness and control, starting with the first recitative and subsequent aria, "Every Valley."

Soprano Kathru Bouleyn demonstrated remarkable skill and ability. The aria, "Rejoice!" has been the undoing of many singers with its fast 16th note passages. Bouleyn navigated them with ease and little strain. A second, slower version of this aria, in triplets, exists for the benefit of lesser singers.

Some of Bouleyn's improvisational embellishments in the slower arias, however, didn't quite fit the context, as was the case in "Come unto me." While

free improvisation was a common practice of the baroque period, it came naturally to the performers who were part of that period. A contemporary performer who doesn't specialize in that style would do best to keep such improvisations to a minimum or to dispense with them completely.

Baritone Leslie Guinn did his impressive share, maintaining a full, rich voice even in the lowest registers.

THE KENNETH JEWELL Chorus was not to be outdone. The voices were precise with good balance and excellent phrasing. It fulfilled expectations in the "Hallelujah" of course but was also convincing in other places. The singing was accurate and coordinated in the jolly skips of "All we Like Sheep" in which supposedly the sheep go astray, but the chorus did not.

This was topped off by the superb playing of the orchestra which merged very well with the chorus and singers, providing clear separation of the voices throughout. Some of the faster tempi started somewhat unpredictably, taking the violins by surprise but never resulting in any serious disarray.

Noteworthy was Donald Green's brilliant trumpet solo in "you guessed it — The Trumpet Shall Sound."

There were only minimal cuts in the long composition. Above all, it seems that the DSO has finally chosen to save this composition from its overplayed, routine aspects.

about Japanese gardens

Betty Frankel, horticulturist and garden writer for Detroit Free Press, will hold a one-session workshop called "Japanese Gardens-Made in America" April 23 at the Farmington Community Center. Japanese gardens are based on imagery, tradition, natural and man-made elements. The need for simple beauty and quiet sanctuary in complicated lives is believed to have created their recent popularity in America.

Mrs. Frankel has visited and filmed many public Japanese gardens all over

the United States. Her slides will show various styles, regional differences, various details as well as the philosophy and symbolism involved.

Line, mass and texture create the theme around which the gardens are designed. Some of the basic elements are water, polished and rough stones, lanterns, simple reeds and sand raking. Tips will be given on how to translate some of this subtle beauty for use in the participants' gardens.

Register and pay the \$6-fee at the center, 24705 Farmington Road.

Male choruses join for spring concert

The Arpi Swedish Male Chorus will present its spring concert with performances by the Finlandia Male Chorus at 3 p.m. April 18 in Finnish Cultural Center, 35200 Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

Arpi director Herman S. Warne and Finlandia director Evert Makinen have programmed the concert to include both serious and popular works.

"This is My Country," by Al Jacobs and "Stouthearted Men" will be sung by both choruses under Warne's direction.

Makinen will direct the joint choruses for "Shurra Luvu Du Lilla," by Weterling in both Swedish and Finnish followed by "Let There be Music" by Williams.

Finlandia takes the stage with "Saskatchewan," "Coal Dust on the Fiddle," "Haltuinen Vain" and "Sini-

nen Ja Valkoinen" in observance of the blue and white Finnish flag.

Arpi's numbers on the program are Greg's "Sangarhison," "Rosa Rod," "Mia ros" and "Sangarvals."

Makinen directs both choruses for Bach's "Now Let Every Tongue Adore Thee," and "Shenandoah."

The choruses join for the finale of "Klara Stjarna" by Weterling in Swedish and Finnish, and Irving Berlin's "God Bless America."

Piano accompanists are Gretchen Moses for Arpi and Martha Shield for Finlandia.

Arpi Ladies Auxiliary sponsors the afterglow. Ralph Mannisto furnishes music for listening and dancing after the concert with his accordion.

Admission is \$2.50. Advance tickets may be obtained through Dorothy Lind, 476-4599. Tickets will also be sold at the door.

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