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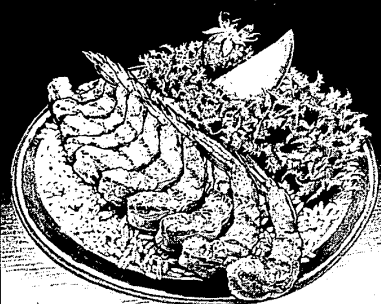
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THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS A PUBLIC SERVICE

Borge pleases concert crowd

By Judy Jablonski
special writer

Comedy and classical music are a rare combination, but laughter and Chopin shared the bill Saturday night when Victor Borge conducted the Detroit Symphony Pops at the Meadow Brook Music Festival on the Oakland University campus in Rochester.

The evening was a continuous seesaw of laughs and classics by greats like Mozart, Liszt and Strauss. Only Borge, the Danish Clown Prince, could couple the two distinct entertainment forms and pull it off.

Equally unique was seeing the Detroit Symphony Pops enjoy the performance as much as the audience. It was amusing to see musicians seated in the back strain their necks and even stand to see Borge's antics as he attempted to deal with an inky page-turner, or chat away with a woman in the front row.

Despite the rainy evening, Borge filled the stage, seats and hills with laughter and music. Who else could serve as a hilarious subterfuge for latecomers—then conduct a superb Gershwin medley?

Borge, at 71, is an extraordinary comedian and pianist who began studying music at age 5.

He was the "lost of the town" in Copenhagen before he was 10, with musical reviews, script writing, acting and directing to his credit.

While he was appearing in Sweden in 1940, Denmark was invaded, so Borge moved to the U.S.

It was a career risk for Borge, who was accustomed to the enormous popularity he experienced in his own country. But his fear quickly vanished. American audiences took an immediate liking to his sophisticated musical satire.

Today's audiences continue to appreciate his dry wit, and the delighted Meadow Brook crowd was no exception.

Borge joked with both the audience and the symphony. Cellist Marcy Chanteaux, who accompanied Borge in a beautiful duet, was the object of his flirtations throughout the entire evening.

The audience loved it. So did Chanteaux; by the end of the evening, she was even flirting back. The assistant principal cellist of the Detroit Symphony Pops flirting on stage? On any other night it would be unfitting, but Borge's warmth and humor made

both the audience and orchestra feel right at home.

He treated the crowd to his "Phonetic Punctuation," a verbal system he invented to emphasize punctuation marks. Borge assigned various sounds to represent periods, commas, exclamation points, and his favorite—the question mark. He demonstrated its effectiveness by reading a passage and the result was roaring laughter and applause.

Like many comedians, Borge's repertoire includes jokes about his family, the weather and, of course, his doctor.

"I went to see the doctor and he told me I need glasses," Borge told the audience.

"So I took his," he quipped as he stumbled about the stage.

"When I get home he wants to see me," he continued, "but he can't because I have his glasses."

Borge chuckled at his own cleverness. It was evident he was having a good time.

The audience equally enjoyed his laugh-a-minute sequences and the Detroit Symphony Pops.

And the symphony? Many of the musicians were laughing so hard they had to wipe tears from their eyes so they could read the next piece of music.

It is a rare occasion when everyone involved has such a good time. Thanks to a ray of sunshine, Victor Borge, the rain was quickly forgotten.

review

'I went to see the doctor and he told me I needed glasses, so I took his.'

— Victor Borge
musician-comedian

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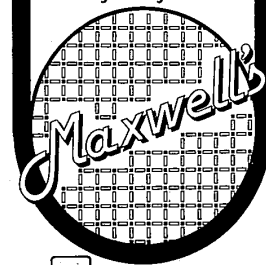
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