

Blomstedt receives deserved recognition

By Avigdor Zarnop
special writer

One may easily understand the temptation to stick with the standard repertoire in concert programs.

While some of the most celebrated composers might install a certain degree of boredom mixed with resignation, at least one deals with a known quantity and a certain measure of success is almost assured.

It takes a great deal of courage and risk to undertake some lesser-known compositions as the major portion of a program.

This was the case last Thursday at Ford Auditorium when Herbert Blomstedt conducted his second of three Detroit Symphony programs scheduled this season.

The program, which consisted of the Overture to Estrella di Sorla by Berwald, the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra by Sibelius and the Symphony No. 3 by Nielsen, turned out to be an unqualified success.

The solo part in the Sibelius work, the only piece in the program that may still be regarded as part of the standard repertoire, was played by Polish-born violinist Ida Haendel.

review

While this composition has more than its share of technical difficulties, dazzling virtuosity isn't its primary purpose, a factor that Ida Haendel wisely took into consideration in this performance.

In addition to her impressive technical skill, her intonation and musicianship were most impressive. The quality of her tone could be characterized as having dark and somber characteristics in the lower range and pure, angelic quality in the upper range.

THE ORCHESTRAL part, which is substantial, was very aptly implemented. There were some occasions when orchestra and soloist were not quite together, mainly due to tempo shifts by Haendel. But due to the skill and control of Blomstedt, these were well disguised and unobtrusive.

Swedish romantic composer Franz Berwald has been largely unrecognized until recently. While his short overture

on this program might not be characterized as a great and profound musical creation, it is nevertheless a pleasant and well written piece — and Blomstedt's treatment did it justice. Berwald's music certainly has merit and deserves to be performed from time to time.

THE ONE composition on the program that deserves more exposure than it has had so far is the Symphony No. 3 by Nielsen. Subtitled "Sinfonia Espansiva," its symphonic scope is truly extensive.

The second movement calls for a wordless vocal part. This was superbly provided by soprano Dorothy Berry and baritone Steven Henrikson, who were stationed among the orchestra players. The orchestral balance and control was just about total. The enthusiasm in the final movement was genuine, without any compromise of precision.

THE RAPPORT between Blomstedt and the orchestra players, which was evident throughout the performance, was demonstrated in an entertaining episode on stage. When the audience was enthusiastically applauding at the

end of the concert, Blomstedt made his characteristic sweeping, all-encompassing gesture toward the musicians, imploring them to stand up and share the tribute. This was his only gesture that was purposely disobeyed.

Never short in imaginative resourcefulness, Blomstedt yanked concertmaster Gordon Staples out of his seat, causing all the musicians to jump up to their feet to the cheering of the appreciative audience.

This week Blomstedt will present his final program here, which will be more traditional. It will consist of works by Weber, Mendelssohn and Beethoven.

American Artists opens new season Sunday

American Artists Series will open its 1983 season with a concert at 3 p.m. Sunday at Kingswood School Cranbrook.

The program includes two first performances — the first Michigan performance of the Piano Quartet by Richard Strauss and the first local performance of "Andante and Rondo Concertante" by Schubert. The program will also include the Sonata for Bassoon and Cello by Mozart, the Poulenc Trio for Oboe Bassoon and Piano and Benjamin Britten's "Six Metamorphoses After Ovid."

Performing artists will be Don Baker, oboe; Joan Freeman, piano; Hart Hollman, viola; Linda Snedden Smith, violin; Winifred Mayes, cello; and Robert Williams, bassoon.

Tickets, \$8, are available by calling 647-2230.

The programs in the series include: an appearance by Irish actress, Siobhan McKenna in "Here Are Ladies" at 3 p.m. Feb. 20; Russian Melodramas and the first American concert performance of Bartok's early rhapsodic Piano Quintet at 3 p.m. March 20; Heidi Lehwalder, harp and

Homophobia is sermon topic

Homophobia, fear of the homosexual, is the topic of the sermon set for 10 a.m. Sunday in Universalist-Unitarian Church of Farmington, 25301 Halsted Road.

"As our society moves toward free-

dom for all minority groups, there remains one group still struggling for their freedom," says Rev. Joan Kahn-Schneider speaking of the homosexual community. "They continue to combat injustice, prejudice and fear, or homophobia."

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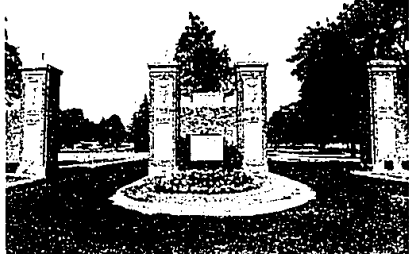
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