

# Akiyama, Kavafian enhance exotic festival program

By Avigdor Zaromp  
special writer

There were several exotic elements in last week's program at the Meadow Brook Festival.

To begin with, there was the Japanese guest conductor, Kazuyoshi Akiyama. Among his famous teachers was another Japanese maestro, Seiji Ozawa. The program opened with a composition by Toru Takemitsu, "A

Flock Descends Into the Pentagonal Garden."

The work, which was commissioned for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in 1977, is based on the composer's dreams, which in turn were based on a photograph of the artist Marcel Duchamp.

The music, which is colorfully descriptive in nature, sounds very much like film music. While it does not match, in my opinion, the depth of the more established classical masters, it does have some pleasing effects.

One noteworthy phenomenon was the fact that a passing airplane, which usually proves to be quite disruptive, seemed to blend perfectly with the music in this instance.

NEXT ITEM on the program was the violin concerto No. 3 by Saint-Saens. Saint-Saens, of course, had his respectable share of his own exotic adventures, which included trips to Africa and the Orient, in addition to visits to more conventional countries, like our own.

His third violin concerto, while not ranked as high as the more popular Brahms concerto (to be performed this week), is nevertheless a charming and melodious composition, and I find it a refreshing diversion from the steady diet.

This work was performed by a young violinist with her own exotic background. Ida Kavafian was born in Turkey to an American family of Armenian descent and was raised in Detroit, which might be considered exotic — who knows.

## review

Kavafian has proved to be a top-notch violinist, with some reservations, however. Her technique and tone quality were superb most of the time, but with some spots of discontinuity.

Some of the large leaps were overly impulsive and contained rough edges. The second movement was faster than I would prefer, preventing the listener

from appreciating the unique aroma of its enchanting theme.

For most part, however, the performance was that of a seasoned violinist. It might take more years of experience to fill those extra gaps.

The program concluded with yet another composition that could rightfully be considered exotic. This was the tone poem "Also Sprach Zarathustra" by Richard Strauss.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra members are by now well familiar with the music, and with good reason — it was performed under Antal Dorati during the two past regular seasons

and also has been recorded. On both occasions I have been misled by the mispronunciation of the title by radio announcers, only to find it misprinted by the paper. Thus goeth the title.

But the music fared much better on all occasions, and this one was no exception. Akiyama has proved to have a thorough understanding of this music and was in full control. The work ended with the appropriate degree of mystery, after highlighting the various phases of the basic theme.

Hopefully, this work will not be scheduled again for the time being. Too much of a good thing is likely to ruin it.

## Activities Center presents understanding of artifacts

The Henry Ford Museum's Activities Center, which premiered in early 1983, was created to help provide a sense of understanding of how artifacts in the museum work, as well as promote further awareness of what the collections contain.

The results offer visitors a chance to experience facets of history by participating in activities as well as demonstrations.

While walking through the exhibit, visitors can visualize the thrill of getting up on a high-wheel bicycle or listen to ragtime on a player piano. One might want to further an understand-

ing of mechanics by viewing a cutaway model of a 1926 Fordson tractor or observing miniature steam engines.

An interest in home arts or communications can be fostered by treading a Singer sewing machine, assembling a small rocking chair, or helping operate a Washington printing press.

THE ACTIVITIES Center is "designed to give the visitor another experience" and is a "reflection of the collections," said Jim Van Bochove, programs assistant for the museum's Education Department.

"We're trying to gear toward the

family audience," Van Bochove said. "The Activities Center is one component of the museum experience. It allows visitors the opportunity to discover how various items operate."

Other items in the exhibit include hand-cranked microscopes of the 1890s (one of the forerunners of motion pictures), a cylinder music box, stereo- scope, turn-of-the-century wall telephones, and a crystal radio popular in the 1920s.

Current theme of the Activities Center, "How Things Work," runs through Labor Day in Henry Ford Museum.

## Beds to race at MD benefit

The beds will roll down West Grand Boulevard in the annual "Detroit Bed Races Against Muscular Dystrophy" on Aug. 12-13 in Detroit. The two-day event consists of a pre-race party from 4:30-9 p.m. Aug. 12 and the races, beginning at 11 a.m. Saturday.



Seasoned violinist Ida Kavafian was soloist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the Meadow Brook Music Festival last week.

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