

Orchestra invited to Jordan

By Arvidgor Zaromp
special writer

review

After the seemingly long summer recess, musical events are about to resume here in full force. This means, among other things, that music critics, who might have become rusty during this period of idleness, have to sharpen their pencils again.

The first major event of this season is a special concert presented by the Renaissance City Chamber Orchestra. The turnout was high, with most seats on all floors filled. Tickets were free. The one thing that wasn't cheap was the performance.

The event that prompted this special concert was the scheduled trip of this group to Jordan, on Sept. 15. This was made possible by official invitation of the Jordanian government, which is subsidizing the expenses. This is indeed remarkable, because this Mid-Eastern Arab country isn't traditionally viewed as a classical music center. The fact that Misha Rachlevsky, the organizer of the series, happens to be Jewish didn't stand in the way of the invitation, which shows that occasionally music can triumph over politics.

THE PROGRAM consisted of three works, two of which are familiar. These were Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," which opened the program, and Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons," which was the concluding work, comprising the second half of the program.

In between was the Sonata No. 2 for Strings by Rossini, which is one of his infrequently performed chamber compositions.

The Mozart composition, in spite of its popularity, sounded sincere and not trivial. There was a full-bodied sound, with overall good coordination. While there were some minor problems in the last, fast-paced movement, they were overcome in the final portion and the result was most pleasing.

The Rossini work, one of his earliest, doesn't feature the crescendo style of his well-known overtures. It is somewhat reminiscent of Haydn's style. While it may not be his most profound piece, the performance was truly captivating.

Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" is performed so frequently that it is everybody's right to expect listening to it again. Last season I heard the sequence twice at Orchestra Hall and one of those was with the Renaissance Chamber Orchestra.

RACHLEVSKY, who played the solo violin part in this performance, is an outspoken proponent of Vivaldi. And he is evidently determined to make this composition even more popular than it already is. To a great extent, he has succeeded.

The phrases were well shaped and precise. There was great attention to detail, with a finely articulated dia-

logue between the solo instrument and the orchestra, keeping the suspense alive.

A very refined echo effect was produced, making the passages full of meaningful content, rather than dull and repetitive.

At the appropriate moments, the orchestra made room for the sound of the harpsichord, played by Catherine Gordon. This is in contrast to some past performances, when the sound of the harpsichord was virtually inaudible.

Rachlevsky was shining with his expressive skill and impressive technique through most of the demanding four concerti, with the exception of the final movement of the summer concerto, in which he ran into problems with the higher notes.

WQRS personality Carl Grapentine preceded each of the concertos with a reading of the sonnets that Vivaldi used to describe the moods of the movements.

In spite of the remote tour of the group, they are scheduled to be away for only 10 days.

The 16-concert series will include many very attractive events. Season tickets are \$40 — that's only \$2.50 per concert. For more information, call 62-MUSIC.



Second runs Tom Panzenhagen

"Blazing Saddles" (1974), 9 p.m. Friday on Ch. 2. Originally 83 minutes.

Here's one of those rare films that fares better on TV than on the big screen. That's because director/writer Mel Brooks' obligatory R-rated vulgarities will be cut for TV, and, in this case, that's a blessing. Gene Wilder's brilliant, comic performance is another blessing. Cleavon Little, Madeline Kahn, Harvey Korman, Slim Pickens, Alex Karras and Mel Brooks co-star. Rating: \$2.10.

"X the Unknown" (1956), 11:40 p.m. Friday on Ch. 9. Originally 80 minutes.

Credit British filmmakers for coming up with a blob of their own two years before Steve McQueen starred in the American film "The Blob." Both pictures have problems trying to imbue radioactive muck with any genuinely menacing, or filmic, characteristics, but the Brits pull it off a bit better than the Yanks. Dean Jagger, Leo McKern and Anthony Newley co-star. Rating: \$2.75.

"At the Earth's Core" (1975), 1:30 Friday night on Ch. 7. Originally 130 minutes.

It's nice to find a rather simple-minded fantasy film among the demotic pot boilers and mega-budget, outer

WHAT'S IT WORTH?
A ratings guide to the movies

Bad.....	\$1
Fair.....	\$2
Good.....	\$3
Excellent.....	\$4

It's not often that made-for-TV movies earn a plug in this space, but we'll always have a soft spot for the delicate characterization of gunshoe Harry Orwell, played by the late David Janssen. Harry was caring, clever, careful and, above all, almost always non-violent — not the sturdiest of brainless TV detectives are made of. Martin Sheen co-stars. Rating: \$3.05.

Buffo the clown in Royal Oak

Howard Buten, a native Detroit now living in New York and Paris, appears as Buffo the clown in a performance at 8 p.m. Friday at Oakland Community College's Royal Oak campus, 739 S. Washington.

Tickets at the door are \$4.50, \$5 for students.

Buten, who attended the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Clown College, has toured with the European Circus Bartok since 1973. In his act, Buffo plays 11 musical instruments, dances ballet, sings, and performs ventriloquism and mime.

space epic of the 1970s. "At the Earth's Core" won't provoke any thoughtful conversations but it is an engaging film from an Edgar Rice Burroughs story. Doug McClure, Peter Cushing and Caroline Munro co-star. Rating: \$2.85.

"Thunderball" (1965), 9 p.m. Sunday on Ch. 7. Originally 120 minutes.

Sean Connery's Bond was interesting when the films in which he appeared were as gritty and believable as the character. With "Thunderball," though, both film and character take on comic book proportions that are especially unbecoming of the ruddy, Irish actor. Still, there are plenty of thrills from this fourth Bond flick, delivered in unique Bond fashion. Adolfo Celli, Claude Auger and Luciana Paluzzi co-star. Rating: \$2.95.

"Harry O" (1973), 2:45 Sunday night on Ch. 7. Originally 91 minutes.

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