

From Japan

"All Things Beautiful: The Japanese Tradition" at Cranbrook Institute of Science contains many fine and rare artifacts relating to the Japanese appreciation of beauty. Among the more than 400 items on display are the intricately carved ivory figures at left and the lacquered wood fan box. Exhibit is included in regular admission charge. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7-10 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday, 500 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills.

Recital peaks in 2nd half

By Ruth Zaromp
special writer

The Birmingham Musicale in its "Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow" series presented prominent area pianist Flavio Varani in recital at Varner Hall of Oakland University last weekend.

Originally from Brazil, Varani has been a faculty member at Oakland University since 1972. He has played in many concerts in the area including the Meadow Brook Music Festival.

On this occasion, one could notice a certain change from his usual style of playing. Among those who have heard him before, he was known to have a rather robust style. Now he played in a much softer manner.

The first piece, Franz Schubert's Impromptu No. 1, isn't heard very often in the concert hall. It is longer than the popular Impromptu and contains more musical themes.

EVEN though Varani managed to portray most of the themes, he didn't achieve a feeling of union between the different parts. The second item on the program was the rarely performed Schumann Piano Sonata

in F sharp minor. This work, of considerable depth and substance, consists of four movements.

In the first two, Varani combined good technique with musical insight. In the last two movements, however, there was a lack of effective integration. The chords sounded disjointed and the themes broke down in several instances.

On several occasions, Varani was humming along as he played, a practice for which the late Glenn Gould was so noted. Hopefully, Varani will succeed in time to match Gould's success without acquiring his eccentricities.

The second part of the program consisted of works of composers who are perhaps less prominent, but these proved to be the highlight of the program. The selections were two pieces by Albeniz and two pieces by Villa-Lobos. Villa-Lobos, of course, is primarily known for his "Bachiana Brasileira."

The two pieces by Albeniz are of a technically intricate pattern. While there was some lack of clarity in the first of these, "Navarra," the second piece, "Triana" was excellent. It was performed with flair and spirit.

review

OF THE Villa-Lobos pieces, "A Minstrel's Impressions" is stylistically different from the composer's better known works. This performance gave it substance and purpose. In the second and final piece, "Holiday in the Countryside," Varani's technique involved oscillating chords and dashing passages which were implemented with impressive balance and richness of sound. The syncopated characteristics of Brazilian rhythmic patterns were most captivating.

As an encore, Varani played some nocturnes by Poulenc which he recently recorded. Copies of this record were available for sale in the lobby.

Varani is indeed a most gifted pianist and musician whose style and approach are still undergoing changes and development.

The third concert in this series featuring Oakland University's show ensemble "Meadow Brook Estate" will be on April 1.

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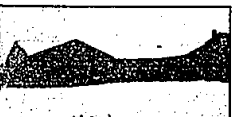
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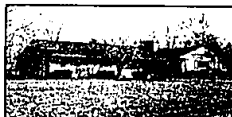
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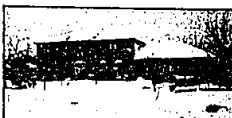
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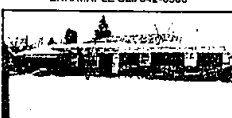
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