

Stuttgart Orchestra's music transcends language

By Avigdor Zorom
special writer

During its 40th season the Chamber Music Society of Detroit (CMS) has been presenting us with an endless supply of outstanding chamber groups from this country and abroad.

If music had been an ordinary commodity, a saturation point should have been reached a long time ago. The paradox is that the greater the quality of the musical event, the greater the thirst for more.

The latest outstanding group was the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra with its

distinguished conductor Maestro Karl Münchinger. This group was formed after the end of World War II and has been impressing audiences all over the world ever since. The works chosen from this program, from a wide repertoire, are familiar to most listeners.

Perhaps the most popular of all is the famous Canon in D Major by Pachelbel, which was the opening work on the program. I could never quite figure out the reason for the spell this work seems to hold over many diverse audiences.

It can be heard in shopping malls and other public places that don't normally

review

feature musical events. Personally, I have never been overly fond of this piece. Even after this fine performance I still find it musically unimaginative.

HOWEVER, one can hardly imagine a more meaningful rendition of this overplayed selection. The upper voices were very prominent, neutralizing the

monotone, sleep inducing effects of the repetitious base line. The gradual buildup of rich sound transcended by the musical content of this work.

Subsequent works on the program, however, offered a rare combination of inspired musical content and an impressive standard of performance. These were by Bach, Vivaldi, Britten

and Dvorak.

The Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 by Bach poses some of the most difficult performance challenges of the six concerti, with the possible exception of No. 6. This is especially true of the first movement, in which it is easy to fall into a monotonous, lifeless pattern.

This performance was one of the rare successful attempts to breathe life into this movement. Careful attention was given to the polyphonic structure. The lower strings were prominently featured, sometimes at the expense of the violins.

The work was played without a harpsichord, which didn't prove to be a serious drawback, and the two harpsichord chorales of the second movement were played by the strings with only a minimal loss of authenticity.

The Concerto Grosso in D minor by Vivaldi, which is one of his most popular works, acquired a more significant dimension with this well balanced, sensitive performance. The expressive second movement was a rare display of a sense of total proportion.

IN BRITTEN'S "Simple Symphony," the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra convincingly demonstrated that the term "simple" and "trivial" aren't synonymous. The delicate, playful pizzicato in the second movement, even in the pianissimo passages, didn't fail to convey tonal richness and variety with an astonishing degree of total control.

The concluding work was the Serenade in E Major by Dvorak. Among the numerous recordings I have heard of this composition I found quite a few reasonably satisfying until this performance demonstrated that this work has so much more to offer.

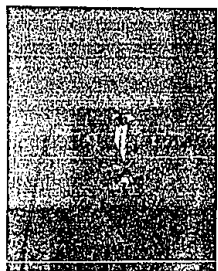
The nice themes and pleasant harmonies of this work are taken for granted, but one is rarely exposed to the variety of color and pulsating life exhibited in this performance.

Following the thunderous applause the group played the famous Minute in A Major by Beethoven, which is a movement from his E Major Quintet, rarely performed in its entirety.

For any person who is considering moving and isn't limited by economic considerations, I highly recommend Stuttgart as a destination to be considered. Language problems shouldn't pose a serious difficulty — the universal language of music should take care of that.



Kurt Machacek



Michael Plonka

Celebrities man gaming tables for Common Ground benefit

Birmingham Eccentric columnist Sally Gerak and Gretchen Hitch will be among a winning jackpot of Detroit-area celebrities who will man the gaming tables at a benefit millionaire's party, "Take a Chance on Common Ground," 8 p.m. to midnight Friday, May 4, in the Community House "Casino" in Birmingham.

The "Suburban Accents" and "Making the Scene" series will be celebrity dealers to raise funds for Common Ground, Oakland County's only 24-hour crisis intervention center.

Guests, dressed in Monte Carlo, Las

Vegas or Reno chic attire will have the opportunity to win up to \$500 in cash while playing Roulette, Black Jack, Craps, Over and Under 7, Chuck-a-luck, Big 6 Wheel and Beat the Dealer. A late-evening buffet will be served.

"BIG SHOOTERS," "High Rollers" and "Millionaires" will ante up \$50, \$75 or \$100 each to attend. The public is invited to call Bea Rose at 645-1173 or Nancy Halsted at 645-4823 for information and reservations.

Other media personalities who will

give Common Ground a hand include disc jockeys, anchormen, columnists, TV personalities and correspondents.

"We've really hit the jackpot with the wonderful celebrities who have said they'll help us," said Elise Hesser of Birmingham, a Common Ground board member who is co-chairing the benefit with her husband, Helmut, and Nancy and Dick Halsted of Bloomfield Hills.

Begun as a grass roots crisis center in 1970, the Birmingham-based nonprofit Common Ground focuses on prevention of and early intervention in mental health and substance abuse problems. Its services to tri-county residents of all ages include phone and walk-in crisis intervention, a computerized information and referral bank and medical and legal clinics. All services are free.

2 take Eagle Award

Kurt R. Machacek and Michael E. Plonka of Farmington Hills Boy Scout Troop No. 283 received Eagle awards at an Eagle Court of Honor in North Farmington High School. Albert Fracassa, football coach at Birmingham Brother Rice, was the featured speaker at the ceremony.

Machacek has been a member of the troop for seven years and held positions as assistant patrol leader, patrol leader and librarian. He had earned 22 merit badges.

For his Eagle project, he supervised other scouts in beautifying the grounds at Farmington Community Center. A special part of the project was the construction of a large, authentic oak bench to be used in the old log cabin on the premises.

He is a sophomore at North Farmington High School and played on the freshman football team and was a

pitcher on a championship Colts baseball team. He is an active member of the Kirk of the Hills church.

Plonka has been in scouting for six years. He is currently an assistant senior patrol leader. He is a student at Brother Rice High School and an active member of St. Fabian Church Youth Group. He and five other scouts worked more than 40 hours on his Eagle project for a Ketchbrook special education classroom. Plonka's crew made a toy train, puzzles, and study carrels for the class.

Used books go on sale

The American Association of University Women, Plymouth Branch, will hold its 30th annual Used Book Sale Thursday-Saturday, May 3-5. The sale will be in Kresge Court of Westland Shopping Center. Hours will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday and Friday with bargain day Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. when all books will be sold at \$2 per bag or box.

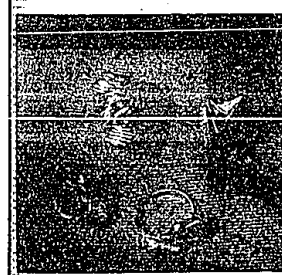
Approximately 15,000 used books

will be available, with the majority selling for 50 cents to \$1.50. The books have been sorted into 40 categories including adventure and western, magazines, paperback novels, mystery and science fiction, children's and old and rare.

Proceeds go to local and national scholarships and fellowships for women.

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