

Southfield Orchestra shows mettle

By Avigdor Zaromp
Special writer

One yardstick by which we can measure the level of involvement of our community in classical music is by the number of symphony orchestras in this area. There are quite a few of these, and one of the significant ones, excluding the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, is the Southfield Symphony Orchestra.

Their program was presented last Sunday at the impressive architectural structure of Temple Beth El, at 14 Mile and Telegraph, Bloomfield Township.

Their conductor for the past five seasons has been Ervin Monroe, principal flute with the DSO, and their concertmaster for the same period, as the case might be, is Linda Snedden-Smith, a violinist with the DSO.

When considering a community orchestra, it would be unreasonable to hold it to the same high standards as one would expect from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

On the other hand, it would be less than candid to pretend that flaws in the performance didn't exist. Such flaws, indeed, were present here, some quite serious. However, far more remarkable were the aspects of the performance that were positive and successful.

THE PROGRAM consisted of works by Verdi, Telemann, Mendelssohn, Smetana, Vivaldi and Weinberger. The opening portion of Verdi's Overture to "La Forza del Destino" sounded authoritative and convincing. There was a professional sound quality to the opening theme, even though it didn't persist with the growing complexity.

This was followed by a portion of the Suite for Flute and Strings in A Minor by Telemann. For this Monroe has switched from conductor to soloist. Assistant Conductor Diane Bolon took over the podium.

Monroe played his passages with meticulous precision. The pace of the second minute, which is a variation of the first minute, was somewhat slower than customary, but a faster pace would have overextended the orchestra. While it would have been desirable to hear this articulate suite in its entirety, one has to take into account the practical limitations.

Another work that was only partially performed was Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony, with its second and fourth movements presented. The slow movement, with its inimitable problems, sounded less than inspiring. In the final, lively movement, however, the passages of the winds were precise and authentic for the most part.

There were some problems with the strings and some intrusive sounds from the brass, but the orchestra under the dedicated guidance by Monroe, managed to recover and land on its feet.

THE MOLDAU river in Smetana's famous overture did flow to its destination, even though its path had some obstacles.

Linda Snedden-Smith was extremely impressive with her rendition of the concerto in A Major for Violin and Orchestra by Vivaldi. The orchestra re-

sponded with matching spirit, if not always with matching technique and intonation.

The sound of the orchestra was most impressive in the closing selection, the famous polka and tango from Schwanda by Weinberger. The main theme was presented in a fresh and sweeping fashion.

The Southfield Symphony Orchestra members are extremely dedicated to their music. While they are undoubtedly aware of the shortcomings, there is a conscious effort to achieve the best possible results. Southfield has every reason to be proud of its orchestra.

This orchestra is successful in evoking interest in classical music among the community. While the road to perfection is long and elusive, members of this orchestra are among the minority who have taken the first few steps.



Avigdor Zaromp

Carolyn Hall's art displayed at bank

"A to Z Soft Animals" and an accompanying quilt of animals by Carolyn Hall of Beverly Hills, author/artist, are on display in the lobby by showcase of First Federal of Michigan, Woodward at Michigan, Detroit.

The exhibit, which continues through December, is open to the public 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

The stuffed animals are the prototypes for Hall's seventh book, "A to Z Soft Animals" to be published in

1985. They include an elegantly sequined iguana, a stalking jaguar, a shaggy yak and an outrageously ruffish monkey.

Hall has had 32 one-person exhibitions of her paintings, collages, constructions and fabric art, including a Christmas exhibit of stuffed bears at First Federal last year.

She is a found member of the Cranbrook Academy of Art alumni group and she and her husband, Cap, are founding members of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Assoc.



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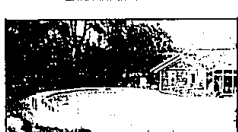
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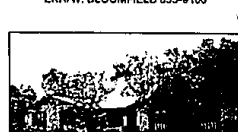
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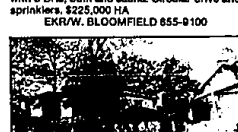
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