



Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Great show by Bernstein

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The Meadow Brook Festival continues to be blessed with quite a few attractions. The major ones were scheduled for the end of this rewarding season. The first of these, the New York Philharmonic with conductor Leonard Bernstein, took place last week.

The ranking of the New York Philharmonic as one of the world's top orchestras is widely acknowledged. These tunes to the many classical music resources around the area regularly exposed to the sound of this orchestra through recordings and broadcasts.

While these are quite impressive, they don't come close to the experience of a live performance. This is especially true when the performance is directed by a most distinguished conductor such as Leonard Bernstein.

Few have left such a prominent and lasting mark in their fields as Bernstein. Then, too, he excels in so many areas.

Just being a successful conductor of such caliber would be more than an adequate achievement for many celebrities. Bernstein, however, is also a prolific composer and writer, as well as an extremely competent pianist. Conducting and composing were just two of the fields represented on this special program.

THE FIRST HALF was dedicated to Bernstein's music - his popular "Candide" Overture and his lesser known Serenade for Solo Violin, String Orchestra, Harp and Percussion. Concertmaster Glenn Dicterov played the violin solo in this work.

The Candide Overture has always struck me as a "cute" piece, but low culture, musically speaking. That was at least the impression until the robust, full-bodied performance on this occasion.

Bernstein's Serenade offers a different perspective. Inspired by Plato's dialogue "The Symposium," it consists of five movements representing different Greek characters. The music ranges from the humorous, as manifested in the Erixyneus movement, to the sombre and contemplative, in the Agathon movement.

Dicterov demonstrated impressive capabilities in his performance. The sound of his instrument was lively and clear, with good projection. His ability to move technically, however, he was successful in maintaining the suspense in the slower portions as well. While Dicterov has a clear, a soloist's reaction, he definitely sounded better than some of those who did.

The second portion of the program featured Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony. It is frequently my contention that it is next to impossible to have a landmark performance of such a well established work.

However, there are some exceptions to this rule and this performance was one of them.

IN SPITE OF the size of the crowd - larger than any I have seen here this season - the attention was constantly riveted on the music. The tempo of most movements was considerably slower than usual, but this extra time yielded extra revelations of this music's depth.

The concentration was so total that one tended to forget that this was an outdoor event. The fact that the airplanes were mercifully scarce helped, of course. The spell of the music was even more vivid toward the silent ending.

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Hugh Gallagher
second runs

"Benji" (1975), 8 p.m. Friday on Ch. 9. Originally 85 minutes. TV time slot: 120 minutes.

Although this film was a "package" aimed at the family trade by an out of Hollywood producer, it is a package that basically works. The secret here is a low-key style that concentrates on telling a mystery story from a dog's eye view. In this case the dog, Benji (Higgins on "Petecat Junction"), is adorably cute, expressive and agile. The movie doesn't sink into the cutes because director-producer Joe Camp stays on the mystery rather than the kids.

Rating: \$2.75.

"Buck Privates" (1941), 8:30 a.m. Sunday on Ch. 7. Originally 84 minutes. TV time slot: 90 minutes.

This was Abbott and Costello's first starring feature and offers some of their better routines. The team was extremely popular during the war years, though in retrospect they don't have the appeal of the

Marx Brothers or Laurel and Hardy. But what a dose of nostalgia this film has - the war fervor, the topical humor and the Andrews Sisters performing "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy."

Rating: \$2.80.

"Lawrence of Arabia" (1963), 2

p.m. Sunday on Ch. 7. Originally 222 minutes. TV time slot: 240 minutes.

Arguably the finest epic film ever made by the grand master of the genre, David Lean, "Lawrence" was made for a wide screen, stereo sound presentation. Anything less will lessen the effect. But there is still much to admire, especially Peter O'Toole's curious, ambivalent performance as T.E. Lawrence, undoubtedly ranking with Jean of Arc as history's most unusual warrior. The all-star cast includes Alec Guinness, Anthony Quinn and Omar Sharif.

Rating: \$3.90 (although you

could take off anywhere from a dime to 50 cents depending on the size of your television screen.

Hugh Gallagher, a movie buff, is a copy editor for The Observer & Eccentric.

WHAT'S IT WORTH?

A ratings guide to the movies

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

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