

One concert fair, other fine

If anything could provide a motivation to become schizophrenic, last Sunday could have been a good candidate.

The many musical events that day made me wish I could split myself several ways to be able to attend most of these attractive events. Under existing circumstances, I had to settle for two of these events. One event featured the Grosse Pointe Symphony at the Porelli School Auditorium, the other being the final American Artists Series program at the Kingswood Auditorium.

The Grosse Pointe Symphony is one of the better community orchestras in our area. Conducted by Felix Rensick, who is a DSO violinist, the orchestra has provided some distinguished performances in the past. This time, however, the intonation problems in the strings were reaching a disturbing level. The worst manifestation of this was in Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet," in which the symbols seemed to be the only instruments playing in tune.

There were some better moments provided by the soloists, however. Oboist Rachel Evans presented a most impressive rendition of the first movement of Haydn's oboe concerto.



Avigdor Zaromp

Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto was the major item on the program with Laura Kargul as soloist. Kargul, who presently resides in Jamaica, is a native of Redford Township and she has distinguished herself in the past for fine music. Her performance on this occasion was uncharacteristically flawed, even though there were many manifestations of good musicianship. It is hoped that we will be fortunate to hear her again in her usual, excellent form.

THE FINAL PROGRAM of the American Artists Series (AAS) was dedicated in honor of Reva Shwayder-Gothelf. The documentary "Young at Heart," featuring Shwayder-Gothelf

and her husband, recently won an Academy Award.

The program, consisting of the Serenade in C major by Debussy, the Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano by Ravel and the Piano Quartet in C minor by Brahms was the most enticing program this season. The lavish sounds of the rarely performed Ravel Trio provided a gourmet treat of one of the most significant impressionistic works.

The Brahms C minor piano quartet is the most seldom performed one among his three works in this category. It shares, of course, the profound scope and elegance with the others. While there was an occasional excessive banging, good balance and well-shaped dynamic proportions were the rule. While there is room for some of the extreme intensity, it has a better effect when reached in a climactic moment but without remaining on a plateau.

We shall all be looking forward for this series next season. These programs almost never fail to provide an impressive level of artistic inspiration and a sense of refreshing novelty.

Thursday, May 5, 1988 O&E

(S.F.1)1C



Bob Weibel

Laughter served up on Hollywood scene

Performances of the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford production of "Geniuses" continue through Saturday at the playhouse in Redford. For ticket information, call 522-8057.

That great American dream factory, Hollywood, churns out movies like sausage — and to paraphrase a popular saying, "Don't ask how either are made." The truth would only spoil the illusion (and taste).

Of course, if you insist on knowing how it's done, and are willing to trade illusion for an evening of hilarity, you should take in "Geniuses" as staged by the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford.

Playwright Jonathan Reynolds harpoons just about every facet of the Hollywood scene. As the play opens, one of Tinseltown's egotistical boy "geniuses" is making a megabuck war epic called, "Parabola of Death" about the conflict in Angola. It's being shot in the Philippines. It's 28 days behind schedule, overbudget and in danger of being canceled. And there's more. A typhoon is about to strike!

All of you film mavens will immediately see the similarities with Frances Ford Coppola's semi-flop, "Apocalypse Now" — on which the play is based.

Director Gail Susan Mack has assembled a fine cast of experienced performers and blended them skillfully with excellent scenery, lighting and sound effects.

JOHN EASTMAN is simply marvelous as a hard-drinking, wheezing, old governor of a makeup man who specializes in wounds, scars and

blood. He has the choicest lines and makes the most of them.

David Podulka comes across very effectively as an insecure film writer (no wonder — he's usually unemployed) who spends the evening trying to come up with an ending for the film.

Elaire Kaiser is well cast as a starlet with the curves of a playmate who nobody will respect as a serious actress (perhaps it's because she loves what L.A. stands for and is into its latest craze — "wattage therapy").

Alan Madeleine is more than a little believable as an art director with a sadistic attitude toward women. And John R. Hall looks and sounds like the efficient Philippine house boy.

Fred Buchalter gives a polished performance as the genius' director. However, he would have greater impact if we could see more swagger and ego in his personality and speech.

Bob Weibel of Westland is a freelance writer, who has spent more than 25 years in community theater as a director, designer and performer.

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Tokyo Strings is a welcome visitor

With the proliferation of chamber groups, one witnesses many artistic trends and directions, not all of them for the better.

Sometimes, to recapture the kind of old-fashioned quality and artistic workmanship from generations past, one has to look in different directions.

As fate would have it, the Japanese are coming to the rescue, helping the Western world to preserve its artistic and cultural heritage.

This is not meant to downgrade other fine chamber groups in existence today. But the Tokyo String Quartet is among this selected elite. The group performed at Orchestra Hall last Saturday on a program under the Chamber Music Society of Detroit series.

This group, in addition to its remarkable artistic capability, is a living proof to the notion that the language of music is universal, transcending national boundaries and identities.

review

THIS, OF COURSE, doesn't mean that the acquisition of classical musical taste is automatic. Early exposure is a must, and intensive studies are among the many prerequisites to gain a significant knowledge and understanding of this art, aspects that are sadly overlooked in our own surroundings and communities.

Members of the Tokyo String Quartet were, of course, exposed to the musical institutions both in their native country at the Toho School of Music, as well as the Juilliard school in this country.

String quartets by Mozart, Beethoven and Debussy were performed.

Three masterful works representing three diverse styles and periods — these works offer the challenges that are worthy of such a distinguished group.

The Tokyo String Quartet is one of those groups that manifest the art of chamber playing to its fullest extent. All instruments actively participate in the creation of music, with no "free rides."

This concept was occasionally carried to extreme, as in the case of Mozart's quartet No. 15 in D minor, K. 421. In some of the more exquisite melodic passages, the first violin would occasionally fall to shine

through the thick texture of the other instruments. But refined sound and expressiveness was the rule.

BEETHOVEN's quartet Op. 127, which is the first of his "late" quartets, had the intensity and passion, together with the tremendous stamina required to perform such a demanding work. The one reservation I had was in the first movement, in which the main theme sounded too heavily weighted, an aspect that hindered its free-flowing nature.

Debussy's quartet had the delightful impressionistic airiness without compromise in its musical substance. It crowned one of the better programs of the Chamber Music Society's series this season.

The Tokyo quartet played the Pizicato movement from Bartok's string quartet No. 4 as an encore. This is the most famous movement of Bartok's six quartets.

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