

Guarneri quartet gives a masterful program

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

The opening of the 45th season of the Chamber Music Society of Detroit took place in a festive atmosphere at Orchestra Hall. The CMS, which has been presenting fine chamber groups for that long period, received a special tribute from the state of Michigan signed by Gov. Blanchard.

A copy of this, as well as a large photo of Dr. Zalman (Tiny) Koonkow, president of CMS, was printed in the program. The Guarneri String Quartet, one

of the world's finest chamber groups, has appeared on the CMS series at least 10 times. Its appearance for the opening attracted a large audience. This type of quality-conscious audience is one of the few encouraging signs in our area, in view of the many problems facing classical music these days.

The three works on the program, quartets by Haydn and Barber and the String Quintet in C Major by Schubert, presented ample opportunities for the musicians to demonstrate their artistic, as well as their technical skills.



Avigdor Zaromp

AMONG THE MOST important attributes of chamber musicians is the ability to submerge their individuality in favor of the common goal of the group. The ability to play as one entity was most convincing in Haydn's Quartet in G Minor, Op. 74 No. 3.

The musicians managed to bring out elements in Haydn's music that are rarely noticed. The staccato to the viola and the cello made some of it sound almost Beethovenian. Haydn's cheer and warmth still came through, but not as trivial and benign.

Barber's String Quartet in B Minor, the only one he wrote, would be among the many chamber works gathering dust in libraries, had it not been for its central adagio movement. This movement, transcribed by the composer for a string orchestra, under the title Adagio for Strings, was bestowed with a life of its own.

It is among the most popular classical themes by an American composer. The other movements of this quartet, while having merit, proved to be no match for the masterful lyrical art of the adagio even in the ex-

pert hands of the Guarneri. Cellist Bernard Greenhouse, who retired from the Beaux Arts Trio two seasons ago, joined the Guarneri for Schubert's Quintet. This masterful work, which was Schubert's last, never fails to move audiences with its rich melodious themes, even in a mediocre performance.

THIS PERFORMANCE was far above that, but it suffered from one major drawback. The sublimation of individuality in favor of a unified sound, which was an asset in Haydn's quartet, proved to be a liability in Schubert's work. The exquisite melodies, for which Schubert is recognized, demand that the featured instruments be favored, frequently, but not exclusively the violins.

In this performance the melody failed to soar above the background. This was especially so in the slow

and final movements. The approach was appropriate for the dark shades of the scherzo, but these should be balanced with more shine in the finale.

The audience didn't receive a true

encore after the prolonged applause. But the "Happy Birthday" tune with balloons descending from the ceiling, which were picked up by many as souvenirs, provided an uplifting conclusion for this milestone event.

Herbig to conduct Mozart and Mahler

Music director Gunther Herbig and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra will perform some of the finest works of Mozart and Mahler in the second concert of the orchestra's diamond jubilee season. Concerts are at Ford Auditorium at 8 p.m. Thursday, 10:45 a.m. Friday and 8:30 p.m. Saturday.

The program will open with Mozart's Symphony No. 25, composed in 1773 when he was just 17. It is Mozart's first minor key symphony (G minor). Although evocative of what several other composers were writing at the time, its drama and force signify a new level of development for the young maestro.

In contrast, Mahler's Ninth Symphony was written toward the end of the composer's life, when he was at the pinnacle of his musical powers.

It stretches the form and brings a fresh approach. The first movement of the Ninth Symphony has been called "the most glorious Mahler ever wrote."

THE ORCHESTRA will perform its fourth and final free concert of the summer as part of the Detroit Festival of the Arts in the city's University-Cultural Center at 8 p.m. Friday.

Assistant conductor Leslie B. Dunner will direct the Orchestra in a program of light-classical favorites.

For tickets, call 567-1400.

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