

Violinist Bell takes giant steps forward

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Visiting conductors invariably bring their own traditions with them. There is a fine line between pride in one's heritage and outright chauvinism.

Guest conductor Jesus Lopez-Cobos, who was on the podium for the recent Meadow Brook programs, seemed to be keenly aware of this distinction. Music of high quality speaks to the listener in a universal language, even when it is of a specific ethnic or national origin.

Spanish music is a case in point. It is readily associated with the guitar, certain folk dances and some



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rhythms. In too many cases one feels inclined to admire the effort that went into its promotion without being convinced of its excellence. This was my feeling about Alicia de Larrocha's piano recital not long ago.

The Meadow Brook program, however, left a different impression that

extended to the music itself, and wasn't confined to the performing artists.

Three of the four composers were French, but their closeness to the Spanish idiom, together with their immense creative talents, resulted in music that is truly universal. Lopez-Cobos made even Chabrier, the

lesser one in the bunch, sound grand in his popular "España," the work solely responsible for his fame.

The one Spanish master in the group, de Falla, may have been, arguably, a master of even greater universal proportions. His "Three Corners Hat" isn't just an example of good Spanish music. It is an impressive work of art that uses Spanish forms and characters as an external accent for its universal language.

In the center of this attractive program was the Symphony Espagnol by Lalo, for violin and orchestra, with violinist Joshua Bell as soloist. Bell, who launched his career as a

child prodigy several years ago, performed recently in recital at Temple Israel.

At 22, he is emerging as a truly mature and capable artist. I noticed greater depth in this performance than at Temple Israel. His playing went beyond the challenges of tone purity and technical accuracy. In the first solo measures he dug into the inner layer of the music to produce a passionate effect, even at the expense of occasionally straining the sound.

In the lyric themes he enhanced the passages with refined rubato, which is the art of slight alteration of the rhythm within the measure. The rapport between soloist and or-

chestra made it into one of the better performances of this familiar work.

After a rainy week, the weather was more agreeable during the Thursday concert, making this event more rewarding than the opening program a week earlier.

In addition to the capable leadership of Lopez-Cobos and the impressive rendition by Joshua Bell, there were several occasions for the DSO musicians to shine in solo passages, especially in Ravel's "Alborada del Gracioso" and de Falla's two suites from the "Three Corners Hat." Among them were principal bassoon player Robert Williams and principal trumpet player Ramon Parcells.

upcoming things to do

● NAVAL SHIP

For the first time in 10 years, a Naval Landing Ship Tank (LST) will visit downtown Detroit, when the naval ship, U.S.S. Boulder, docks along-side Hart Plaza, Thursday, June 29, through Tuesday, July 4. The vessel will be open to the public for guided tours from 10 a.m. Saturday-Tuesday, July 1-4. The public may view the 523-foot-long ship as it comes into port at 11 a.m. June 29. Local dignitaries and the United States Air Force band will be on hand to welcome the vessel on the first stretch of its goodwill cruise of the Great Lakes.

● COUNTRY STARS

A dozen of country music's biggest names will be highlighted in the Palace of Auburn Hills. The series includes four major concerts, one each month beginning in July and running through October. Series ticket orders guarantee the same seats for all the shows. Country music veteran Earl Thomas Conley, along with Patty Loveless, the Forester Sisters and newcomer Clint Black

begin the series with a concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 20. Hank Williams, Jr. and the Bama Band, and Wayne Jennings perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 19. Top-billed-makers George Strait and Reba McEntire, with special guest Ballie and the Boys, take the stage at 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16. Superstars Randy Travis, K.T. Oslin and Tammy Wynette appear at 7 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 1. Series tickets at \$74 (four shows) per strip are on sale at the Palace box office and all Ticketmaster outlets including Hudson's, Great Stuff and Harmony House locations. Tickets may be charged by phone by calling 646-6666. Subscription deadline is Thursday, July 13. On-sale date for individual tickets to each show is to be announced.

● PERFORMING ARTS

Paul Boylan, dean of the University of Michigan's School of Music, has announced the schedule for the school's 1989-90 season in the performing arts. The 89-90 calendar will include two productions presented by the school's Musical Theatre Program, two operas by U-M's Op-

era Theatre, five dramatic presentations by the Department of Theatre and Drama's University Players, and one fully mounted dance concert by students in the University Dance Company. Four of the 10 productions, "La Boheme," "Present Laughter," "Vital Elements" and "The Three Penny Opera" make up the Power Series, a subscription series which presents School of Music offerings in theater, musical theater, opera and dance, performed in the 1,400-seat Power Center for the Performing Arts in Ann Arbor. For ticket information about the Power Series or many of the other productions in the 1989-90 School of Music season, call the League Ticket Office at 764-0450 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Mondays-Fridays beginning Tuesday, Sept. 5.

● CONCERT SERIES

The Grosse Pointe War Memorial's 1989 Sounds of Summer concert series features three local groups, performing outdoors on the center's lake side grounds, Thursday evenings in July. Classic rock group, Steve King and the Duilles, get things started Thursday, July 13. The band plays music of the '60s, '60s and '70s. One of the Detroit area's most popular bands, the Sun Messengers, appears Thursday, July 20. Concluding the line-up is the Tri-

nidad Tripoli Steel Band, Thursday, July 27. All concerts are at 8 p.m. at the memorial in Grosse Pointe Farms. Grounds open at 6:30 p.m. for picnics. Tickets are \$8.50 per person or \$15 for a package of three tickets good for any concert in the series. For more information call 881-7511.

● WATERFRONT INN

Miramar Waterfront Inn in Union Lake continue with Tim Lambert, jazz pianist, from 7:30 p.m. to midnight, Fridays-Saturdays through June. July will feature Don Nadel,

pianist, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays-Thursdays and Sundays. There is no cover charge. For reservations call 363-9469.

● FIREWORKS DISPLAY

The International Freedom Festival fireworks display will be televised at 9 p.m. Friday, June 30, on WDIV-TV, Channel 4. Carmen Haran, Chuck Gaidica, Margie Reedy and Dan Mountney will host the special, live, from parties aboard the Landsdowne Restaurant and a rooftop reception overlooking the Detroit River.



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