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# Spectacular's the right word

By Isabelle Smith  
staff writer

Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony's March 25 concert was titled "A Russian Spectacular." For the audience of more than 800 at Temple Beth El, it was that indeed.

In a program featuring Rimsky-Korsakov's ever popular Russian Easter Overture, Shostakovich's zesty Second Piano Concerto and Moussorgsky's kaleidoscopic "Pictures at an Exhibition," this north Oakland resident orchestra displayed a skill and professionalism far above that usually found in community musical ensembles.

The soloist was pianist Leszek Bartkiewicz, who would be a credit to any major American symphony orchestra.

Led by Maestro Felix Resnick, whose acute music talents have blessed this area for more than 25 years, the BBSS musicians ended the classical portion of this 15th season with dynamically intense and colorful renderings of three compositions that show off every section of the orchestra.

THIS BEGAN with concertmaster Linda Snedden Smith's faultless opening solo in the Russian Easter Overture, noteworthy French horn solos in "Overture" and "Pictures" and prize-winning playing throughout by the brass, woodwinds (especially the English horn), reeds and percussion.

The rich sound quality of the strings — rare in a local orchestra — is a tribute to Resnick's ability to mold the ensemble and to fine musical leadership by string

section principals.

The smashing Tutti finale ("The Great Gate of Kiev") in the concluding Moussorgsky was a fitting end to an audience-pleasing program highlighted by Bartkiewicz's stunning pianistic pyrotechnics in Shostakovich's ebullient, youthful concerto.

WRITTEN IN 1956 as a 19th birthday gift for his son, Maxim, this is one of Shostakovich's most engaging works. That quality came through clearly on this program.

Special difficulties were engendered, such as having to have the piano at floor level, a full two feet below the orchestra.

But Resnick and Bartkiewicz managed valiantly, with continual neck craning and turning, to keep orchestra and soloist in sync (no small feat in this rhythmically tricky work) to produce a performance of power, vivacity and wit. The soloist was only occasionally overpowered by the ensemble.

Sandwiched between the lively, antic first and third movements (with their

dazzling finger works displays), the tender, poetic second movement was especially impressive because of Bartkiewicz's singing tone and beautifully arched phrases, spun out with a melting tenderness that held the audience rapt.

AFTER A BRILLIANTLY bravura finale by both soloist and orchestra, the engaging, boyish Bartkiewicz acknowledged the overwhelming and prolonged applause with a delightful Chopin mazurka encore (C sharp minor, Op. 63, No. 3).

It was only intermission, and the audience had already gotten much more than it paid for. The vivid, well-played second-half performance of the Moussorgsky, in which the brass and woodwinds distinguished themselves, was a creamy icing on an already rich cake.

May 3, Mitch Miller will join the redoubtable Resnick for a "Miller and Resnick" pops concert.

For ticket information, call 645-BBSS.

## Celebrating 60th season

The Scandinavian Symphony Orchestra will be featured in "Around the World in Sixty Years," a musical evening of light classics and buffet dinner, at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Days Hotel/Southfield Performing Arts Center, 17017 W. Nine Mile (between Southfield and Greenfield), Southfield.

Guest conductor Dai Uk Lee will lead the Orchestra in a performance of works by Brahms, Bizet, Rossini and Copland

that will highlight the heritage of the composers and trace the history of the Orchestra, now celebrating its 60th season.

Tickets for the concert and dinner are \$20 per person and are available at the Mary Thompson Cultural Center just south of the Southfield Civic Center. For reservations and information, call 644-9203.



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