

Jarvi finds new beauty in Strauss waltzes

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra brought last year to a close on an upbeat note. The New Year was celebrated with a special program, "Night in Old Vienna," consisting mostly of light pieces by members of the Strauss family. Music director Neeme Jarvi came in for this occasion, between European engagements, to spend this important season at his new home base.

This sell-out event was another testament to Jarvi's popularity — a trend that started with the first an-

nouncement of his appointment here. Jarvi is the one person capable of turning a program of mundane works into a special event. Under ordinary circumstances, the pieces on that program would draw little attention and fanfare. There seems to be a limit to what one can musically achieve with such light, non-profound material — unless one has the imagination to challenge these limits. Jarvi is among those few who have such an imagination.

AMONG THE THINGS that distinguished this event from others like it were some stage effects — special lighting of different and varying

shades, together with uncommon sound effects.

In Johann Strauss's Egyptian March, for example, the DSO musicians chimed in with their voices, enhancing the special effect even though it didn't quite make the Detroit Symphony Choral obsolete.

There were dancers and entertainers on the stage, providing yet another uncommon dimension. In the Champagne Polka, some appeared on stage with real champagne bottles, followed by a replica of a giant, super-bottle, which emitted real bubbles.

Another polka, "At the Hunt," was

accompanied by shotgun blasts, which took some listeners by surprise. A lesser known piece by Strauss Jr., Persian March, doesn't seem to receive much support even from an ayatollah. The main attraction there was Jarvi, marching off the stage after the opening bars and returning just in time for the concluding chord.

The few non-Strauss selections — Light Cavalry by Suppe, Gold and Silver by Lehár and the Barcarolle from "Tales of Hoffman" by Offenbach — provided some variety.

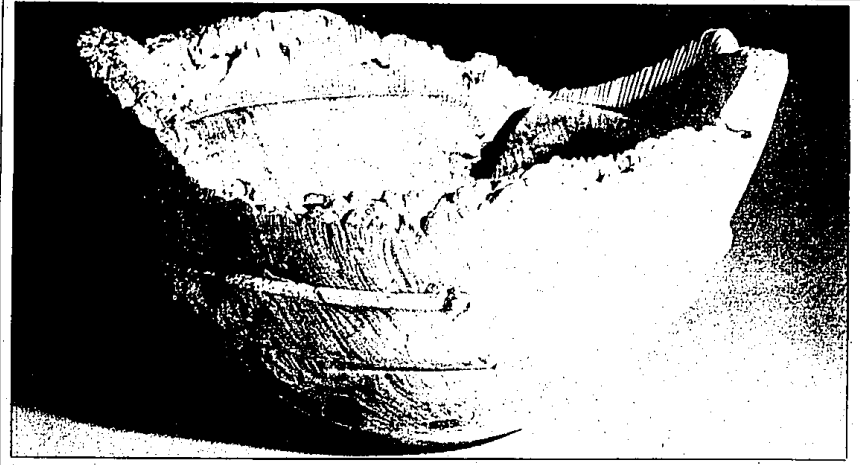
JARVI SEEMS TO BE FAMILIAR with the Viennese character of



Avigdor Zaromp

this music. This was shown by the judicious accents and flexible rhythms of the waltzes, making them sound so different from the many mechanical, metronomic performances of these overexposed hits.

Jarvi's next appearance will Friday, Saturday and Sunday Jan. 18, 19, 20 in performances of Martin's Suite No. 1 from Spalček and Rinsky-Korsakov's Sheherazade. Lorin Hollander, pianist, will play the Saint-Saens Piano Concerto No. 5.



Woodturner's skills on exhibit

"Open Tribal Bowl" of box elder burl by Dennis Elliott is one of many examples of the woodturner's work in the new show at Sybaris Gallery, 301 W. Fourth, Royal Oak. Also in the show are ceramics by Yik Wen Kuo and weavings by Fuyuko Matsubara. The show continues through Feb. 23. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

New executive director takes over this month

Mark Volpe, former vice president and general manager of the Minnesota Orchestra, became executive director of Detroit Symphony Orchestra Hall, effective this month.

White with the Minnesota Orchestra, he conducted successful labor negotiations of three-year collective bargaining agreements with the musicians and stagehands and negotiated recording contracts with several firms. He was responsible for all foreign and domestic touring activities including an east coast tour last fall and the March 1991 tour of Japan.

"This represents yet another key element in the

growth and progress of DSOH," said Neeme Jarvi, DSO music director.

Approval was also voiced by Robert S. Miller, chairman of DSOH and Joe Goldman speaking on behalf of the musicians of the DSO.

The search committee was headed by DSOH board member Ralph Mandarino, who worked closely with key staff members, the musicians and the board.

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