

Violinist Elmar Oliveira uncovered a treasure

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Uncovering treasures among dormant works may be like prospecting for gold in an abandoned mine. All of the easily accessible gems have already been found and removed. The possibility of finding some isolated rich nuggets is still there.

How does the Concerto in D Minor ("Hungarian") by Joseph Joachim fit in this scheme of things? That depends greatly upon the performing artist.

Violinist Elmar Oliveira is one artist capable of turning this neglected concerto into a valuable nugget. He demonstrated this in his last week's performance with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Associate conductor Leslie Dunner conducted his first regular subscription program with the DSO on this occasion.

Joachim's name is primarily associated with the far more celebrated Brahms concerto, whose expert advice Brahms mostly ignored. Otherwise, Joachim's reputation was that of a violin virtuoso, a fact that this

demanding concerto bears out.

IT WOULD BE EASY to find flaws in this concerto, which is certainly no match to that of Brahms. The orchestral introduction seems to last forever, and even during the solo parts the orchestral role is frequently awkward. But Oliveira evidently found substantial assets in it and the flaws seemed minor in comparison.

The technical virtuosity of this work, with its challenging double and triple stops, is only part of its attributes. As the title suggests, this concerto has a pronounced Hungarian flavor and its passages convey substantial ideas beyond the technical feats.

The task of the soloist is made even more difficult by having to compete with the entire orchestra on occasions. Oliveira, with his intense, but undistorted tone, made it into an equal match, demonstrating in the process that even the heavy orchestration, which would be clumsy and inept under different circumstances, seemed to have a legitimate role.

While there are some bigger and



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better nuggets in the violin repertoire, this one is too valuable to be cast aside. This performance demonstrated that its inclusion in the repertoire is justified.

The orchestral works on this pro-

gram consisted of Short Overture by the American composer Ulysses Kay (b. 1917) and the Symphony No. 7 by Dvorak. This provided a rare opportunity for Dunner, whose duties keep him out of the spotlight much of the

time, to shine in a major event.

The Kay overture, composed in 1947, may be an insignificant speck in the musical universe, but its non-obnoxious nature is a redeeming feature that only a minority of contemporary works possess.

DUNNER'S LEADERSHIP in Dvorak's Symphony No. 7, the only standard repertoire work on this program, was impressive. It was evident that he had concise and well-defined ideas of this work and the knowledge of how to go about implementing them.

He obtained robust sound from the orchestra without compromising the sense of balance and proportion. Some of the few drawbacks were in the more tender themes such as the second subject of the first movement—which tended to suffer from some overweight. For most part, however, this symphony radiated with the kind of power and intensity that confirmed its stature as among Dvorak's best.

My previous observations of Dunner's conducting were only with minor selections in off-beat events.

Winter Cabaret blends music, food, dancing

The Pontiac-Oakland Symphony will host a Winter Cabaret at 8 p.m. Saturday at Roma's of Bloomfield, 2101 S. Telegraph, Bloomfield Township, just north of Square Lake Road. Doors will open at 7 p.m.

Maria Cimarelli, soprano, and Karl Schmidt, tenor, featured soloists from the Michigan Opera Theatre, will be joined by the full orchestra on

center stage with David Daniels conducting.

The evening includes a buffet dinner plus dancing after the concert and cash bar. Tables seating 10 may be pre-reserved for groups.

The program will showcase the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber. It also will feature selections from many great Broadway musical shows such as "Phantom of the Opera," "Cats," "Briga-

doon," "A Little Night Music," "Evita," "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Les Miserables."

To order tickets, \$30 for dinner, concert and dancing, call 334-6024. Two concerts remain for this season—the Young Artists Gala on Sunday, Feb. 17, and the Waterford Concert on Saturday, April 13.

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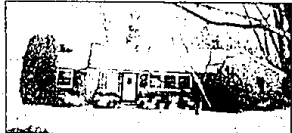
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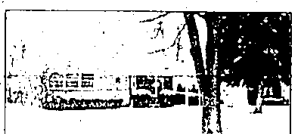
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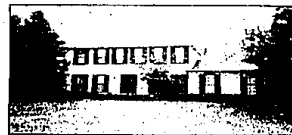
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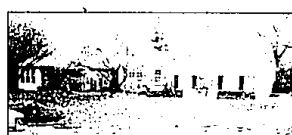
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