

Horowitz's piano to make a grand appearance at store

By Janice Tiger-Kramer
special writer

Not even the experts can tell the difference between one Steinway grand piano and another.

But there is something special, and maybe even grand, about the Model D concert grand used by the beloved Russian-American concert pianist Vladimir Horowitz, who unabashedly called his Steinway an "inseparable friend."

Horowitz's concert grand, Steinway No. 314503, is on the road again, this time as the main attraction of a two-year tour that includes stops at Steinway dealers in 75 U.S. cities.

The piano is on display at Hammell Music, 1530 Middlebelt, Livonia, through Thursday, March 5. The stop also will include three concerts at the store's recital hall, all performed on the Horowitz Steinway.

Russian-born pianist Vladimir Kovalsky, who teaches at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University, will perform at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 3. The Hurezyk-Alten Trio, made up of three generations of classic pianists, will perform at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 4. David Dubal, pianist, broadcaster and personal friend of Horowitz, will present "An Evening with Horowitz" at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 5. Tickets to each concert are \$5 per person.

WHAT'S SO special about this black nine-foot grand, revered not only by the late world-class pianist, but also by his undyingly loyal audiences? If you're tall enough to reach the keyboard, you be the judge.

The folks at Hammell invite piano students, seasoned musicians and even you dilettantes to spend 15 minutes at the keyboard of the famous Steinway that accompanied Horowitz on worldwide concert tours for more than 50 years.

In the privacy of the store's recital hall, raise those digits high to imitate the master's forceful fortes and crescendos or play one-handed chopsticks. For \$9.95, you can even have the performance taped.

"To bring Horowitz's piano to the public is just incredible," said Tim Hoy, president of Hammell Music, the state's only Steinway dealer.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so we're hoping music teachers will send young students here to play. Maybe a 12- or 13-year-old won't completely understand what it means to play Horowitz's piano today, but when they're much older, they'll sit back and tell their grandchildren, 'I played Vladimir Horowitz's concert grand.'"

FOR SOME Horowitz fans, just seeing the master's piano may offer a clue to his artistry. Hoy said.

Mary Scialano, a Livonia piano instructor, believes seeing Horowitz's piano may be even more important to her students than listening to his concert recordings.

"So many younger students don't realize what a legend he (Horowitz) is. This is a wonderful opportunity to relate this information to them. Seeing the piano and being able to play it is more concrete than watching a video or listening to Horowitz on tape," Scialano said.

"I've often told students, 'Mr.

Horowitz's hand position is everything I've told you not to do, but if you can play the way he did, do it.'"

It was Horowitz's wife, Wanda, a constant companion of the maestro and the daughter of composer Arturo Toscanini, who came up with the idea for this ambitious U.S. tour.

THE MARKETING people at Steinway & Sons in Long Island City, N.Y., whose close association with Horowitz lasted until his death in 1989, eagerly took on the project and began plotting the tour that began in January 1991.

"Mrs. Horowitz felt her husband's love for the piano was so great she wanted it (the piano) to live on after his death," said Horace Comstock, Steinway & Sons marketing director.

"Mr. Horowitz was an unusual man. His music welled up inside of him. He didn't just play notes, he truly lived his music. He touched and talked to his concert grand like a friend. The piano took on as much charm and personality as the performer himself."

For all the hard knocks the piano has taken, the people at Steinway say it is in remarkable shape — no dents, scratches or wear on the keyboard, which Horowitz attacked with his forceful, flat-fingered style as he played the works of Rachmaninoff, Chopin, Scriabin and Prokofiev, to name a few.

To play the Horowitz piano or to reserve concert tickets, call Hammell Music at 427-0040.

Dates slated for antiques festival

The Birmingham Antiques Festival, a benefit for The Community House, will open at a preview party April 9, and remain open to the public April 10-11.

Ted and Betsy Taylor are chairmen for this year's event. Honorary chairmen are Thomas and Marilyn Varbedian, last year's chairmen. The show will be managed by Jennings and McMillan. For more information, call The Community House at 644-5832.

Last year, more than 40 antiques dealers from across the United States exhibited their merchandise in the recently renovated, traditionally decorated Community House, 380 S. Bates in downtown Birmingham.

BENEFACTORS, at \$50 per person, will be invited to the preview party 6-9 p.m. Thursday, April 9. Sponsors, at \$30 per person, will be invited 7-9 p.m. Chairman for the preview are Frank and Cathie Pollock and Bob and Nancy Sellers.

New this year is a preview luncheon Tuesday, April 7. A hospitality hour will begin at 11:30 a.m. with a display of reproductions of American first ladies' inaugural ball gowns, on loan from Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Deer.

Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m. At 1:30 p.m., William W. Stahl Jr., Sotheby's senior vice president for American decorative arts and furniture, will talk about "New Views of Collectors and the Market." The price per person is \$30.

THE ANTIQUES Festival will be open to the public 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. April 10, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 11. Pre-sale tickets will be available in the lobby of The Community House from Monday, March 2, to Friday, April 3, at a cost of \$4. They will cost \$5 at the door during the festival.

A garden shoppe will be open selling garden statuary, freshly potted plants and garden accessories. The Bates Street Cafe will also be open, serving light lunches.

All proceeds of the Birmingham Antiques Festival will benefit The Community House.

The Community House is a not-for-profit, multipurpose organization, founded in 1923 that provides educational, social and cultural programs, child care, employment assistance, meeting rooms, banquet and catering services and group travel activities.

Its services are available to people from all over the Detroit metropolitan area. It receives no tax support or United Way financing.

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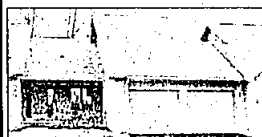
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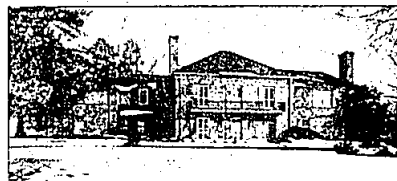
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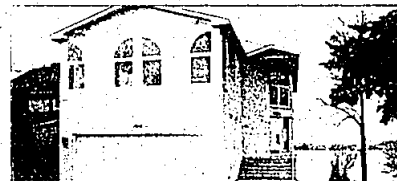


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