

LEND AN EAR

Music Critics Came To Town

By MADELEINE HARRIS
Special Writer for The Eccentric

What do music critics talk about when they get together? Interestingly enough—about many things, running the gamut from how to execute their heavy musical responsibilities to an avid interest in such things as football, baseball, and a consensus that Frank Sinatra has real talent.

The occasion for these and other sage remarks was the convening of the fifth annual music critics' workshop here Oct. 11-13, sponsored by the American Symphony Orchestra League, meeting at the invitation of both the Detroit Symphony and The Detroit News.

The group was a very distinguished gathering with representatives from many major American and Canadian cities as well as a few from south of the border.

WE WERE WINED and dined lavishly at two dinners—one sponsored by the Symphony and the other by The Detroit News where one could relax a bit, and get to know a little about the personal life of these critics who help to make their metropolitan newspapers the fine examples of journalism that many of them are.

However, the majority of our time was taken up with several panel discussions and workshop sessions dedicated to an attempt to codify some of the means by which a critic should ply his trade.

On one occasion we met to criticize each other's reviews of a performance of the Detroit Symphony's first Friday Afternoon Concert . . . and criticize we did.

MILES KASTENDECK, critic for the New York Journal American, presided, and we all had a royal romp ripping apart each other's literary effort. Despite the fact that many barbed comments were passed among us, I am sure everyone left that session with a clearer picture of what constitutes more effective reviewing.

By the way, the Detroit Symphony's performance was praised unreservedly by all. The acoustics of the Ford Auditorium were judged to be not the best—a situation which we all hope will soon be corrected.

However, the beauty and practicality of the hall were the envy of many a visiting critic—many of whom are forced to review concerts given in galleries and public buildings because of a lack of facilities for their orchestras.

A PARTICULARLY hot moment in one session came when Paul Hume of the Washington Post mentioned in an address that he was able to cover many performances from his living room easy chair, listening to them coming through on an FM station.

This practice was gravely challenged by the editor of one of our papers who said that all performances should be covered in person—and went on to say that he resented the departmentalizing that goes on in some quarters where a music critic is just a music critic and nothing else.

He felt he must be first and foremost a good reporter capable of going out and covering a fire if necessary. This statement brought to my mind the ludicrous picture of the editor of the New York Times telling the late Olin Down to go down to Seventh avenue and cover a robbery.

THAT A critic must be a first class journalist no one could deny, but he must also be a specialist—he should be a good musician himself with years of listening interpretive experience behind him to be equal to the heavy responsibility of saying yes or nay to a budding young artist or helping to mold the musical milieu of any community.

Comparing the range of musical activities in Detroit to that of other major cities showed that we can hold our own. Aside from New York City, which requires a paper to engage at least five major critics on each staff to cover the bevy of musical performances, most cities have a musical picture rather like our own—good and growing.

Our orchestra was adjudged to

be one of the leading orchestras on this hemisphere with heaps of praise lavished on our conductor, Paul Paray, and the first chairs of our various sections.

IT WAS PLEASING to find that this group could take a fresh look at itself—that these men are not afraid to sit down with others and learn something new about a profession in which some of them have been active for over a quarter of a century.

The Critics' Workshop in Detroit was a significant venture for it proved again the high caliber of our Detroit Symphony, and it showed the enlightenment and creative progress of the men who sit in judgment on music throughout the country.

Random Notes About Town

MUSIC
Detroit Symphony has ZARA NELSON, vocal soloist at Ford Auditorium, night 8:30 . . . also Fri. Oct. 25, 8:00 p.m.
Michigan Opera Co. has TOSCA at Ford Auditorium, Fri. Oct. 25, 8:15 p.m.

THEATRE
VILLAGE PLAYERS—'House of the Ancestress' comedy, Oct. 18, 19, 20 and 21—certain time 8 p.m., Chestnut street playhouse.
CASA Walter Pidgeon in a warm, romantic comedy, 'The Happiest Millionaire', BIVOUAC—Libertine who borrows from the TV series complete with a full symphony orchestra, Oct. 27 for one week.

MOVIES
BIRMINGHAM—Thurs. Fri. Sat., 'Man on Fire' with Ring Lardner and 'Run of the Arrow' with Rod Steiger.
BLOOMFIELD—Chair to Remember with Gary Grant, Deborah Kerr—also 'Frother Hood' with Joe McCrea and Barbara Stanwyck.

CONCERT ART FILMS
Have 'The Story of Albert Schweitzer' starring Burgess Meredith and Frederic March—an excellent film.
STUDIOS—'The World Today' have 'Maid in Paris'—a French comedy film, starring Danny Robin.

TELEVISION
Monday Oct. 25—'THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER' at 9:30 p.m.
Oct. 31—'PLAYHOUSE 90' at 9:30 p.m.
Channel 7—Fri. Oct. 25—PATRICK
Channel SHOW with Cyril Ritchard—7:30 p.m.

Fri. Oct. 25—Frank Sinatra in a drama 'THAT HOGAN MAN' 8:00 p.m.
INTERVIEW, 9:00 p.m.

16-Year-Old Drunk

Birmingham police arrested a 16-year-old Hazel Park youth Friday night at the Birmingham Hazel Park high school football game. The youth was charged with being drunk and disorderly after he was taken from the stands at the game here. Police said the juvenile had been drinking whiskey.

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