

AFTER 25 YEARS

Vronsky, Babin Make 2 Pianos Better Than 1

Reviewed by Jerry Hays

Are two pianos better than one? When its Vitya Vronsky and Victor Babin at the dual piano, we have a powerful argument for the premise.

This fine pair of artists have been performing together now for over 25 years. During these years, they have amalgamated their musical personalities into a unique oneness of technique and style.

The opportunity to hear these artists again came last week Tuesday at the final concert of the Cranbrook Music Guild's tenth season. The opening selection was Babin's own tasteful arrangement of Bach's "Trio Sonata No. 5 in C Major."

This work was originally composed for two claviers and pedal (a small foot organ). The second movement of this sonata, marked Largo, is extremely expressive and haunting. The team performed it with a lovely tonal quality that marked so clearly their splendid comprehension of the two piano idiom.

THIS WAS followed by Schumann's "Andante and Variations Op. 46 in B flat," which, to me, represented the highpoint of the concert. Like so much of the two piano literature, this piece is little known. The composition is based on a beautiful set of variations built around one of Schumann's best themes.

The melody has the same simple lyric quality that has made his "Traumerei" such a universal favorite. The piece afforded Vronsky and Babin a wonderful showcase for their dual virtuosity. Building the composition slowly

the singing melody was effortlessly passed back and forth between the pianos, building the tonal colors with amazing luminosity.

THE FIRST half of the program was concluded with the "Second Suite for Two Pianos" by Rachmaninoff. Both of these suites were expressly composed for Vronsky and Babin. Unfortunately, they do not represent the best of Rachmaninoff's piano literature.

Despite the lack of imagination inherent in the composition, the partnership seemed to thrive on the sentimentality of the music, and they wrung from it every possible ounce of charm.

The second half of the concert began with a composition of even lesser merit, a pseudo impressionistic piece by Sauguet entitled "Les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hassard." This was followed by the brilliant "Lindaraja." This is one of Debussy's piano literature.

A show of Japanese arts and crafts continues at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Galleries through April 29.

Textiles, ceramics, metal, lacquerware, toys and ceremonial objects are among the objects featured in the display.

The admission will be charged. Summer hours are now in effect. The gallery will be open from 2 to 5 p.m. daily, except Monday and holidays.

bussy's Spanish flavored compositions written at the same time as his orchestral suit "Iberia," after a short visit to Spain.

THE COMPOSITION has dark, lush, exotic harmonies and rhythmic emphasis. Vronsky and Babin gave to this piece all the glowing richness of tone and rhythmic pulse necessary to create Debussy's smoldering images.

This brilliant performance made me wish to hear the team play more of the two piano impressionistic repertory such as Beethoven's "Ma Mere l'Oye" (Mother Goose) in the original four hand arrangement.

The closing selection was Milhaud's "Scaramouche." They performed this suite of three short pieces with fine fluency, "variety and liveliness. For encores they treated the audience with three Vronsky and Babin specialties—the Babin arrangement of Rachmaninoff's beautiful song "It's Lovely to Be Here," Dvorak's "Slavonic Dance in E Minor," and the Arensky "Waltz."

BESIDES presenting the community with an evening of fine music, this concert provided a second purpose. Proceeds from the concert will be used to support the Guild's musical scholarship fund which each year presents a scholarship to a deserving music student.

Reviewer Hays graduated from the University of Michigan with a master of arts degree and reviewed plays, arts and concerts for the University newspaper.

THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC, BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN
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Potpourri

by ROBIN BAHR
Arts Editor

Opera goers have a good chance to catch up on their opera before the Met arrives in May.

An opera headquarters has been set up in Grinnell's open Monday through Friday to answer questions, pass out brochures and take registrations for a lecture series "Anatomy of Opera" at the Baldwin Library May 7, 9, 11.

Sponsored by the Baldwin Library and the Birmingham, Bloomfield Franklin committee of the Met, the lectures will be given by guest speakers, well versed in opera.

MONDAY, MAY 7, Mrs. Benjamin Brewster will discuss "Lucia di Lammermoor" and "La Forza del Destino" Wednesday, May 9—Nancy Bauer and Mrs. Willy Wagner—"Aida," "Tosca" and "Cosi Fan Tutte" Friday, May 11—Mrs. Robert Leggett—"Salome" and "Madama Butterfly."

PETER KOENIG, Kingswood art instructor, is exhibiting 25 of his most recent paintings and drawings in a one-man show in the school's art galleries. The exhibition is opening Sunday with an invitational preview and is open to the public Monday through Friday from 4:30 to 5:45 p.m. until April 29.

Koenig has studied with Zoltan Sepeshy, president of the Cranbrook Academy of Art; Victor Candell and Lawrence Kupferman. He has previously exhibited at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Worcester Museum of Art, the University of North Dakota and Ball State College in Indiana.

Koenig received his B.F.A. from Massachusetts College of Art and his M.F.A. from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

THIS BEING National Library Week, the April issue of "Suburbia Today" features an article on American reading habits by Harry Golden, a wise and funny author of several best-sellers, and publisher of the unique personal newspaper "The North Carolina Israelite."

Golden says, "Americans don't read. We are publishing more books, but this is not an encouraging sign, considering the books. Half are self-help books, another third—'nothing books'—memoirs of the personality or starlike who is hot at the moment."

IN THE case of a good book, like "Dr. Zhivago," where over a half million copies were sold, Golden claims, "a good portion simply decorated coffee tables, until consumed to the shelf."

I wonder how he knows that for a fact, I also wonder if it is true that "half the increase in books are self-help and another third memoir type books"—a claim he does not back up with statistics.

Furthermore, it is surprising that Golden comments on American reading habits, without even a reference to library service.

THE BALDWIN Library loans an average of 13 books per person to area residents—twice the national average. But the



Associate director Bill Martin (left), Joan Roberts, producer, and her director, Frank Dornegai discuss progress of the final rehearsals of "The Constant Wife," the current offering at St. Dunstons. Irony and improbability perhaps could best describe the tone of this comedy by Somerset Maugham.

Maugham's Razor-Sharp Wit Well-Handled at St. Dunstan's

By JERRY HAYS

An extremely handsome cast of players moved through a smartly paced scene between the wife's lover (Maurice Smith), the wife (Sidi Coppin) and her husband (Walt Selover), in this scene the lover

pace increased, the dialogue began to bite with its natural humor. This was especially true of the hilarious scene between the wife's lover (Maurice Smith), the wife (Sidi Coppin) and her husband (Walt Selover), in this scene the lover

enacts his very proper farewell for the husband's benefit, who is all too painfully aware that this man is about to embark on a six week intrigue with his wife.

The three actors built the scene skillfully, carefully underplaying the double entendre and finding pauses carefully, they let the ridiculous situation create its own humor.

THE MOST completely drawn portrayal was achieved by Sidi Coppin in the leading role of Constance Middleton, the wife. Aided by natural beauty and grace of movement, she presents a commanding figure on the stage. This strength of personality and excellent timing enabled her to deliver Maugham's sophisticated lines with genuine style.

The third act revealed the potential merit of the cast. If in succeeding performances, they can gear their efforts in acts one and two, they will have a production of merit. The play is to be repeated on the 18th and 14th.

Local Art Group To Hold May Show

The Parkland Recreation Center in Clawson will host the annual exhibition of the Tints and Tones Art Association president Mrs. Earle Heft of Birmingham has announced.

The exhibition will be out of doors on May 20 unless rain necessitates it being held in the recreation center building.

The Art Association also sponsors evening classes in art, either advanced or beginning, to be taught by Mrs. Leon Jewell. Those interested should call Mrs. Thomas Martin, J11-8-1134 for further information.

MSUO Hosts Piano Institute For Teachers

Dr. Robert Pace, concert pianist and composer, will lead a piano teachers institute at MSUO on Monday. Dr. Pace is director of piano instruction at Columbia University.

The program for the institute will include two three-hour demonstration workshops, and a lecture, "Contemporary Piano Music for Children" by Dr. Robert Holmes, assistant professor of music at MSUO.

AREA RESIDENTS working with the music department in planning the program are Mrs. Teruko Yamasaki, Birmingham; Walter Schrott, of the Birmingham Conservatory of Music; L. Robert Slusser, music director of the First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham; Robert Bates, music director of Christ Church, Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills; and Mrs. Worthing Stone, Birmingham.

PIANO AND organ teachers wishing to attend the institute may make reservations with the division of continuing education, MSUO.

Local Best Sellers

- FICTION
- "Ship of Fools" by Katherine Ann Porter
 - "The Agency and the Ecstasy" by Irving Stone
 - "The Bull From the Sea" by Mary Renault
- NON-FICTION
- "Six Graves" by Richard M. Nixon
 - "Night Drop" by Gen. S. L. A. Marshall
 - "The Rothschilds" by Frederic Morton

Paper Folding Fun For Young or Old

Currently gaining in popularity is the Japanese art of paper folding known as Origami.

Kits with instructions are available in many stores, providing all the materials necessary for making animals, jet planes, toys with moving parts and many other entertaining and decorative items.



TAKING A BREATHER just before curtain time are (from left), Cranbrook Music Guild's new president, Graham Shimeck, and board member Mrs. Edison Poole with dual-pianists Victor Babin and Vitya Vronsky. The two artists appeared last week on the final concert of the Guild's 10th season, held at Cranbrook School's gym-auditorium.

Art Collection Lends Itself To Rental at Baldwin Library

By ROBIN BAHR
Arts Editor

You can have a Van Gogh print in your living room for \$1.50 a month!

Or a Cezanne or a Rembrandt or a Renoir.

Over the past seven years, the Baldwin Library has acquired a diverse and distinguished collection of framed prints for loan. Officially introduced to the public in 1955, the rental collection has grown from an original 19 prints to the present 49.

There are landscapes, seascapes,

Spring Concert Set Tonight at S'Field

Spring features will highlight Southfield High Schools 11th annual Spring Concert, to be presented tonight at 8 in the high school auditorium. Sophomore pianists Nancy Willson and Nancy Willson will appear as soloist as well as senior trumpeter Doug Bayne.

Dr. Ira M. Altshuler, Southfield Board of Education member, will conduct the band in his own composition "March, Southfield." A new song, "We're the Bluegrass," composed by the school band director, John Caldwell, will be performed by a vocal group directed by L. Vincent Kochenderfer and will be dedicated to Principal Robert E. Hall.

still lifes, portraits—works from the ancient past to the present—by artists as different as Corot, Picasso, Odilon Redon, Antonio Canaletto and Homer Winlow.

"YOU FEEL AS though you'd just struck oil," said one woman excitedly, having just discovered the prints and the purchase with a still life by Monet.

"Everyone reacts that way," said Mrs. Millman, supervisor of the program. "People are invariably amazed that the collection has been here all this time and overjoyed with the ease of acquiring a work of art. They walk out happily with a print and return the next month to renew the print or reserve or rent another."

Occasionally the library sells a print—if it has been in circulation for at least a year. Consecutive rentals go toward the purchase price. But surprisingly enough, most people want to experiment with a new print each month.

THIS IS EXACTLY what Librarian Jeanne Lloyd had hoped would be the case. Miss Lloyd, who initiated the program, first saw an art rental collection during a library convention in St. Paul, Minn.

Intrigued with the idea, Miss Lloyd studied the rental collections of the Windsor Library and the Detroit Institute of Arts, and became convinced that this would be

a feasible and invaluable addition to the Baldwin Library program.

In 1952, the Friends of the Baldwin Public Library received a bequest of \$1,000 from John Watling. After furnishing a fine arts room, \$300 remained.

Miss Lloyd suggested the art rental; it was approved by The Friends, and with additional funds from the AAUW and the Birmingham Junior League, Miss Lloyd was on her way to becoming Birmingham's first art librarian.

Cranbrook to Open New Summer School In Dramatic Arts

A theatre arts laboratory will be added to the curriculum of the Cranbrook Summer Theatre School. The theatre school, an affiliate of Cranbrook School, opens in the Greek Theatre at Cranbrook on June 18. Opportunity will be provided for discussion, learning and practice in all areas of theatre methods and techniques.

In charge of the new course will be Annette Wambarger, instructor in English at Wayne State University.

Added also to the summer curriculum will be a credit course for older high school and college students, "Theory and Practice in Theatre Arts."

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