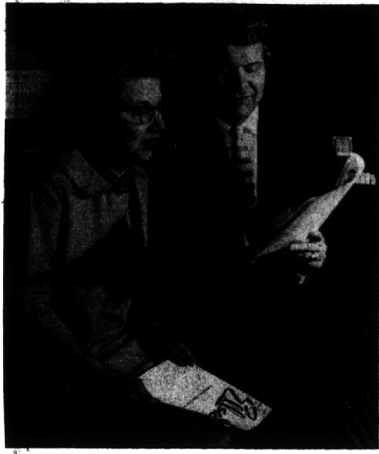


Ellsasser Sparkles in Organ Concert



ECCESTIC PHOTO
YOUNG AMERICAN organist Richard Ellsasser goes over the program for his organ workshop, held last week at Bloomfield Hills High School, with one of the organ devotees who attended, Mrs. Lew Betterly, 4040 Overlea Court, Bloomfield Hills.

4-D THE BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC Nov. 21, 1963

Players

(Continued from 1-D)

for each believes the other wrong and each is convinced of his rightness. And the followers of Brady, the townfolk, despite their wrongness and weakness, are well-intentioned men and women.

"DRUMMOND calls Brady 'the water boy for the great unwashed' and throws the fire and brimstone right back at him but in reversed form. Drummond states his opinion of the truth: 'Truth has meaning as a direction. But one of the great intellectual tragedies of our time is the grid of morality we have placed on human behavior: so that every act of man must be measured against an arbitrary latitude of right and longitude of wrong.'"

"THE FINAL moving scene of the play, shows Drummond alone, preparing to return whence he came, at the scene of what was a great disappointment to him yet by no means a measure of his defeat. For his great defense of the 'right to think' was indelibly written in the pages of history.

"The large cast was headed by Jack Hassberger as Drummond, a longtime favorite of Birmingham audiences, he played the lawyer with sympathy and warm understanding.

"Matthew Harrison Brady was capably played by Dyke Dweley. Although consistent, one couldn't help wishing for a little more frantic fire than was provided by Mr. Dweley. E. K. Hornbeck was archly played by Lee Madden who made his debut on the Players' stage.

"He showed firm control of character and was not excessively hammy delivering his perverse Desamities.

"DICK BAGG, drama and English teacher at Seaholm, played Bertie Cates, the young schoolmaster, with intensity and zeal. Unfortunately, Mr. Bagg's intensity and stage presence was not balanced by answering emotion from others on stage with him.

"Mr. Bagg was thoroughly in character, while one had the feeling that many of the minor characters were standing around waiting for their turn to speak their lines after Mr. Bagg had finished.

"The production could have stood another good dress rehearsal, for although there were moments of individual intensity and competent individual acting, the show as a whole was uneven and slow in pace. Crowd scenes moved leadenly and lumbered instead of marching.

"On 'To Zion' was more a dirge than a marching hymn. Blackouts were not thorough and the tension of the blackout was frequently eroded by seeing actions prematurely move off stage.

"SCENE CHANGES were noisily executed and lighting cues were mangled. This is surprising, for the Village Players possesses a fine light board. One hopes the technical matters were straightened out by the second night and were only opening night jitters.

"Of course, 'Inherit the Wind' is a lot of play to tackle. Being historical and journalistic in flavor and tending to heaviness, fast pacing and light staging is of utmost necessity in bringing it in on time to the closing triumph of the trial.

"Others in the cast were Jerri Iverson as Melinda, Liz Boyne as Rachel, Cates' girl; Alice Tabor played Mrs. Krebs, Jim Hodges, Mr. Goodfellow, Morrie Purdy was wryly amusing as Meeker the jail

Reviewed by ISABEL HIMELBOCH

The Birmingham-Bloomfield community was exposed to a fascinating evening Thursday at Bloomfield Hills High School.

Reason for the sparkling evening was mainly due to a young, vital man by the name of Richard Ellsasser—organist par excellence. An American born Ellsasser hails from Cleveland, Ohio, and at the age of 37 has accomplished a great deal in the music field. After studying in Europe, mostly in France and Germany, under the renowned Josef Bonnet, he has devoted himself to an extremely active concert schedule.

In addition to this, he has also set aside his summer month activities to the National Music Camp at Interlochen.

ELLSSASSER IS the youngest person in history to have memorized and performed the complete 250 organ works of Bach. He has also tried to keep alive the lost art of improvisation, which is a decided feat in any language. Students, parents and guests had a one-in-a-million experience in attending this concert. Ellsasser, though young in appearance and age, has a musical understanding way beyond his years and a unique interpretation as such.

Ellsasser, from the moment he appeared on stage, had complete control of his audience. He wrapped them up with a smile and told them in so many words why they were going to like his selections. "This was done in such a compelling way that the audience couldn't resist him, so with this warmth and humor, the evening passed rapidly.

THE WELL-BALANCED program was a means of showing the versatility of the organ. Ellsasser opened his program with three early compositions. Vivaldi's "Concerto in A minor," which exercises the delightful Baroque period, became the vehicle to illustrate Ellsasser's brilliant display of technical facility.

His pedal control was amazing, for his feet seemed to dance across the pedals while his fingers were busily working across the two keyboards, adjusting the stops with Mercury-like speed.

Then followed Arne's "Flute Solo" and John Bull's foot-stomping "Rondo in G."

Two German selections completed the first section of Ellsasser's program. . . Mendelssohn and J. S. Bach. Bach's "Tocatta in F" was

one of the highlights of the evening. This three-part counterpoint work demands the most out of the performer, and Ellsasser definitely showed his virtuosity.

THE SECOND portion of his program was in a lighter vein. Elmore, Karg-Elert, Richard Rodgers and Leroy Anderson were some of the composers' works played. However, the apex of the evening was Ellsasser's improvisations.

An eight-measure theme was submitted by a student, Pam Wipple, and then completely developed in different keys and musical forms to illustrate this almost lost art form.

It is obvious to this critic that Richard Ellsasser is not only a performer but also a composer. No person could improvise in such a magnificent way without a highly competent and detailed background.

The theme was first presented in a straightforward melodic line, then into a slight sonatina; next came the relative key development of the theme.

Ellsasser does not take a back seat to Mozart in utilizing a running-bass. He employed this configuration beautifully. Lastly came the grand fugue treatment. Three-

B'ham Man Is Named to Arts Council

Thomas D. Murray, vice president, copy director of Campbell-Ewald Co., has been appointed as a member of the Committee for Communications and Community Relations of the Michigan Council for the Arts. Murray received the appointment early this month from Gov. George Romney.



MURRAY IN relating the aims of the council in his letter to Murray Gov. Romney stated, "Michigan is rich in culture. We must, however, work to preserve our excellent heritage."

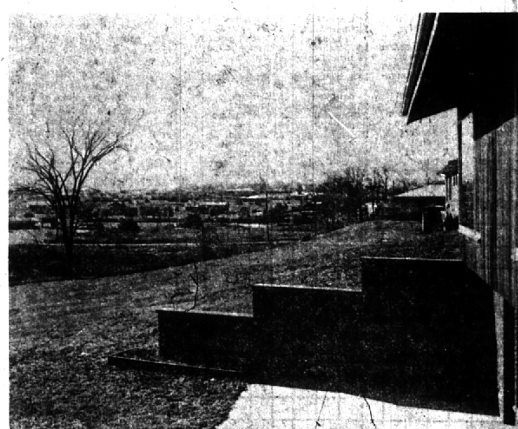
point counterpart was the finale of Miss Wipple's theme.

AND SINCE the audience was so appreciative, Ellsasser rewarded them with a delicate interpretation of the favorite "Moon River" for an encore.

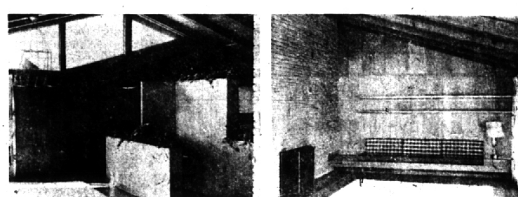
To those of us who were fortunate enough to hear him, I'm sure we'd all like to say welcome back and soon to Richard Ellsasser.

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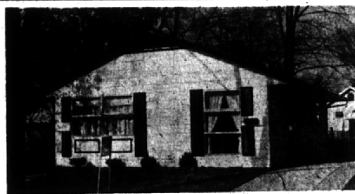
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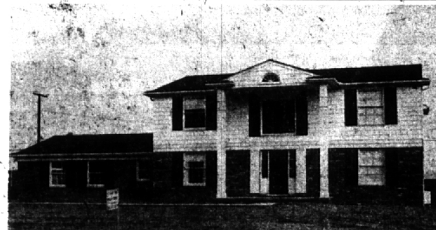
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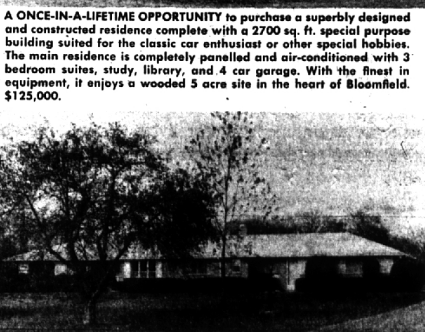
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