

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA NEWS

Arts & Ent

COSB Gives Concert without Steiner

By Leonne Lewis

Chamber Orchestra of the South Bay bid farewell to the 20th century with a neatly balanced program of shorter works of Bach, Britten, Jolivet and Telemann.

Before the concert began, COSB president Bob Miller walked on stage and made a stunning announcement. Music director Frances Steiner was recuperating from recent surgery.

Apparently she fell and fractured her hip, but the maestro is making a speedy recovery and plans to pick up the baton soon.

The orchestra's assistant conductor Hector Salazar, of El Camino College, filled in for Steiner. He is an experienced musician, having already conducted COSB and other Southland orchestras.

It may not come as a surprise to listeners that Steiner's group is prepared for most any situation. The orchestra is dominated by concertmaster Miwako Watanabe and powerful strings.

Salazar's conducting is very musical. Despite the limitations of last minute rehearsals, he secured the performances when necessary, as in Bach's "Ricercare a 6," of "The Musical Offering." It may be significant that Steiner chose this example of fugal counterpoint because of the 250th anniversary of Bach's death.

Flutist Nadine Asin was the evening's splendid soloist in Telemann's "Suite in A for Flute and Strings." Asin has played with the New York Philharmonic and the English Chamber Orchestra. She is currently on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival.

Pulse and genial swing are prominent characteristic of Telemann's music, and Asin sustained a mastery of tempo and taut control. The "Les Plaisirs" and "Rejouissance" movements offered fastidious playing by Asin. The orchestra

provided crisply delineated instrumental lines aided by harpsichordist Duane Funderburk. The performance was marred only by small lapses of ensemble in the "Polonaise" movement.

Salazar is a fine conductor of the contemporary repertoire. How better to show this than with Jolivet's Concerto for Flute and Strings, with Asin as soloist. The composer's saturnine temperament is reflected in this unfolding poem of colors.

There was a constant sense that conductor and orchestra were participating in a gripping musical experience. Asin brought a resonant warmth and well sustained energy to the "Largo" and "Allegro Risoluto." One was impressed by the expressive finesse of her playing.

The program closed with



Nadine Asin

Britten's Simple Symphony Op. 4, which the English composer drew from works he had written between the ages of 9 to 12. The music is a reflection of Britten's young innocence and emotional identification with his country.

Given the rustic theme of the outer movements, the "Sentimental Sarabande" sounded oddly like Baroque music. But Britten's dreaminess created a dramatic lyricism, and the orchestra played on the same fluent, stylistic level. Before the gigue-like "Playful Pizzicato" began, the players put down their bows. Then they plucked their way throughout the movement with breathtaking effect. At the conclusion, the audience gasped then applauded wildly.

COSB ends the year with a decidedly enjoyable evening of music conducted by Hector Salazar.