

## ENTERTAINMENT

## Newly repaired hall reverberates to fine piano

BY RON EMERY

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TROY — People had been holding their breath.

Would the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall sound the same after the ceiling was repaired and painted?

Judging by the first concert Monday in the

## REVIEW

newly painted, acoustically famous hall, the ghost of George Szell can rest easy. The sound is still lively, bright and unforgiving of the least dropped pencil, creaky seat, whispered comment or wrong note. The repairs that started July 1 and finished the morning of the concert seem to be a success, preserving the piano's true sound from bass to treble. Szell must surely smile still at such sound.

More details will come as different ensembles play the hall.

Young pianist Renee Louprette gave a splendid hour-long debut piano recital to open the sixth season of the Music Hall's Music at Noon series, started by Findlay Cockrell, who has annually given the season's final midday concert.

Louprette is a real find, a pianist with a strong technique and an appealing musical personality. She turned out to be just the artist to reopen the music hall.

A native of East Greenbush and a 1991 graduate of Columbia High School, Louprette studied in the Music for All Ages program at the College of Saint Rose and presently works on a music degree at the Hart School of Music in West Hartford, Conn.

Louprette played a big program with major works or parts of works by three of the composers whose names are painted in large letters in a frieze just below the music hall ceiling — Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven and Frederic Chopin. The fourth composer made an artist's bow toward Latin America and the 20th century with three Argentine dances by Alberto Ginastera.

Things started a bit tentatively with Bach's Prelude from the English Suite in A Minor. The notes, difficult in themselves, were at hand, but the performance tended a little toward the faceless academic style of

modern baroque performances — Glenn Gould without the jitters.

Still, in light of the playing that followed and Louprette's unusually mature sense of musical architecture, she may indeed have deliberately underplayed the Bach for later effect.

Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 10, No. 1 is several romantic steps away from Haydn with a dramatic opening allegro, a beautiful adagio molto with rattley rhetorical roulades in a contrasting middle of the legato melody, and an "as-fast-as-possible" finale that Louprette tore into most impressively.

Most enjoyable were the final pages of the second movement which Louprette molded and phrased with skill.

Chopin's Third Ballade in A-flat

Major, Op. 47, is dramatic without being morose, though it still has its emotional heart on its sleeve. Some youthful players have pushed the emotion button too hard in this piece. Louprette kept the romance nicely in the foreground with a consistently sweet tone and a marvelous sense of forward motion.

The darker, even despairing, Polonaise in C Minor, Op. 40, No. 2, got the most intense reading on the program.

Louprette played the three appealing Ginastera dances from his first published work with wit and penache, indulging herself especially in the virtuosic vigor of the final dance.

It's already time to think of Louprette back at the Music Hall for a full evening's recital.