

## ENTERTAINMENT

## A MATURING SYMPHONY

*Guest conductor Gisele Ben-Dor and pianist Alan Gampel headline exceptional Classical Series concert*



PRESS PHOTOS/ROB WIDDIS

**Pianist Alan Gampel** performs with the Grand Rapids Symphony on Friday night. Guest conductor Gisele Ben-Dor leads the Symphony.



JEFFREY KACZMARCZYK

Guest conductor Gisele Ben-Dor isn't just anybody. Music director of the Santa Barbara Symphony in California and a frequent guest conductor everywhere from New York to London, she is one of the most heralded young conductors today.

Yet, in Friday's Classical Series performance at DeVos Hall, there were a number of moments in which it appeared the players were a step ahead of the conductor, moving into new territory while Ben-Dor was keeping time.

However they got there, they got there in an exceptional Classical Series concert, featuring piano soloist Alan Gampel, who was in town for a weeklong residency that included a solo piano recital Tuesday at St. Cecilia Music Society.

Gampel, the 1995 Chopin Prize winner in the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Israel, appeared in a mesmerizing performance of

Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor.

The three-movement piano concerto hints provocatively at the progression of the composer's three-period career, from the traditional, classical opener, to the early romantic yet mature second movement, to the adventurous finale pointing the way to Beethoven's final works yet to come.

Gampel's playing could be both stormy and gentle, often happening simultaneously in opposing hands.

Yet, with his graceful, fluid legato technique and trills to die for, Gampel made one forget that the piano is a percussion instrument.

**GRAND RAPIDS SYMPHONY** with pianist Alan Gampel, conducted by Gisele Ben-Dor, Friday evening in DeVos Hall. The Classical Series concert repeats at 8 p.m. today. Preconcert talk is at 7:15 p.m. Tickets — \$10 to \$46 — are available at the Grand Center Box Office. Tickets also may be bought for a fee at Ticketmaster outlets, or by calling 456-3333 to charge tickets. Student and senior tickets are half price at the door one hour before the concert.

**THE PROGRAM:**

Santa Barbara Overture .....Diemer  
Piano Concerto No. 3..... Beethoven  
Symphony No. 1.....Sibelius