

## MUSIC

By ROBERT SHERMAN

## Competitions: Here to Stay

COMPETITIONS are unkind, unfair and probably fattening, but until somebody comes up with a better system for pinpointing worthy talent, they are here to stay. Certainly they are flourishing in Westchester and Fairfield, where a number of contest winners will be reaping the performance rewards of victory this month and next. Other young players will collect their recently won prize appearances next season, and at least two competitions are still very much up for grabs.

Let me start with the Westchester Symphony Orchestra's Concerto Competition, for no better reason than the fact that I served with the pianist, Jo-

seph Bloch, and the cellist, Michael Rudiakov, on its judging panel one rainy Sunday last month. I liked several things about the setup. We were not given the contestants' names, for instance, nor any other data (ages, teachers, etc.) that might have swayed us from purely artistic considerations.

We also had considerable leeway in awarding the prizes, as a result of which we named two winners instead of one and (for the first time in the history of the competition, as it turned out) cited three other entrants for honorable mention.

The first-place winner, a 15-year old Dutch-born violinist, Piet Koornhof, from Scarsdale, is a major talent. He played parts of the Bruch Concerto for us with the flair and assurance of a professional, and if his musicianship grows apace, he will be a fiddler to remember. Jessica Roemischer, a 17-year-old from Dobbs Ferry, was the runner-up, with her small-scaled, but warmly sensitive approach to Mozart's C Major Concerto, K.467.

Encouragement, of course, is a primary goal of competitions at the high-school level, and that is why we wanted

the honorable mentions. We felt that recognition was due flutist Laurie Lewis, of Scarsdale, and Alexander Toulos, a Port Chester oboist, for having attained such a high level of technical proficiency. With Elizabeth Chang, a Dobbs Ferry violinist, the situation was a little different: she has yet to tame her instrument, completely, but what a temperament! Elizabeth, by the way is 12 years old.

The two winners will appear next season at one of the regular Westchester Symphony concerts. Last year's first-prize recipient, Henri Delbeau, a

14-year-old pianist, will play the Beethoven First Concerto with the Orchestra under Raffael Adler at its final program of this season, 8:30 P.M. on April 30, at the White Plains High School.

Meanwhile, over at the Westchester Conservatory of Music, Miss Roemischer had earlier walked off with the keyboard honors at the concerto competition held here last month. A distinguished jury—Martin Bookspan, musicologist; Peter Simenauer, New York Philharmonic clarinetist, and two