

Organ recital 'awesome'

By **RALPH W. MAUGHAN**
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The organ concert Monday night by Aram Basmadjian was, as my grandson would have said, "Awesome."

Basmadjian, "one of the most accomplished young organ virtuosos in America," displayed his exceptional talent to an appreciative audience attending the concluding concert of the 1994-95 Community Concert series.

It was perhaps the greatest concert of the last few years.

The magnificent Allen organ with four keyboards for the hands plus another for the feet was accented by banks of speakers placed across the back and side of the stage, 24 in all.

Basmadjian explained that some of the speakers were for the high notes and some for the low notes. Demonstrating, he joked that the lowest rumble of the organ would register some 3.5 on the Richter Scale. The highest was barely audible to the human ear.

In between were magnificent sounds of the pipe organ stored in the computer memory of the instrument and recalled as his hands deftly swept across the banks of keys. Spacious panels of "stops" on either side of the keyboards and others beside the foot panel provided an almost infinite range and variety of sound and beauty.

Personable and talkative, Basmadjian described the large knobs on the controls beside his feet as "trailer hitch balls." The audience of farmers and farm-related businessmen and women laughed heartily at this comparison.

Basmadjian opened the concert with a powerful rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" which had everyone immediately on his or her feet applauding his talent.

Much of this piece was played with the musician's feet flying across the foot pedals, but rested now and then on the "gas pedals," which amplified or diminished the sound.

At one point the musician demonstrated what he called four styles of music, all achieved by

adjusting appropriate stops on the console: the flute, strings, "church music" and the full sound of traditional pipe organ music.

His repertoire included familiar tunes: "Londonderry Air" ("Danny Boy"), as well as complex classical concertos, sonatas and aires. All were greeted with enthusiastic applause from the enthralled audience which honored him with no less than three standing ovations.