

Two octogenarians attending premiere performances of the opera "Calvario" in UMD's Main auditorium this week have a special interest in the work and its composer.

They are Mr. and Mrs. Westcott P. Alspach, Findlay, O., parents of the opera's composer, Addison M. Alspach, UMD professor of music. The elder Alspach is 87 and his wife, 80.

They drove the approximately 700 miles from Findlay, located 40 miles south of Toledo, especially to attend the premiere production.

With them came a daughter, Mrs. Catharine E. Cramer, Columbus, O., who shares the Alspach family's keen interest in Addison's musical fortunes.

"We wanted to be sure to get to this one," explained the father. "Our health didn't permit our attending the premiere of our son's symphony by the Duluth Symphony orchestra in 1953."

The latter work, "Symphony 1945," was written while Professor Alspach was teaching at the University of Iowa.

Still recovering from extensive treatment this spring for an ailment, the elder Mrs. Alspach is careful to conserve her strength as they prepare for the return drive to Findlay starting today (May 9).

"Dad played the fiddle, and mother sang. An aunt used to come to visit us on Sunday afternoons, and she played the piano in the parlor. Music was very much part of our lives ever since we can remember," Professor Alspach recalls.

"We're really proud of him," said Mrs. Alspach after the premiere performance. "We're happy that we have lived to have this experience."

The musical Alspachs made up quite a premiere audience in themselves.

Besides the elder Alspachs there were Mrs. Cramer, a former public school vocal instructor whose two sons, Phillip and William, are outstanding young musicians in Ohio; and the composer's children, Elizabeth, Minneapolis, Mrs. Richard Heim, Syracuse, N. Y., and 1st Lt. Edward Alspach, B-25 flight instructor at Reese, Tex., air force base. Edward is a UMD Air Force ROTC product.

Final UMD performances of "Calvario" will be at 8:20 p.m. today and Saturday.