

Two conductors in one

JERUSALEM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, Juan-Pablo Izquierdo conducting; with Peter Frankl, piano (Jerusalem Theatre, February 12). Gluck: "Iphigenia in Aulis" Overture; Schumann: Piano Concerto opus 54; Oves: The Unanswered Question; Stravinsky: "Firebird" Suite.

THERE seemed to be two different conductors on the rostrum during this concert: In the first part (classical-romantic) a stiff time-beater with parallel arm movements of indistinct precision; and in the second part of the evening (20th-century composers) an excellent and inspired leader with precise indications and choreographically beautiful movements – a happy man.

Izquierdo has a great reputation for conducting contemporary music, and apparently still feels at a loss with any other, although the Gluck Overture received a clean and clear reading and retained its inherent dramatic dignity and beauty of phrasing. In the Piano Concerto, it was the soloist who dictated tempo and interpretation. In the fairly tricky rhythmical extravaganza in the finale (a two-four, march-like beat for the orchestra against the prevailing three-four of the piano), insecurity nearly resulted in lost connections – excessive movements only make matters worse for any orchestra in terms of following its leader. Fortunately, Peter Frankl is not only an excellent solo pianist but also a musician of dynamic force. He did not neglect the romantic aspect of Schumann's music but kept it within bounds, and his forceful attitude propelled the concerto forward, building steadily to an exciting climax.

The "second" Izquierdo took over after the interval and gave the *Unanswered Question* a truly mystical interpretation. An unnamed trumpet soloist (probably Ram Oren) asked his question from the back of the hall, among the audience; placing him off-stage perhaps increased the mysterious mood the composer probably intended.

In the *Firebird* Suite, Izquierdo let loose all his power, imagination and

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inspiring leadership and whipped the orchestra into a riot of brilliant playing, growing out of softest dynamics and quietest moods. The *Firebird* is a standard work for any conductor of the younger generation; it never fails in its effect on the audience, and Juan-Pablo Izquierdo made the most of the opportunities offered by Stravinsky's score.

Last wish: the director of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra should forgo his maddening habit of shouting "bravo" at the end of every concert; the audience is intelligent enough to know when the end has come and when they should applaud.

YOHANAN BOEHM

A CONCERT OF CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN AND ISRAELI MUSIC presented by the Canadian Embassy, Acoustic 7-11 and the Sha'ar Zion Library, Beit Ariela; participants: Twentieth Century String Quartet (David Braude and Arthur Zisserman – violins; Aric Bar-Daroma – viola; Israel Berkovitch – cello); Duotone; Shimon Abalovitch – violin and Zahava Simon – piano; Er'ella Talmi – flute; Efrat Lavry – harp; Sara Fuxon – piano; Orit Zelniker – double bass; musical direction: Daniel Galay (Beit Ariela, Tel Aviv, February 5). Works by Murray Adaskin (Canada); Joseph Dorfman; Daniel Galay; Murray Schafer (Canada); Ya'acov Gilboa; Raul Theberge (Canada).

CONTAINING NO LESS than four Israeli premieres, this concert proved a real challenge to audience and critic alike. The first item, *Impromptu* for violin and piano by Adaskin (1982), posed no problems. Influenced by neo-classical trends, it borders on the light-music style and sounds more like entertainment than concert hall music. Neither did Dorfman's *Coloro* for harp solo (1981) give us any reason for reflection or emotional reaction. The piece sounded like a haphazard assemblage of groups of tones and modernistic gimmicks leading nowhere.

From here on, matters seemed to become much more serious. Galay's Concerto for Flute and Strings (1985) showed a tremendous ad-

vance on his previous works. Inspired by Bach in general and by the particular quality of Bach's music, its incessant forward motion in particular, Galay's music flows smoothly in originally shaped adjacent tone sequences. Of real beauty is the fourth movement, in which glissandi of the strings stabilize into consonant harmonies lying widely apart.

Murray Shafer's string quartet *Waves* (1976) is inspired by the rhythm of ocean waves. A heterophonic texture interspersed with motivic repetitions, the music creates a most unusual feeling of soft and soothing monotony. One is confronted with a strange, remote and timeless soundscape.

In strong contrast to Schafer, Gilboa's *Toccata in Black and White and Grey* for piano (1975) immerses the listener in sharpness of sound and dissonance. Using the conventional martellato (hammering) technique, but also huge sound clusters materialized by the use of the whole length of the arms on the keys, Gilboa achieves an impressive sound volume and some quite surprising effects. His *Toccata* is a valuable addition to our piano repertoire.

One of the most original pieces of the evening was Paul Theberge's *Maqam* for flute, violin and cello (1978). No maqamic motifs, originating in the Middle East, are of course part of the work; but the application of the motifs of the work and the feeling of improvisation which the work creates are undoubtedly reminiscent of Near Eastern music and of the compositional maqamic technique used by oriental musicians. The work is slightly too long, but otherwise of great interest.

All works were given dedicated execution by the various participants, whose individual achievement cannot, regrettably, be evaluated properly within the space of this review. However, the general feeling was that no effort was spared to do full justice to the music, the composers and the event.

BENJAMIN BAR-AM