

Broad spectrum

JERUSALEM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA — Juan Pablo Izquierdo conducting; Shoshana Rudiakov, piano. (Jerusalem, Henry Crown Hall, February 5.) Prokofiev: Ballet excerpts from "Romeo and Juliet," Op.64; Yuhás: Prelude for Orchestra (1981); Chopin: Piano Concerto No.2 in F minor, Op.21; Ravel: "La Valse," Poème Choréographique.

THIS WAS a big concert in many senses of the word. The orchestra was in full complement as the programme called for piano, harps, the full range of brass and a wide variety of percussion instruments. The emotional range in the repertoire was of extremely broad scope, and the full expressive power of the orchestra was constantly on call, from the massive sonorities of Prokofiev and Ravel to the almost fragile accompaniments of the Chopin.

In marshalling these forces, Izquierdo proved himself a true artist of the podium, as with his bare

hands, and especially a wizard-like expressivity with the left (interestingly predicted in his name, which means "left" in Spanish) he moulded the sound spectrum like a sculptor and brought every element under precise control. The orchestra, which tends to become unwieldy in such circumstances, responded with admirable finesse.

The Prokofiev was beautifully rendered, its lyricism singing out, its abrupt shifting of tonal centres smartly executed and its dark moments deeply moving without becoming lugubrious. All told, a unified tone poem in five parts which

unfolded the story of the ill-fated lovers with uniformity of line and integrity of style.

Rudiakov and Izquierdo might have been playing a sonata for accompanied piano, so well integrated was their work on the Chopin concerto. The composer, a miniaturist by temperament, wrote his two concertos primarily to catch the eye of the musical world, and much of this music foretells of his predilection to the small forms.

The orchestra hung an appropriate backdrop over which Rudiakov embroidered a finely-wrought tapestry, incorporating steely springiness

with an ability to flow with the long melodic contours. Her fine technical mastery enlightened the performance as she moved effortlessly through the work's various atmosphere of sound and brought to them unity of expression. The audience responded with tumultuous and well-deserved applause.

To close the concert, the orchestra took a deep breath and plunged headlong into Ravel's tribute to, and threnody for, the Viennese waltz. Izquierdo was in firm command, and with his unflagging attention to the fine points and larger picture alike, this brilliant showpiece provided a splendid climax to a grand evening.

Dan Yuhás's Prelude, an interesting study in orchestration, will be discussed in a future column on contemporary music.

DANIEL ZIFF