

CONCERT REVIEW

ISRAEL SINFONIETTA Beersheba Conservatory May 25

The great Chilean conductor Juan Pablo Izquierdo led the Sinfonietta and Jerusalem Music Academy Choir in a program of Bach cantatas – No. 131 (“From the Depths,” Psalm 130) and No. 140 “Wake, Arise,” as well as a new work by veteran Israeli composer Leon Schidlowsky.

Izquierdo, whose association with Israel goes back over three decades, approached Bach with bright tempi and Latin crispness, emphasizing

the sacred works’ dance-like buoyancy over philosophic Weltschmerz.

The Academy Chamber Choir, the best we’ve heard this season in Beersheba, gave a vocally luminous rendition. Bach’s intricate counterpoint had clarity and transparency. The German texts were articulated with commitment and authority by three capable young soloists – Tamar Kleinberger, soprano, Yossi Aridan, tenor, and Yvgeny Nyegenytz, baritone, sang the recitatives and arias with purity of tone and intelligence.

Schidlowsky’s “Meditations” (2000)(10’) is an abstract

expressionist work, a meditation on love and loss written in memory of the composer’s late wife, Susanna. Its originality consists in the extension of isolated, single-note pointilism into sustained tone and lyric beauty.

The arching lines are colored in instrumental gestures that interlace through widely spaced intervals, sonorities and registers.

Maestro Juan Pablo, a personal friend of the composer since their student days in Chile, gave the new work for strings and winds a decidedly polished and emotional premiere.

• *Max Stern*