

ISQUIERDO
THE JERUSALEM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
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MUSIC

Concert highlights Stravinsky, Bach, and new Israeli work

THE WEEKLY CONCERT of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra offered no less than two Bach piano concerti (father and son Carl Philipp Emanuel), a world premiere of an Israeli composition (Benzion Orgad's "Suffering for Redemption") and a repeat performance of Stravinsky's "Firebird," heard only a few days ago in a New Immigrants Concert (Jerusalem Theatre, March 4).

The second performance of the "Firebird" was a triumph for conductor Juan Pablo Isquierdo and the orchestra, who gave a high-powered reading which brought out the best in all involved.

Duo-pianists Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir performed C.P.E. Bach's Concerto in E-flat for Harpsichord and Piano, bringing the different characteristics of the keyboard instruments into relief and giving a sympathetic interpretation of this pleasant if not particularly ingenious work. Joined by Rami Bar-Niv, they then played the Concerto in D Minor for Three Pianos by J.S. Bach, their good team-work resulting in a flawless performance. The more metallic sound of Rami Bar-Niv's playing may have been due to the instrument, but, in general, the three pianists worked together in harmony of purpose.

Orgad's newest work uses a soloist (Rema Samsonov, mezzo-soprano), a women's choir (a section of "Rinat National Choir) and

a relatively small orchestra (part of the brass was placed at different spots in the hall to obtain a space effect). Having a natural aversion to suffering, and not being convinced of redemption, I do not wish to judge the text (a combination of Ibn Gabirol and Recha Freier, according to the programme explanations). The music is very economically applied, mainly based on small intervals. This resulted in harsh chordal textures, but the melodic line came out boldly when emotional exaltation demanded it, and — as always with Orgad — his sincerity and total involvement convince the listener of the logic of his writing. Maestro Isquierdo, a Chilean conductor, again proved his masterly handling of contemporary scores, and the composer could not have asked for a better interpreter. Soloist and choral group met the demands imposed and all members of the orchestra, wherever placed, fulfilled their parts most satisfactorily.

In the final "Firebird" Mr. Isquierdo put his inspiring personality to the test and came out with flying colours. He led the orchestra in a most impressive performance, and the audience responded with prolonged applause rarely accorded in these concerts. The conductor should be given more programmes with purely orchestral works to give the orchestra and the public the maximum benefit of his special gifts.

YOHANAN BOEHM