

New Palestinian Music

SUNDAYS concert of the local branch of the International Society for Contemporary Music, which took place at the Palestine Conservatoire in Jerusalem, brought to a close the successful first season of this valuable association. Beginning with Hindemith's Music for Strings, op. 44, no. 3, a simple, lively and original composition, a solo sonata for violin by Genzmer, a pupil of Hindemith who combines his master's qualities with his own marked talent in a very pleasant way, the Society presented its public with two new works by Palestinian composers. These were a Quintet for Wind Instruments by E.W. Sternberg, and an Overture for String Orchestra, Flute and Bassoon by Josef Gruenthal.

Mr. Sternberg, who is undoubtedly the most marked personality among the present Palestinian composers, has in this new quintet definitely aimed at melody, comprehensibility and, one might almost say, popularity. Flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon and horn are beautifully blended and in the lyrical passages there are some excellent tonal effects.

Thematically, the scherzando march movements are the most interesting, and their harmonisation and rhythms are effective. It is very noticeable in this composition that Sternberg, like so many of the best contemporary composers, is turning back towards the romantic in music, and away from the purely abstract.

Mr. Gruenthal's overture, which was played through twice, is a con-

centrated, gripping and dramatic piece of music. The sureness of the instrumentation is remarkable, and the melodic prominence of the secondary voices is particularly interesting. It is clear that Gruenthal, who used to compose with his intellect only, can write for the ear too, and that his success is certain when he does so.

The players at this concert included Messrs. Schleyer, Cohen, Tjornier, Markus and Levy as wind ensemble, the Student Orchestra of the Palestine Orchestra, playing well and firmly under the direction of Mr. Gruenthal, and Mr. Sascha Parnes, whose rendering of the monstrously difficult sonata by Genzmer was by far his most striking performance of recent months.

— R. de C.