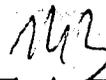


29 APR 1970

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EIN GEV FESTIVAL



# TAL'S TOUR DE FORCE

Israel Chamber Ensemble, Gary Bertini, conductor; Pinhas Zuckerman, violin; Uzi Wiesel, violoncello; Willy Haparnas, baritone (Esco Music Centre, Ein Gev — April 23). Handel: Concerto Grosso in E-minor; Vivaldi: Concerto for violoncello; Josef Tal: Double Concerto for Violin and Violoncello, J. S. Bach, Concerto for Violin in A-Minor; Shostakovich: "The Nose"—excerpts.

**T**HE programme had Gary Bertini's customary touch: contrasts, stimulating works, the traditional mixed with the new and unaccustomed. An additional attraction was the participation of Pinhas Zuckerman, not only as soloist as scheduled, but also as orchestra violinist at the first desk (to help out for indisposed Alexander Tal). He visibly enjoyed the occasion, finding an outlet for the considerable youthful exuberance and proving that he has not been spoiled by international success. His towering figure, artificially enlarged by a Samson-style non-haircut, kept moving in unison with the music. But, despite this and his impulsive style, he is a fine musician with great talent.

Interest centred on the world premiere of Josef Tal's Double Concerto, another commission from the Lotti Steinberg Memorial Fund for the Ein Gev Festival (Partos' "Paths" for Orchestra was premiered two days previously by the I.P.O. under Mendi Rodan). It is near impossible to assess this work adequately after one performance, or even after repeated hearing. It is written in one movement, keeping the conductor extremely busy beating out steady quavers as the basic unit for keeping body and soul

together.

But this work is a *tour de force* in more than one meaning: the composer pulverises the rhythm into ever differently syncopated chords and phrases so that the overall impression is one of completely free time; despite continuity there is no real flow of music, as the rhythmical intricacies rather hold back and spread nervous tension in jerks and fits, the texture is mostly very transparent, like chamber music, even the busy percussion section never breaks out into excessive noise.

The soloists are faced with parts ranging over the whole of their registers, widely-spaced phrases closely interlinking the two string instruments, joined frequently by solo members of the ensemble. It is a highly intellectual-conceived and worked-out piece which probably can be appreciated only intellectually. The soloists fulfilled their enormous task with assurance and technical mastery. Gary Bertini steered his musicians between Scylla and Charybdis and secured efficient execution of the difficult work.

The Ensemble had given a lively reading of a Handel Concerto Grosso with bright sonorities at the opening of the concert. Uzi Wiesel contributed a pleasant Vivaldi Concerto for Violoncello with dignified attitude and proficient playing; Pinhas Zuckerman added a Zuckermannish version of a Bach Violin Concerto, full of vim and vigour.

Another newcomer to the programme was Shostakovich' "The Nose," which provided ample opportunity for grotesque and abandoned noise. Willy Haparnas sang two arias with appropriate characterisation and in fine voice. **YOHANAN BOEHM**