

## 23670 *Electronic music*

**Electronic Music at the University: Josef Tal presents his Overture to the Opera "Ashmadai" for Electronic Tape and his Concerto No. 6, for Piano and Tape (Hebrew University Campus, the Wise Auditorium, Jerusalem — June 15).**

**T**HIS was one of the last programmes of this year's Monday lunchtime concerts at the University and was devoted to electronic music and its foremost representative in Israel, Josef Tal. A large number of students attended the programme which featured the first performance of two works.

Josef Tal is at present busy writing an opera with Ashmadai, the Evil Spirit of the Talmud, as its protagonist. The overture, the composer explains, is designed to support the dancers electronically, absent on this occasion. The piano concerto, completed very recently, thoroughly exploits the possibilities of the instrument, which was very efficiently played by the composer. The impression is mainly one of nervous jerks with occasional soft spots. One could, of course impute all sorts of programmatic symbolism to the music at the risk of accusing the composer of introducing anachronisms, but this is dangerous ground.

It might be stated — without infringing on the prerogatives of the specialists who are so up to-date in things technical that only they can pass judgment — that Josef Tal has progressed tremendously in the application and mastery of his material. This field does not yet have any rules or specified limits. The means of making music have multiplied, new ground is being explored, new mixtures are being tried and new horizons are opening up. The result for the ordinary listener is stimulating confrontations in uncharted areas for which new criteria are yet to be evolved.

It may well be that Tal, who underwent a thorough traditional music training and is basically a romantic at heart, will develop this medium into something to intrigue and attract even the conservative listener.

Y.B.

# Electronic music proves 'interesting'

Electronic Music at Ein Karem: Josef Tal presents his "Variations" for Electronic Tape and the Piano Concerto No. 6, for Piano and Electronic Tape (Targ Music Centre, Ein Karem — October 26).

JOSEF Tal is a knowledgeable lecturer. He was slightly embarrassed talking about himself. Nevertheless, he tolerated our shortcomings in understanding the ramifications of this new medium, and succeeded—despite lengthy elaborations—to explain many technical terms and means to the assembly. The "Variations" — a premiere — were written (or rather assembled) with an eye to choreography, to include dancing and visual means (a screen projecting the score on



the background cloth); it lasts for close to 12 minutes. A theme, consisting of a group of sounds quickly following each other and taking no more than a few seconds, is being varied in many ways: in very low register, in high sonorities, in rhythmical impulses, in chords representing the "attack," others the "live" space of a sound, and again others to demonstrate the "decay" of the tone, and, of course, combinations of the various elements elaborated previously. The result is an interesting experiment in exploration of this new world of disembodied sounds. It is worth hearing, worth confronting even if one cannot enjoy it as music or its equivalent in emotional experience. It is a cliché to speak of such a confrontation as an "interesting experience"; unfortunately, no other term comes to mind.

His Sixth Piano Concerto — premiered at a Students' Concert in June this year — confirmed the first impression on that occasion: it is interesting enough to be heard again (no one could claim to remember much of its structure or content after the first hearing) and confirms rather the dictum that electronic music, if applied sincerely and responsibly, has its *raison d'être*, even for those who are staid and conservative in things musical.

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