

# ENTERTAINMENT

## CCM Dishes Out New Music

BY NANCY MALITZ

Enquirer Music Critic

Another jewel was added to the bewilderment of riches that constitutes 20th-century music Sunday night at the College-Conservatory of Music. It is called "Scenes from Franz Kafka's Diaries," by Israeli composer Josef Tal. Tal, who was trained in Central Europe, has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as composer, performer and teacher. His current American tour included a residency at CCM for several days, during which time he has lectured about music, worked with students, enjoyed performances of his works and even performed a bit of it himself. In addition to the world premiere, Sunday's CCM concert included four other Tal works, two Stravinsky pieces and two studies by Dallapiccola.

Like many world premieres, Tal's "Scenes" happened quietly and without much fanfare. In fact it barely happened. A work for solo soprano and dancer, the piece lost both its soprano and its choreography early in the week. A last minute call to soprano Christine Anderson, former CCM student who teaches at Temple University, salvaged the singing part of the project. Anderson did a crash preparation on the piece, and it is a tribute to the wealth of her resources that she delivered its message so expressively.

THE PIECE set much of the text from Kafka's diary entry dated June 25, which is a typical half-dream, half-real episode in Kafka's anxious, isolated search for salvation. The text begins with him pacing in his room, which he virtually destroys to make ready for a vision he is certain he will experience, and ends with the angel he saw transforming itself into a painted wooden figurehead, which hangs from the ceiling as a candle fixture.

Much of this Tal set for solo voice, in an intense, well-made outburst which aptly captured the dreamlike qualities of Kafka's search and also its very real frustrations. The piece hovered between hallucination and reality; Anderson's anxious, fragmentary melodic utterances had a ring of truth to them; and the overall dramatic impact of the work made one eager to hear some of the large scale oratorios and operas which have won Tal such an excellent reputation.

THE OTHER works on the concert included some illustrative examples of Tal's 12 tone compositional technique, arranged for piano as a series of episodes and performed athletically by faculty pianist Frank Weinstock; a compact, complex Duo for Viola and Piano, performed by student violist Jack Griffin and student pianist Karen Wilhelm; and two eloquent recent works, "Shapes" for chamber orchestra, conducted by Gerhard Samuel, and the 8th Concerto for Piano and Electronics, performed by Tal.

In the last two, particularly, Tal emerges as a modern master, with an abundance of melodic ideas, plenty of rhythmic energy, textural imagination and a real knack for building expectations over long periods of time. The piano concerto presents a workable idea, in which the electronic tape takes on the customary function of the orchestra—mingling, supporting and capping the contributions of the solo pianist.

As a soloist, Tal was surprisingly traditional, not in the least embarrassed to make a pretty gesture or to devote enormous attention to the grace and color of small phrase shapes.

In fact, all of Tal's recent music seems a comfortable accumulation of styles and esthetics. "Shapes," which closed the concert, was an instant success with the audience. It received its premiere in Chicago in 1975, and it is successful on so many levels that it is likely to stay in the active performing repertory.

THERE ARE many music conservatories which would consider the Sunday concert, with all its new music, sufficient output for a season. But the fact is that the Tal concert was the second of two important CCM concerts involving major 20th-century compositions last weekend.

Friday the Philharmonia Orchestra, under the direction of Gerhard Samuel, performed Copland's Clarinet Concerto with student soloist Tom Apple, who seemed quite at home with the piece's syncopated Americanisms and gave it a fine performance, supported wholeheartedly by the orchestra; and Ross Lee Finney's Concerto for Percussion, a thoroughly successful composition for full orchestra and four soloists, strung left to right in front of the orchestra, playing several storeful of traditional percussion instruments. The fine student performers were John Brennan,

William Deal, Eugene Novotney