

# MUSICAL DIARY

On the occasion of the first countrywide congress of musicians and music teachers a concert of works by Jerusalem composers, arranged by the New Jerusalem Conservatoire and Academy of Music, was presented at the Beth Hahalutzoth on Saturday. It opened with a powerful Funeral March by Stefan Wolpe, played by Eli Friedmann, followed by three songs by the same composer and captivating in their bold harmonics. The singer was Anna Hirsch (contralto). The remainder of the vocal programme was devoted to young and promising Jerusalem composers killed in action: there was the "Song for

Shroitman), which has a picturesque charm and was followed by two songs by Zvi Ben Yosef, rendered by Imre Haydu. Abel Ehrlich's *Allegro appassionato* (for piano) has a romantic trend and colour and came as something of a surprise after the more abstract earlier output by this composer. A highlight was Josef Gruenthal's series of "Sonnets" for piano, played by the composer. Crystal-clear, they excel by a subtle and well-differentiated sense of sound, as complicated as Arnold Schonberg's "Herzgewaechse." There was a repeat-performance of the first two movements of the new post-Brahmsian sonata for violin and piano by Heinz Alexander, but with a "new cast": the young violinist David Lein and the composer himself (at the piano). Alexander's Israeli Dances, a piano duet, was given its first performance by Kurt Schlesinger and the composer. The dances are engaging, full of folklore and rhythm, the first with a Kinneret flavour, the second apparently influenced by a theme from Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." Karl Salomon's Bagatelles for Piano "Am Israel Hai" (read by Mr. Kurt Schlesinger) are in the popular manner. But we would like to listen again and again to Salomon's extraordinary Piano Concerto, written during the siege of Jerusalem and up to now performed only once. Hanoch Jacoby's Theme, Variations and Finale for Trio is an outstanding piece worthy to be placed among the best of modern chamber music, exemplary for contemporary style, setting and counterpoint (performed by Gershon Jarecki, David Lein and the composer). It was an imposing end of an interesting programme.

## New Immigrants

There was another concert in this connection at the packed

Beth Hahalutzoth Hall on Monday, with a varied programme that was varied in every sense. It started with Beethoven's unique *Appassionata* — as moving as his *Kreutzer* sonata — played by Alice Herz (an arrival from Czechoslovakia) with feeling and spirit which demonstrated that she is a real artist. A previous venue of her concerts was a Nazi concentration camp, where she gave concerts for the unhappy inmates. Her first rate rendering of an extremely modern encore, a *dupak* by Bohuslav Martinu, was especially impressive.

Benno Schneider (from Poland) was also something of a revelation. He dealt with Liszt's great Sonata in G sharp minor in a brilliant and sparkling manner, and at the same time revealed the demonic, not to say titanic, figure which was concealed by the mask of the man of the world, Franz Liszt. The encore was Chopin's majestic A major Polonaise.

Less sensational was the vocal part of the concert. Ruth Schneider's soprano is promising, but far from perfect, as exhibited in arias from Massenet's "Manon" (ma non troppo, so to speak), Puccini and Tchaikovsky. Her husband was at the piano.

Another soprano, Ruth Sharon (from Rumania) rendered — besides some hackneyed arias by Puccini — some excerpts from Mozart's Figaro, as though it were Rossini. She should also beware of shrillness. Both singers have a decided need for improved breathing technique.

Young Ben Sharon's tenor has a nice timbre (as proved by arias from Flotow, Massenet and Verdi, and in a Verdi duet with his wife.) The volume of his voice seems more suitable for the microphone. Avner Aharon was at the piano. The distinguished auditorium demonstrated its hunger for music with almost over-enthusiastic applause.

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