

10/ 2/57

Fifth Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Subscription Concert. Heinz Freudenthal, Conductor; Andre Navarra, cello. (Ohe! Shem, February 4). Beethoven: Eighth Symphony; Boccherini: Cello Concerto; Tchaikovsky: Rocco Variations; Tal: First Symphony; Weber: "Freischuetz" overture.

I FOUND Mr. Tal's work very arresting. It holds one's attention from beginning to end, even though its texture is often rather heavy and its language far from easy to follow. It is serious in its workmanship and in its mood almost depressingly so, even where it dances. It is perhaps characteristic that right at the end it turns from D-major to F-sharp minor. But it is also very forceful.

There is certainly nothing heavy about Mr. Navarra, whose playing is all light and ease. His technique is truly dazzling, his bowing wonderful and in tone and style his performance was a marvel.

Mr. Freudenthal, last not least, did an excellent job in this so very varied programme. His accompaniments were finely timed and shaded. His Beethoven and Weber are faithful and he clearly aims at what the Germans call *Werktreue* rather than self-revelation. But his best was Mr. Tal's symphony, a work with which he most fully identified himself and which he obviously has taken much to heart.

The programme notes informed us that Mr. Freudenthal makes his home in Stockholm and spends most of his time conducting in Scandinavia. Whoever wrote that does not listen to Kol Yisrael on a Tuesday night, or perhaps the weather last week led him to believe that Jerusalem has moved up north.

W.A.

MUSICAL DIARY

96 Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Regular Subscription Concert. Heinz Freudenthal, conductor; André Navarra, cello. (Edison Hall, Jerusalem, February 14).

NORMALLY the public tries to avoid listening to contemporary music and especially to new compositions — and here the case was aggravated by the fact that this work had actually been written by an Israeli living amongst us. Out of consideration for the customer, Tal's Symphony had been placed in the middle of the programme and the pill sugared by a collection of standard classics built around it. But here something went wrong; the classics fell rather flat, and contemporary music stole the show.

Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, played by the orchestra with visible boredom and audible lack of interest, left even the most conservative listener cold while Weber's "Freischuetz" with its fool-proof C Major scale and happy ending, made no impression after the impact of Tal's Symphony. The great success of this evening lies in the point that for once our public was obviously moved and affected by something new and showed its appreciation by lengthy acclaims.

As in his other works, Tal uses a minimum of material (here it is a very old Jewish Lamentation from Persia, "By the waters of Babylon"). Harmonic problems are circumvented by many-toned tremoli, which produce an indistinct but very effective mysterious background for the development of melodic elements.

The symphony is energy-laden and so concentrated in its contents that one sometimes wishes that the composer would let go for once and allow himself some expression of warm human feeling. Life is not only sadness and depression, and although it is the composer's right and duty to create works congenial to his temperament, a

really great artist embraces all wonders of life and sings about them.

This great success should be an encouragement to Josef Tal, who has already won considerable renown abroad.

Heinz Freudenthal directed the performance with as much devotion and driving force as a composer could wish for. He also showed his rare gift for accompanying — reliable, unobtrusive, leading the orchestra with spare but efficient movements, an ideal helpmate to every soloist performing his difficult task.

Though André Navarra's way of playing Boccherini may be slightly different from the conservative interpretation to which one is accustomed, his unaffected, seemingly unsurpassable performance must have satisfied everyone. There seems to be no technical difficulty for him, and his cantilena is sheer delight. If Boccherini was not quite rooco, the "Rococo" Variations by Tchaikovsky were given all the fireworks in the right places. One looks forward to Navarra's solo recital, which promises another feast of enjoyment.

Y. BOEHM