

JOSEF TAL: Double Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra

A few technical remarks might help the listener to pay attention to points which the composer deems important.

The composition does not begin with an introduction, at once postulating, as it does, the central idea, represented by a motile sound in the low register of a flute and a clarinet, which are immediately joined by the two pianos. Instead of a subject in the conventional sense, it is here a musically worked-out sound structure which presents to the listener a texture characteristic of the entire composition. This statement is responded to by a melodically clearly formulated tuba solo. Whatever is going to happen right to the end of the work, are the musical consequences of this dialogue.

It is now up to the listener to try and follow the many structural changes in the initially postulated texture, as well as to perceive the contrasting responses.

The listener familiar with following the adventures of a subject through the classical symphonic movement, will not find it hard to switch his listening habits from the classical thematic formation to the structured texture of a 'composed' sound and its results. He might even be astonished as to how much of the traditional vocabulary is indeed contained in this music which speaks so different a language. That is so, because the thread linking ages and bridging changes is the fundamental demand, faced by the composer, to master his spontaneous, unique emotions by the application of inexorable, organic logic and, doing so, to raise them to higher potencies in the creative act.

As it were, it is the ability of the listener to follow, listening, the growth of a composition, which gives the work its right to exist. The discourse between the instruments in the score then communicates itself also to the living dialogue between the composer and his audience. I shall not interfere with this equally spontaneous process with a surfeit of technical analysis, relying as I do on the curious child in every healthy adult.

Written by Josef Tal, translated by Haim Schneider.