

# THE JERUSALEM POST

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THE IMMENSE variety of 20th century music styles was highlighted in the Israel Contemporary Players' opening concert of the season, conducted by George Benjamin, by a selection of works from different countries.

Israel was represented by Josef Tal's *Saxophone Quartet* (with Gan Lev), composed in 1994 by the then 84-year-old composer. One could only marvel at Tal's continual inventiveness in his life-long quest for the novel.

Even this altogether unconventional combination was made to sound mellow and deliberately undemonstrative, as if there could be nothing more natural in the world.

There was no British understatement in George Benjamin's *At First Light* (1982). Conventional notions that a first light would involve subdued sounds were cast aside.

On the contrary, penetrating sounds, piercing in the higher registers and hol-

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## ISRAEL CONTEMPORARY PLAYERS

Works by Stravinsky, Gubaidulina,  
Benjamin, Knussen, Tal  
Jerusalem Music Center  
Mishkenot Sha'ananim  
November 9

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ling boomingly in the lower ones, highlighted the composer's penchant for contrasting tone colors.

There was nothing recognizably Russian in Sofia Gubaidulina's *Detto II* (1972).

Very personal, soft cello utterances (by Irith Assayas) were enveloped by a sometimes pointillistic-sounding accompaniment, working up to an intense, anguished outcry, only to subside again to a less anguished calm.

*Ury Eppstein*