

The Los Angeles Jewish Symphony

Artistic Director
Norcen Green

Connections by Joseph N. Feinstein

Israel's Music

For their last concert of the season, the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony dedicated their program solely to Israeli composers and artists. Jerusalem served as home base or a favorite well-spring of inspiration for each of the five composers, as well as the lovely interpretative dancer, Or Nily Azulay, the incredible-range singing voice of Maya Haddi, the fascinating oud sounds of Yuval Ron and the exciting sounds of hand drummer, Jamie Papish. The orchestra, which was founded eight years ago, is dedicated to playing "works of distinction, which explore Jewish culture, heritage and experience." and is under the capable and dedicated baton of Ms. Norcen Green.

Over 700 people filled Westwood's Sinai Temple to embrace the many new sounds and melodies composed by these fresh, talented composers. All the pieces were composed between 1965 and the present. Yuval Ron's lovely closing piece, "Sephardic Songs of Exile" describing the Jews' expulsion from Spain and their arrival in Morocco with hope renewed and faith restored was composed just this year and was heard for the first time by this audience.

There is no question that Jerusalem is the seat of musical composition and appreciation throughout the entire Middle East. Aside from the Israel Philharmonic, Jerusalem boasts major musical departments at all of their universities in addition to the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra and the Israel Camerata of Jerusalem.

An array of music by composers Ariel Davydov, Moshe Rasiuk, Yuval Ron, Noam Sheriff and Benjamin Yusupov made up the evening's program. Accompanying several of these pieces was the fabulous flamenco of Or Nily Azulay whose graceful movements were a joy to behold. She transcended the handicap of a small space with a memorable performance. The melodious and haunting voice of Maya Haddi singing several of the Sephardic songs of Exile will linger in memory for a long time.

And the accomplished and earnest performance by Ms. Green and the Jewish Symphony created the moods and sounds of Israel in Westwood. We felt the desert winds, we could imagine the sheer beauty of Jerusalem; we felt the pain of the Jews being uprooted once again. And we shall always wonder and hope that soon Eretz Yisrael will finally find what it deserves - shalom...peace.

Information on future concerts or obtaining tapes of Jewish Symphony concerts available by calling 818-753-6681.