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Last night's concert

by Ora Binur

The apple didn't fall far from the tree

The Israel Philharmonic conducted by Herbert Blomstedt with the pianist Ignat Solzhenitsyn.

For the first time in 40 years the Israel Philharmonic played Sibelius' symphonic poem, "En Saga" - which is shrouded in an atmosphere of mystery and rising tension. The Swedish conductor, Herbert Blomstedt, led the orchestra well, emphasizing each detail without neglecting the overall structure.

The surprise of the concert was the appearance of the 23 year old pianist Ignat Solzhenitsyn, son of the famous author, performing a very musical rendering of Mozart's 23rd. concerto. Solzhenitsyn is extremely gifted, with a light and agile touch and technical brilliance that is well suited to Mozart's works.

The major test in this concerto is the slow movement, which combines ethereal beauty and romance with tragedy and pain. Here Solzhenitsyn excelled with a noble rendition, walking a fine line between classic beauty and pathos. He remained true to Mozart, to the period and the style, imbuing the music with genuine emotion. His style of playing recalls Murray Perhai, and certainly as far as talent goes - the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

Beethoven's 7th symphony, as conducted by Blomstedt, grew like a jigsaw puzzle, until the parts came together to make a whole. It was clear that the conductor had worked on the rhythmic passages, the orchestral collaboration and much more.

Nevertheless, the symphony sounded technical, remote and dry. It lacked the spirit that is essential to breathe life into the work of a genius like Beethoven.