

## Classical Music DJ In Israel

June 6, 2019

The past week started off great with a concert/lecture by Astrid Baltsan, an Israeli pianist and musicologist, who I saw in Toronto a few months ago. Her topic was the first piano sonatas by Beethoven, Brahms and Berg and she described, discussed and performed them. See the picture below. That was followed by a trip to the north of the country. I find that part of Israel the best as you can see from the photo below from a hike to Montfort, the ruins of a crusader castle in hills of the Western Galilee.

Last Monday was tough, starting with a meeting at a new location in Jerusalem, followed by 3 program presentations. The first two were at Melavev ("Leonard Bernstein – Conductor, Teacher, Performer, Composer") and Enosh ("Jewish All-Star Composers") where I had done programs before. The attendees were still very receptive and enjoyed them very much. They all want me to come back.

By the time I got to the third program at 7 PM, I was very tired. But this one was really interesting. The place is called Beit Moses, an upscale private retirement home. It had the best facilities for video and audio presentations I had ever used. There were about 50 people in the audience, and I did my big hit program, "Jewish Themes In Classical Music By Non-Jewish Composers", in English. The audience loved it. I felt rejuvenated had some interesting discussions with some of them afterwards. One gentleman asked why I did not present any examples from the composer, Gustav Mahler. I said that when I return in a few weeks my next program will include excerpts from Mahler's first symphony. He asked, "Why not his second, or his fifth symphony, too?" I said that each of Mahler's 9 symphonies is over an hour in length and I only have a presentation time of one hour. It was a good banter, back and forth. I was told later that this man was a distinguished concert pianist from South Africa and really knew his stuff. I was really pleased that he enjoyed my program. I look forward to talking to him again on the return visit.

On Wednesday I was back in the Tel Aviv area doing two programs at the Bayit Balev rehabilitation hospital in Bat Yam. These were perhaps the most difficult presentations that I have ever done. I had to do them in Hebrew, and they had to be plain and simple. I took my program "Breaking Winds With Mozart" and changed the title to "Mozart And The Wind Instruments" because the original title really loses its joke in Hebrew translation. The facilities in the two locations in the hospital were less than ideal. The first one in a rehabilitation ward was done in an area that was a combination hallway, dining room, lounge and reception area for the ward. There was a lot of commotion going on around the place. I also got my first injury as a Classical Music DJ, cutting my finger when I had to use a pair of surgical scissors to cut a cord to release the video cable to attach to my computer. Thankfully I was in a hospital setting and did not have to go on the disabled list following treatment. I went ahead with the program and several people in the audience of about 15 liked it. I even got to tell Mozart's joke/comment about the flute in Hebrew translation: What's worse than a flute? Two flutes. The second Bayit Balev location was on a ward with patients with varying degrees of dementia. The facilities were similar to the previous one but there was very little response from the audience because of their condition. However, the coordinator seemed to feel that my program was OK, but it was hard to tell.

I will be doing two more programs at Bayit Balev, but to professionals in a proper classroom facility. The first will be to some doctors to give them an idea of what my programs are all about and some discussion on my experience with them. The second will be at a one-day conference in July to a number of people from various backgrounds on the topic of music therapy. I also hope to learn something from these events.

This coming Saturday evening is the holiday of Shavuot – a very important one on the Jewish calendar. Why? Because Shavuot was the time when God gave cheesecake to the Children of Israel. So, regardless of your beliefs, or flavor preferences, go out and celebrate with some cheesecake!

