

## Concerto for Percussion, With a Global Outlook

Even in symphonic works with significant percussion parts, the performers are usually heard but not seen, hidden behind throngs of string players. But for one

### MUSIC REVIEW

VIVIEN  
SCHWEITZER

work at Avery Fisher Hall on Wednesday evening, an array of percussion instruments — including marimbas, vibraphone, Turkish hand drums and Arabic tambourine — were lined up in front of the New York Philharmonic.

Zubin Mehta, who was the orchestra's music director from 1978 to 1991, was presenting the American premiere of "Spices, Perfumes, Toxins!," a concerto by the Israeli composer Avner Dorman, as part of the Hear & Now series hosted by the composer Steven Stucky. The soloists were the two musicians — Tomer Yariv and Adi Morag, collectively known as PercaDu, a percussion and marimba duo — who had inspired Mr. Dorman's concerto and given its premiere in 2006 in Tel Aviv, with Mr. Mehta leading the Israel Philharmonic.

As with many young composers, Mr. Dorman's influences span many genres. They include the jazz guitarist John McLaughlin, Ravi Shankar, Art Tatum, Bartok, Bach, Middle Eastern traditions and John Corigliano (Mr. Dorman's former teacher at the Juilliard School). The title "Spices, Perfumes, Toxins!" refers to "three substances that are extremely appealing yet filled with danger," Mr. Dorman wrote in the program notes.

There was a sense of living on

*The concert repeats on Friday morning and Saturday night at Avery Fisher Hall; (212) 721-6500, nyphil.org.*

### New York Philharmonic PercaDu

Avery Fisher Hall

the edge in the outer movements of the concerto, played with impressive energy by the virtuosic PercaDu musicians.

The first movement, "Spices," is based on Middle Eastern and Indian scales that are played on two marimbas, interwoven with excerpts of boisterous rock drumming and jazzy interludes. "Perfumes," the sensual second movement, opened with an evocative theme on the marimba, first accompanied by three flutes and reminiscent of the slow movement of Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez." In the rhythmically exuberant finale, "Toxins," PercaDu's drumming alternated with colorful orchestral outbursts. An enigmatic interlude with piano and marimba both played in the upper register preceded the jazz-hued conclusion. At times the entire orchestra played second fiddle, overshadowed by the fiery percussion.

The performance was rewarded with a boisterous ovation. As a pre-intermission encore, PercaDu performed an elegant transcription for two marimbas of the Prelude from Bach's English Suite No. 2 in A minor.

The concert concluded with Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra, an apt pairing with Mr. Dorman's music. Composed in 1943, two years before Bartok's death, it blends percussive elements, folk-inspired melodies and a brass chorale, and parodies a melody from Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony. Mr. Mehta conducted a vigorous, polished reading.



RACHEL PAPO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Zubin Mehta, center, with members of the New York Philharmonic and the soloists Tomer Yariv, left, and Adi Morag, right.