

MUSIC

Jana Haimsohn: Catch her while you can

Eclats de voix, a program of new musical sounds involving jazz, singing, poetry, and movement, featuring Jana Haimsohn, with a trio of musicians: Don Pullen, piano, Sironne, double bass, and Ed Blackwell, percussion, presented within the series, Les événements du neuf, in the Ukrainian Hall, Thursday night.

By ERIC McLEAN
Gazette Music Critic

The French expression, *Des éclats de voix*, means, literally, voices raised in anger — an outburst of rage. While some of Thursday night's performance in the Ukrainian Hall might have qualified for such a label, it was not so dominant a feature as to justify using *Eclats de voi* as a general title for the program.

This was one of the series of concerts called *Les événements du neuf*, a play on words since "Neuf" not only means nine, but new. This group presents new directions in music, and the concerts always take place on the ninth day of the month.

For memory bank

In this instance, the central attraction of the group of performers was a young woman by the name of Jana Haimsohn . . . a name I can recommend for your memory bank, not only because you should make an effort to see and hear her the next time around, but also because I am convinced she will be burned out in a couple of years if she continues such all-consuming performances as the one she gave on Thursday.

She was dressed in black silk tights and a black silk halter, over which she wore a sleeveless coat of green satin, and she was on

stage for two continuous hours, without an intermission.

The imprecise term, singer, describes only a fraction of what she does. She is not a soprano, a contralto, or a coloratura, but all three at once. She also emits the sounds of a threatened mouse, or a set of fingernails scratching across a blackboard the wrong way. She dances seductively; she is a poet, playing with syllables in the most complex way imaginable; she can out-skate Ella Fitzgerald; she plays the drums; and with only two brief pauses to lubricate her vocal chords with what I assumed was water (her colleagues, pianist Don Pullen, bass-player Sironne, and percussionist, Ed Blackwell, take over, with some fine improvisations) she is in continual action.

A springboard

More, as I left the hall, I was astonished to see a mob of people in the lobby waiting to get in for her second performance!

This sort of thing can be trying because it demands such ferocious concentration on the part of the spectators, and it was probably for this reason that there were some defections in the middle of her program. This, at least is my interpretation. I find it hard to believe they were leaving because she uses English as her working language.

Actually, intelligible language is simply a springboard for her, and in no time at all she is flying high with some kind of Esperanto of her own making.

If they can persuade Jana Haimsohn to come back, don't miss her.