



Floods inspire art

Queensland Symphony Orchestra

With the Brisbane Chorale and Canticum Chamber Choir
Concert Hall, QPAC
Reviewer: Suzannah Conway
Reviewed: Sunday, September 11

A BOLD concert program of three works by three living composers from three continents is interesting festival fare. It also brought together the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, a 120-piece choir and vocal soloists under the baton of exciting Israeli conductor Asher Fisch.

With September 11 as its commemorative theme, American and Israeli compositions were combined with the world premiere of a work much closer to home commemorat-

ing the Brisbane floods of January.

John Adams, the quintessential modern American composer with his New World sensibility, was aptly represented by his minimalist composition in three movements, *Grand Pianola Music*.

It was the Australian premiere performance of Israeli composer Avner Dorman's work *Variations Without A Theme*, with its repetitive and simple lyricism influenced by major events such as the terror attacks on the US of September 11, 2001 and the Israeli Intifada.

Elena Kats-Chernin (pictured) had been commissioned to compose her first symphony for the Brisbane Festival when the natural disasters turned the work into a commemoration of the floods.

Written in four distinct movements, *Symphonia Eluvium's* musical narrative is both moving and dramatic, with sweeping and accessible lyricism.

The opening movement, *Nimbus*, gave

us dark, rumbling percussion and brass with the swell and fall of water omnipresent. It worked powerfully.

As *We Weep* opened with a vibraphone and soft strings perfectly capturing the aftershocks.

The Mud Army added humour and a steely resolve, and the appropriate march of the woodwind to clean up the city was intelligently realised.

Finally, *Cirrus* gave us a slow waltz of hope tinged by sadness, with a mournful solo violin leading to the joint forces of choir, organ and orchestra which resolved to move forward.

This was an impressive and beautifully structured work.

Making his Queensland debut, Fisch was in full command of the orchestra and vocal forces in all three of these diverse and interesting works.

