

**Sabah Fakhri at St David's Hall**

# Artistry of singer a delight

By IFAN PAYNE

## REVIEW

OF Arabic music, one of the most important forms is muwashahat, a setting for Andalusian poetry which came to Syria from the Arab-occupied regions of Southern Spain.

The form still flourishes in Aleppo, whose most famous musician was Sheikh Ali Darwish, whose life straddled the last and this century and was lived in exile in Egypt and Tunis.

Aleppo, though, has tended to lie in the musical shade of Beirut, where the melismatic art of Egypt and Turkey holds sway, but the current demise of that city, combined with the international popularity of the singer Sabah Fakhri has put the muwashahat of Aleppo back on the musical map.

Sabah Fakhri, who performed in St David's Hall on Friday evening, is a singer of extraordinary expressiveness. He has an evenness of vocal production and an accuracy of pitch (in what is to our ears microtonal music) that is equally as extraordinary.

Supported by six instrumentalists and two male singers he delighted the audience with an exuberant and uninhibited evening of music-making. Indeed, the concert was as much as a success not only for Fakhri's consummate artistry but also for the continuous enthusiastic contribution from that ecstatic audience.