



TUESDAY MAY 1 1984

## London debut

# Freshness of manner

The pianist **Jack Gibbons**, winner of the 1982 Newport International Competition, could be Britain's answer to Ivo Pogorelich. His playing is almost outrageously mannered yet absolutely convincing. Nothing was predictable in his account (without repeats) of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, yet each and every eccentricity made some musically valid point, whether it was a phrase imbued with odd stresses and dynamics or a variation taken at one extremity of tempo or another.

The same freshness in his reaction was evident in Chopin's Second Sonata, which

was again spiced with colour. Perhaps the first movement was a shade splashy, but the Funeral March's outer sections were monumentally mournful while the reposeful D flat major middle section was taken daringly slowly. The finale was likewise even more fleeting than usual with some careful pedalling heightening its ghostliness, and Gibbons's hyperactively poetic account of Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* - more considered, I felt, than Pogorelich's recorded performance - was yet both vivid and hypnotic.

**Stephen Pettitt**