

Salzburger Nachrichten

[Start of the Ouverture spirituelle: And the birds sing again | SN.at](#)

FLORIAN OBERHUMMER

Friday the 21 of July, 2023

06:34 a.m.

Start of the Ouverture spirituelle: And the birds sing again

The Salzburg Festival began with a rich double concert evening. Old and new music under the sign of love and compassion expanded the consciousness.



Cellist Julia Hagen, choirmaster Grant Gershon, and percussionists Christoph Sietzen and Bogdan Bacanu.

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The SWR Symphony Orchestra under Ingo Metzmacher, the Los Angeles Master Chorale and cellist Julia Hagen thrilled on Friday with Olivier Messiaen's last work in the Felsenreitschule.

With two extraordinary concerts for the annual motto "Lux aeterna", the Ouverture Spirituelle started on Friday and thus the Salzburg Festival one week before the official opening. On the program of the first concert in the Felsenreitschule, at which the SWR Symphony Orchestra and Ingo Metzmacher competed in a huge line-up, was Olivier Messiaen's last completed work "Éclairs sur l'au-delà," which flare up a vision of paradise in eleven parts.

Images that are mainly inspired by the revelation of John, but also allow one's own deep roots in faith to be experienced in concise grazing lights. A work of immense intensity and enormous expressiveness, which the entire cosmos of the Messiahs? Sound language and condensed to an absolute climax. With the excellently arranged SWR Symphony Orchestra, Ingo Metzmacher has succeeded not only to let the large sound surfaces change, but also to decipher the fine contrapuntal structure behind it and to implement the sound noise with extreme transparency. Accordingly, the cheering of the audience at the encounter with this fascinating work is also great.

No less fascinating on this evening were the Los Angeles Master Chorale under its brilliant director Grant Gershon, the cellist Julia Hagen and the percussionists Christoph Sietzen and Bogdan Bacanu, who presented Sofia Gubaidulina's "sun song" in the Kollegienkirche. A work in which the cello is the focus? Is it on the occasion of the 70th Birthday of Mstislav Rostropovich. However, not in the sense of a cello concerto, but much more far-reaching. Because the cello here takes on almost something like the role of the narrator, is the voice of Francis of Assisi, who is visionary in illness, whose sun song not only praises the glory of God, but also expresses the hope of being seen by him in paradise.

Julia Hagen as a great cellist

Grandios Julia Hagen, who lived out the expressive lines, the many playing techniques, the theatrical moment built in by the composer extremely intensively and animated it with great passion. But no less impressive is the collective of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, which impressively intoned the texts of Francis. A deeply moving thing.

But almost even more impressive than the second part of this concert with the "Musical Exequien" by Heinrich Schütz, which was sung by heart and with a captivating lyrical clarity due to the scenic implementation and in a quality that you do not get to hear every day. Peter Sellars "staged" both parts, whereby Schütz refers to the repetition of the same scene? The spiritual concerts recreated the farewell at the deathbed with different soloists? And limited the word-related gesticulating with the hands. Put your hands up in heaven, put on the ground on earth. Not exactly creative and perhaps even a hindrance, because the exclusively impressive were the singers, both soloist and in the collective as well as their equally memorizing choir master Grant Gershon.

Conclusion: An absolutely successful start to the new festival season.