

Christof Jetzschke, Klassik heute

### **Tschaikovsky – Dvořák**

Artistic quality: 9 out of 10

Quality of sound: 9 out of 10

Overall impression: 9 out of 10

Manfred Honeck's thoughtful introduction to Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 b-Minor op. 74 contains a statement to be taken with a pinch of salt, when it comes to setting the music of this such emotionally loaded sinfonic score: "There is no doubt that the subject of death is a dominant theme in the symphony." Death as a dominant theme? That may just be true. But my alarm bells rang to the following: "I dare to say that in a way, Tchaikovsky experienced his own death through the music." The *Pathetique* as a requiem, as a lament or as a personal experience with death? How might Honeck and his Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra (PSO) implement this? As a shattering, meaningful, probably dripping sentimental mourning? I expected no good – but soon i was disabused.

Next to vibrantly and very bandable phrasing are first of all the tempi to be mentioned, wich are contrary to my fears never delayed or overly accelerated, a majestic, but rhythmically precise and at the same time urgent Tchaikovsky-interpretation leaving no space for theatrical exaggerations, a highly sensible dynamic creation with fascinating staggers, in which brass, wood and strings are always perfectly balanced (one should only listen to the Allegro molto vivace or the Fugato of the wildly overtaking development of the head movement). Finally the meticulousness with which Manfred Honeck highlights the instrumentation's details, reaching into every last corner exemplary. The PSO's often mysterious, nevertheless great, pecise, very homogenic and multifaceted sound could bear some more brilliance, but nevertheless it contributes to an interpretation comparable within it's expressions urgency to Leonard Bernstein's and the New York Philharmonic's recording from 1986 for the German Grammophon: thrilling, also painful, but by no means sentimentaly excessive moments and a dramatic density streched to the breaking point, in addition an overall quite narrative tone and a love of life, flashing up again and again, which i did not trust this interpretation with after reading Honeck's introduction text - all of that makes this live-document (!) of April 2015 at the Pittsburgurh Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts a very recommendable recording.

The Rusalka-Fantasie makes the tremendously colourful conclusion – a suite made and brilliantly instrumented by Manfred Honeck and the Czech composer Tomáš Ille with the most important motives and themes of the famous Dvořák-opera. It's atmosphere is perfectly caught. But compared with the urgency in the expression in the Tchaikowsky symphony, here the PSO diminishes noticeably.

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