

## **Lots of Noise, with Star Soloists**

Anne-Sophie Mutter and Daniil Trifonov accompany the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. The soloists are brilliant in their roles but the orchestra largely presented itself as a raucous second-rate resort band.

**By Helmut Mauró**

The good news: the Philharmonie in Munich seats around 2400 and was sold out on two evenings. Firstly, because the genius pianist Daniil Trifonov was performing and secondly because the violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter was playing. The second bit of good news: both soloists delivered a magnificent concert. Mutter has over time developed a technique of slightly scurrying over particularly difficult sections, but Antonin Dvořák's Concerto in A minor was in great hands with her. Her sound, her attitude towards the works, her discipline and her unshakable directness continue to be admirable. She is currently in the process – completely justifiably – of playing her way into becoming a legend.

On the first night Trifonov rushed through Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, dissecting every bar down to the last quaver rest, before presenting it in a staggering new and at the same time familiar and musically coherent manner, so that listeners would be forgiven for forgetting to what extent this piece is characterized by rough chords, rarely unfolding in patterns structured in friendlier way for the pianist. And now for the third bit of good news: right at the end, during the second part of the evening, when performing Tchaikovsky's Sixth, the orchestra came close to achieving what you would expect this symphony to be like. But up until then the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Manfred Honeck, presented itself as a noisy second-rate resort band with soloist accompaniment, missing no opportunity for fireworks.

Even for the first piece, Beethoven's Coriolanus Overture, the wind instruments and timpanists exploded like grenades, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto was a barrage of sound that reduced Trifonov's precision work at the piano to rubble. Of course there are sections where the composer staggers the piano and the orchestra, giving the audience an idea of what this piece could sound like. But the extremely black-and-white approach to the sound delivered by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at less than technical perfection meant that try as one might, even here the music could not unfold into an effect, and it definitely could not produce anything one could call tension or total context, let alone poetry.

**Süddeutsche Zeitung  
6 June 2016**