

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Full of Pathos

Manfred Honeck was the musical director general of the Stuttgarter Staatsoper. Now he is on European tour again with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

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Image 1 of 1

Internationally successful: Conductor Manfred Honeck.

He left his musical mark on Stuttgart. Manfred Honeck was the musical director-general of the city's opera for four years, from 2007 to 2011. The warm, cultivated sounds were his thing, although he had a falling out with the artistic director Albrecht Puhmann in 2009. Honeck had politics on his side, but then things turned out differently and he left. The 57-year-old is now internationally successful as a concert conductor.

He stands on the rostrums of almost all world class orchestras. At the Baden-Baden Easter Festival he had success with the Berlin Philharmonic. Honeck's musical home, however, is in the United States, in Pennsylvania. He has headed the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra since 2008. It is not traditionally one of the Big Five orchestras in the United States, but under Honeck is regularly tours Europe, performing concerts in the most important venues and

playing its way up the leader board of US orchestras. On Thursday, 2 June, the Pittsburgh musicians will perform in Stuttgart's Liederhalle (8pm, tickets via SKS Russ).

They already performed this programme in Frankfurt – with all their might. Beethoven's Coriolanus Overture: the story of the Roman hero in cinemascope format with brutally harsh accents. Superstar Daniil Trifonov was the evening's soloist, exhibiting his skills from laconic to virtuoso as he performs Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto in the Alte Oper. At times the Pittsburgh musicians threw themselves so powerfully into the big romantic sound that the bearded Siberian pianist, a strictly introverted Rasputin, faded away at times. But his performance was rousing nonetheless.

The concert concluded with Tchaikovsky's Pathétique, performed with US power. Honeck conducted his musicians in a choreographic manner. He shows what he wants. And he also wants a big show: the scherzo with an escalating tempo. The finale, however, exhibited deep seriousness, magnificent. A few members of the audience interrupted the silence with their coughs. Maybe the people of Stuttgart are healthier and more sensitive.