



Music Box, 13th June: Manfred Honeck and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra - Tchaikovsky and Dvorak's works

Tuesday, 21 June 2016 , ora 10.29



On Monday, 13th June, 19:00, I want to suggest listening to what I believe to be a one in a lifetime audition: the newest record of Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, conducted by its music director, the Austrian conductor Manfred Honeck. This record contains: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6 Pathétique* and a fantasy based on Antonín Dvořák's lyric fairy tale *Rusalka*, both coming to life under the baton of Manfred Honeck.

The record was released on the 13th May 2016 under the guidance of the record label Reference Recordings, the same one that since 2013 has been editing the live recordings of the well-renowned American orchestra, recordings which were taped with the help of the technical team Soundmirror, owner of an impressive Grammy prize list - 70 prizes - for the high technical quality. Actually, the record that you are going to listen to right now has the same high technical quality which can be found on the record with Beethoven's works, works which were performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of conductor Manfred Honeck. The album with

Beethoven's works was presented in January 2016, on Radio Romania Music during the campaign [Vote the Best Classical Album of 2016](#), where one can listen again to the records which entered the competition.

A Symphony Which Deeply Moves You

However, more than the high technical quality, I was deeply moved by the artistic quality when performing Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6*. It is one of my favourite works, one I have listened to again and again performed by various orchestras. It is a special work, breathtakingly beautiful, which has traps for the performers. I fully agree with Manfred Honeck which writes in the CD's booklet: "As for interpreting Tchaikovsky's music, I am aware of the existence of three potential dangers: the first one is exaggeration, the second one, excessiveness and the third one, impatience. After thoroughly analysing all of them, it is important to realize the fact that Tchaikovsky's music is by itself, filled with emotion. That is the reason why, not only is it useless, but also dangerous to augment what is already there... My predecessor at leading the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Mariss Jansons, whom I respect the most said: 'It is not necessary to add sugar to honey' and I believe he was truly right."

Bearing all of this in our minds, you may think that Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* is rational, cold: well, au contraire. Honeck knows how to find the perfect balance between all the elements written by Tchaikovsky in the music score, and especially those not written in the music score. Manfred Honeck's interpretation brings forth an extraordinary dynamic compass, from a barely perceptible pianissimo one can only imagine, the lines are neatly made, on large spaces, but even more so, Manfred Honeck transforms this symphony in a philosophical study about the meaning of life and death, inviting the audience to meditate, so that the audience can enter the realm of the chosen ones. You just have to want to listen attentively and to let yourself be guided by Manfred Honeck's Prospero baguette, the conductor who has made Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra one of the greatest ensemble of our times.

A Fantasy's World Premiere

After Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, which can move one to tears, it was necessary to perform a solar music. And Manfred Honeck suggests a unique fantasy which he himself has made out of various themes from Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka*, and with the help of Czech composer Tomas Ille who made the orchestration. Actually, it is not Manfred Honeck's first fantasy made out of various themes from works, but the third, after a suite taken from Leoš Janáček's *Jenůfa* and a rhapsody made out of themes taken from Richard Strauss's *Elektra*.

Manfred Honeck has known Dvořák's work, *Rusalka* since he was a member of the Vienna State Opera. He was immediately enticed by the ideas and themes present in this work and since then -thirty-five years ago - he has thought to create an orchestral work based on Dvořák's *Rusalka*.

His plans were brought to fruition in 2015, when he recorded during a world premiere his very own *Rusalka* fantasy alongside Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

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