

## **RMF: The most sublime violin art – Anne-Sophie Mutter and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at the Kurhaus Wiesbaden**

*By Dietrich Stern*

WIESBADEN - There is nothing to argue about – when such a star enters the stage, a special aura is created. In her delicate, pale yellow evening gown, on her 40th anniversary on stage Anne-Sophie Mutter appears young, almost elfin, as she shines out from the black-clad musicians of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. There are no perceptible airs and graces otherwise, only great concentration on the music and interplay. Polish composer Witold Lutosławski wrote the Partita for Violin and Orchestra for Anne-Sophie Mutter in 1990. The work provides great opportunities to showcase the violinist's virtuosity, however, it is of particular interest for its anti-virtuoso passages, despondent like a child, and for lamentations where the violin glides from note to note almost woebegone.

This gliding reappears in Antonin Dvorak's violin concerto in A minor during the shifts. Anne-Sophie Mutter does not hide these shifts, but moves her fingers from one position to another in a cheeky way, almost like a folk musician. In doing so, she approaches Dvorak's deep longing, always palpable, to reconcile Bohemian folk music and high art. This is juxtaposed by the highest sound culture and finest articulation, making the evening an experience of the most sublime violin artistry.

Manfred Honeck has been at the helm of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for almost ten years, one of the US orchestras with a long and great tradition. He gets along with Mutter very well. They have already recorded the Dvorak concerto together with the Berlin Philharmonic. The Pittsburghers' wind culture does probably not quite touch the Berliners', and it takes an effort for Honeck to create a sensitive, elegant accompaniment for the sparkling violin-jewel which is Mutter. In the concluding 6th Symphony by Pyotr Tchaikovsky, it shows that violent belting and fierce passion are the strengths of the Pittsburghers, which can lead to a certain rawness, especially in the brass.

The programme booklet contains a clever article by Honeck on this symphony's close proximity to death. In addition to the highly tense lyrical farewell mood, Honeck may also have discerned panic and horror in the furious passages. Never-ending applause for soloist and orchestra alike.