

By Reinhard Kriechbaum

To speak of a stroke of luck in music history would be exaggerated. Yet, the fact that German violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter crossed the path of Polish composer Witold Lutosławski in the 1980s was good for both sides. In 1986 the violinist premiered Lutosławski's "Chain 2", a "Dialogue" for violin and orchestra. She had outgrown the child prodigy age, but she was still very young and in great demand on the stages. Lutosławski (1913-1994) recollected a piece, a partita for violin and piano, which he adapted for orchestra with performances by Mutter in mind. And in order to unite "Chain 2" and the "Partita" as a violin concerto, the Pole composed a connecting "Interlude for orchestra".

55 minutes of mature Lutosławski with seduction by the violin - good for Mutter and likewise for Manfred Honeck at the rostrum of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, in the last orchestral concert of the Salzburg summer. Naturally, the two solo parts, tailor-made for her and her sound, fit the violinist like a second skin. Regarding the Partita, a thought could come to mind: Ready for the island!\* The solo instrument repeatedly leads an insular existence, the orchestra withdrawing. There was a method behind the concerts of this summer regarding programmes with intense contrasts, also the case here: the "Pathétique" by Tchaikovsky afterwards - why not? Honeck has reshaped the strings in a European way, with some of the woodwind contributions appearing softer than one would expect from a US orchestra. All in all, a courageously romanticizing rendition with very variable tempi.

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\*Translator's note: There is no English equivalent to the original German phrase. It means something along the lines of "the dire need to have a vacation", implying a weariness of the strains of modern civilization – and the wish to go to an island, where peace and quiet might be found.