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### **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra acclaimed at Musikverein**

Levit played in diminutive mode, there was more action in Mason Bates' "Resurrexit."

Two works with the motto "larger than life", *Minimundus* [miniature world] in between: this is how the itinerary of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's concert under Manfred Honeck at the Musikverein could be described. Igor Levit assumed the role of alert advocate of the small, genteel world, playing Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-flat Major K482. The classical plea of the 32-year-old exceptional artist turned out virtuoso, knowledgeable and nuanced - but so harmless as well. It remained devoted to the cute and dapper. Music-making in diminutive.

The swift sixteenth passagework in the corner movements (the final movement was borderline fast) were like well-tempered whirlwinds sweeping through the doll's house of little Marie Antoinette. The tones of slow melodic lines resembled smooth polished pearls embedded in velvet. There was an enormous amount of craftsmanship, but little life. One would have liked to have heard more about Mozart as a human being and less about the posh jeweller. The encore, the Adagio of the Piano Sonata K570 in B flat major, also carried the listener away into an idealistic art world, where even the onset in minor wore a dark tailor-made suit.

### **Set on extremes**

More action was to be experienced with Mason Bates' *Resurrexit*. The orchestra's birthday present to their esteemed chief's 60<sup>th</sup> sounded like a film music compilation for the blockbuster *Jesus Christ Superman*, produced by Jerry Bruckheimer. Shostakovich's Fifth tells of repression, pain and forced jubilation – that would actually be something to be turned into a film at some point. In his well-versed interpretation – the recording of the work was awarded a Grammy in 2018 – Honeck banked on extremes.

In the Moderato, the physical force of the brass was virtually breathtaking. The second movement, with its settings reminiscent of Mahler's Scherzo worlds, was pumped up inbetween elegant little dances and bulkily trudged along the way: an Arnold Schwarzenegger Allegretto. After a soulful, intimate Largo, the Americans began the final movement with a Mike Tyson-like punch. The encore for cooling down: Satie's *Gymnopédies*. The exceptional artist: solo flutist Lorna McGhee. Ovarions at the first of two evenings.