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### **Manfred Honeck conducted at the Musikverein**

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra as a guest in Vienna

By Daniel Wagner

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO), one of the most exceptional orchestras in the USA, is currently touring Europe with a potpourri programme ranging from classical to contemporary. The stopover at the Vienna Musikverein was a matter of honour for Austrian chief conductor Manfred Honeck. Honeck has added a brilliant chapter to the 120-year success story of the PSO with regard to perfection.

This became evident at the beginning of the evening in the dazzling programme work "Resurrexit" by American composer Mason Bates (born 1977). With this commissioned work, in 2018 Bates created an oscillating sound image that, between harmonic sound clouds and a giant percussion line-up calling for prayer, makes it possible to experience the resurrection of Jesus. The series of first performances during the tour can be regarded as a birthday present for Honeck's 60<sup>th</sup>, who is renowned for his love of Christian traditions.

Afterwards, things got gallant with Igor Levit at the piano: with Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-flat Major K482, a pinnacle of classical music filled the delighted hall. After the technical opening Allegro, the tender Andante dialogue with the clarinets and the popular Rondo became a blessing. The sonic highlight of the evening was to be Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony with all its wit and brutality - it is no coincidence that the recording of the Pittsburgh Symphony was awarded two Grammys last year. The lyrical and elegant opening Moderato was followed by sarcastic ländlers in the Allegretto, while the final Allegro oscillated between respectful horror and nonetheless elevating triumph. This interpretation created a musical moment that will remain unforgettable for a long time.