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Subtlety and Ecstasy

By Anna Schürmer

Mozart in minor possesses an intensity that reaches deeper than the composer's merry mass production. Such as the Concerto No. 24 in C minor, the depths of which Lang Lang sounded out in Munich with a light hand. Due to the unfamiliar acoustics of the Gasteig, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under Manfred Honeck begins somewhat cautiously. Meanwhile, the Chinese world-class pianist waits in front of the grand piano, self-forgotten. However, with his first entry he unfolds his magic: his fingers caress the keys so delicately and unconventionally, so enraptured and yet in the moment is his playing.

He begins the second movement on his own, before a delicate dialogue with the orchestra develops, demonstrating a great strength of Lang Lang: his pronounced willingness to communicate, driven by curiosity and love for music. He effortlessly glosses over smaller weaknesses of the orchestra and demonstrates his virtuosic ability in sparkling runs and solistic passages with gusto. During the concert, Manfred Honeck was almost covered by the grand piano, whilst Lang Lang went about his work, almost conducting himself.

However, after the interval, the conductor can expose himself. For Anton Bruckner's unfinished Symphony No. 9 in D minor, the orchestra returns to the stage with more vigour. The musicians develop a rousing joy of playing and ecstatic energy. Apart from minor weaknesses in the delicate, transparent passages, the orchestra raises into a rapture of sound that reaches its climax in the resounding general pause shortly before the end of the third movement.