

Andre Raphel Smith led the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra with Exuberant Temperament. Carolin Widmann played the violin with expressive power.

'Simply irresistible-the second concert in the symphonic cycle turns out to be a lucky case'

Only in the highest of praises do I want to write about this concert which too many people avoided because the programme consisted of lesser known works. Whoever missed this concert should regret it. What the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc under the baton of the American conductor Andre Raphel Smith and with the violinist Carolin Widmann offered at the Theater an der Ilmenau will not easily be topped by anything in the Elbphilharmonie.

With scintillating expressivity and refined sound, they delivered an interpretation of esthetical finesse and brilliant musical variety. The evening began so promising, introduced with the 'Adagietto' by American composer Richard Danielpour (born 1956), that the applause was unusually long. After the concerto op.14 by Samuel Barber (1910-1981), though, the audience absolutely should have showed even more enthusiasm.

Carolin Widmann is the recipient of the ECHO classics award 2006, and she opened our ears for the sensuality of this score. The atmosphere resembles the verismo sound, which spellbinds not only the audience of the country of its origin. Wide and soft string surfaces as well as dramatic and romantic passages, tantalizing solos to jubilate, explosive emotions and a solo part that takes your breath away. Carolin Widmann impressed with expression and overwhelmed with her piano range, she united the strong and subtle colors of this astonishing work in gripping emphasis. The orchestra shone, reliably and with a wonderful sound- irresistible.

After the intermission, there was Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 A major on the program. Here, too, the man at the conductor's stand proved that he knows how to lead the orchestra in austere concentration and discipline- and that he, Andre Raphel Smith, was Kurt Masur's assistant in New York! This was no muddy sound but transparency, subtlety and colorful ecstasy. One big fanfare in the biggest possible non-chalance for life!

"It is the biggest crime of a musician to play notes instead of making music", said the American violinist Isaac Stern. The players of the symphonic cycle concert made the most gripping music that is imaginable.