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Knowing What You Want and Knowing How to Get It

To know what you want and to know how to get it, as it is said in English, is in art an unyielding formula for success. All the participants seemed to know its secret well at this event, and the result was a triumph; clamorous, but still worth it. The Philadelphia Orchestra has been at Palau many times, one of these times, in 2004, conducted by Christoph Eschenbach (born in Breslau, 1940) when he had just assumed the position which now has been passed on to Charles Dutoit. The progress of the Orchestra these years has been spectacular, especially since Eschenbach had not achieved a performance of that level with top orchestras such as the NDR (in 2001) and the one from Paris (last year).

The program gathered three indispensable works for the comprehension of music history in the first half of the 20th Century. The three pieces were interpreted perfectly.

Schönberg's Chamber Symphony No.1 Op. 9, situated in 1907 at a time of turmoil, when tonality was lost and we abandoned the world of *Transfigured Night*, was from start to finish, a prodigy of precision. The fifteen virtuosos at the command of the conductor were capable of solving all the transitions with strict observance of the corresponding indications of speed, intensity, and expression, with several abrupt changes and contrasts, resisting the sensation of spontaneity. If at all, the voice of the first violin was highlighted with a little bit of excessiveness from the rest.

Although young, (born in Athens, 1967), Leonidas Kavakos is an old friend of Valencia since the debut of the Philharmonic in the beginning of the nineties. This is the third time that he comes to play the Violin Concerto by Sibelius (from 1903), and as always, delivered an amazing performance. This time was no exception, although neither the Valencia Orchestra in 1994 nor the Comunitat (at Palau de les Arts, in 2007, with Mehta) were able to offer him the richness of nuances found with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The third wonder was Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 (from 1945) impeccable in all the technical aspects and suggestive in each inflexion. The distinct humor, abundant in the piece, was especially evident in the second movement (*Allegro marcato*), overflowing with a fluidity and a fresh, natural quality, without one instance of rigidity, confusion, or incoherence. Only someone who knows the piece well and knows how to play it can achieve this.