

A LUXURIOUS PINTSCHER AND A CHEAP SCHUBERT



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The Philadelphia Orchestra with Christoph Eschenbach, yesterday, at the ‘Auditorium.’

G. GARCÍA-ALCALDE

The extraordinary Philadelphia Orchestra, one of the greatest orchestras in the United States and in the world, appeared again at the Alfredo Kraus Auditorium, but this time with a conductor not on the same level. Christoph Eschenbach, well remembered here as a pianist, started the program conducting Beethoven’s Egmont Overture with a great rhythmic and dynamic energy, perfect balance, and supreme heroic accents. No objections.

The innovative Osiris, composed in 2007 by the young German Matthias Pintscher, followed. It sounded like an enlightening proposal; to match 21st Century music with a language able to overcome the great aesthetic crisis at the end of the 20th Century. That is to say, imaginative music and a solid structural basis, overcoming the last consequences of Serialism in all its forms, but not requiring syncretic restrictions to justify its recovery, which is nothing but a retro easy way out. The piece, as established in the original parameters, is capable of reinvention, of seeking new tones in the organic and mundane, and above all, of mastering the tension/expansion game that the boorish so often forget.

The course of the piece maintains the raised sensory and intellectual attention, entertaining with many breaks of humor and achieving the atomization of the sound through a subdued percussion; a seductive metonymy of the erotic and aromatic gardens of oriental cultures. From the “tutti” passages, an imperial characteristic of great volume, a reintegration that sounds like an original voice is obtained, imposing a rhythmic discourse, with unique sounds, and minimalist chatter – just sparks of color – emanating from all the instrumental groups. The best part is that it doesn’t sound like anything familiar and pleases the ears miles away from Rameau’s harmony and Schönberg’s system. Is the quality of the sound the most important thing now?

Pintscher’s piece was very well performed by Eschenbach and the Philadelphia Orchestra, a wonderful collective of soloists, with an incredible trumpet, producing a symphonic ensemble of exceptional beauty.

Unfortunately, the conductor conceives the genius Schubert’s Ninth Symphony in C major, “The Great,” as a string of military marches. It is a pity to imagine what these privileged, delicate and ethereal stringed

instruments along with these silky wind instruments, could do with a simple reading of Schubert, especially playing the first part. In other words, less confusion in the division between the decisive and the aggressive, less bulky, infinitely more melodious in the second themes of each movement (and in the scherzo trio, completely frustrating); less rhetoric and without the obsession with such a binary beat. The supported densities are not from Schubert, not even from his idolized Beethoven; Perhaps from Brahms, but not always. In summary, a cheap version from an elite orchestra that will always be welcome.