

Media: Luxemburger Wort (newspaper, Luxembourg)

Circulation: 79.633

Date: 14.02.09

Homage to Bartok

Kavakos and Eschenbach, with the Philadelphia Orchestra

[...] this outstanding violinist [Kavakos] appears unmoved by this admirable work's formidable technical problems. Almost without moving, without the slightest gesture focusing attention on himself, Kavakos contemplates his violin with a controlled yet serene eye, making its strings ring out in an intense, brilliant and lyrical song, always warm, with no disturbing parasite in his powerful attacks, and perfect intonation in the soft passages, over the entire tessitura employed. The precision of the notes in the rapid passages, especially the cadences, is such that his virtuosity seems to become natural, ceasing to dazzle us.

This is no doubt the "sine qua non" that focuses our attention fully on the musical development and charmingly refined tones of these rarely played pages. But it is also the powerful, ever present resonance of that fabulous violin that has the orchestra, under Christoph Eschenbach's baton, displaying its full spectrum of nuances, without ever drowning out the soloist, while maintaining an exceptionally precise dialogue between the orchestra and the soloist. A magnificently executed homage to Bartok!

A full, spectacular, truly Brucknerian breath

While we could already fully admire the orchestra's brilliant tones during the concerto as a subtle start, Bruckner's 6th allows the orchestra to broaden its potential, particularly in terms of strength.

Eschenbach conducted the vast phrases perfectly and managed to bring to life this very full, spectacular Brucknerian breath, highlighting the various instrumental groups, such as the orchestra's magnificent strings, and the brilliant brass Bruckner puts to use, such as the batteries of organ reeds. But one is still led to wonder whether the brass's crushing the strings in some tutti passages was something the composer also intended.

[...] the eloquence of the central silence during the Adagio, a movement which, moreover, solidly highlights the excellent quality of this orchestra's woodwinds.

Especially worth mentioning in the last movement, at the performance level, is an interesting isolation of three musical expressions, clearly corresponding to the triple themes so dear to Bruckner, one lyrical and singing, the second, with a pulsing energy, and the third rather heroic, sometimes with clearly traced and contrasting boundaries, and sometimes influencing one another.

Photo caption: The violinist Leonidas Kavakos contemplating his violin with a controlled yet serene eye, making its strings resonate with an intense, brilliant and lyrical song.

