



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## Concert Review: La Philharmonica at Ehrbar Saal, Vienna

Ehrbar Saal, 15.02.2025 [ENA]

The performance by La Philharmonica at Ehrbar Saal was a captivating blend of virtuosity, musical diversity, and exhilarating expressiveness. On this remarkable evening, the audience had the privilege of experiencing a performance that brought together six extraordinary musicians from the prestigious Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, offering a program that spanned the classic and the contemporary, as well as the familiar and the new.

The ensemble featured an impressive mix of talented musicians, including Lara Kusztrich (violin), Adela Frasinianu-Morrison (violin), Ursula Ruppe (viola), Ursula Wex (cello), Valerie Schatz (double bass), Andrea Götsch (clarinet), and Sophie Dervaux (bassoon). Their collaboration is an example of refined artistry, with each member bringing their unique sound and technical prowess to the stage, blending seamlessly to create a unified musical voice.

The concert began with the renowned Overture from *Le nozze di Figaro* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, a fitting choice to open an evening that would be rooted in both Viennese tradition and innovative modern compositions. From the first crisp, energetic notes, the audience was immediately transported to the world of 18th-century Vienna, where Mozart's genius for melodic elegance and dramatic flair took center stage. The musicians' spirited performance emphasized the dynamic contrasts that define this famous overture, showcasing their precision and deep understanding of the score. The clarity of the strings, paired with the rich timbres of the woodwinds, set a brilliant tone for the evening.

Next, the ensemble turned their attention to Johannes Brahms' Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115. This deeply expressive piece features a dialogue between the clarinet and strings, and Andrea Götsch's clarinet playing was nothing short of sublime. Her tone was warm yet vibrant, with a rich, rounded quality that effortlessly melded with the strings. In the Allegro movement, the interplay between Götsch and the strings brought forth a mesmerizing dialogue of contrasts—at times tender and reflective, and at others, boldly passionate. The second movement, marked Adagio, was a highlight of lyrical beauty, with Götsch's clarinet soaring over the gentle, harmonious backdrop of the strings.

The ensemble displayed exceptional cohesion throughout, achieving a near-perfect balance between the instruments. Following the Brahms, Jean Françaix's *Divertissement* for Bassoon and String Quintet offered a lighter, more playful character. The work was a delightful departure from the preceding heavy emotional

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weight, featuring the virtuosic Sophie Dervaux on bassoon. Her impeccable technique and expressive phrasing brought this quirky piece to life, while the accompanying string section provided a lively, colorful backdrop. The audience was charmed by the sense of fun that Françaix infused into the work, with light-hearted exchanges between the bassoon and strings.

The playful interactions between the musicians were a testament to their ability to bring character and individuality to each piece, no matter the style. One of the most anticipated moments of the evening was the world premiere of Tristan Schulze's L'Opera, a newly commissioned piece written specifically for La Philharmonica. The work was an exploration of musical textures, blending classical string elements with modern nuances, and was designed to showcase the ensemble's exceptional technical range and dynamic expressiveness. The composition unfolded in rich layers, with moments of both quiet introspection and vigorous, sweeping grandeur.

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After the intermission, the performance continued with a shift in mood. Erich Wolfgang Korngold's String Quartet No. 2 in D major, Op. 26 was a work of lush romanticism and sophisticated harmonies. The ensemble's attention to the nuances of the music—its sweeping gestures and intricate counterpoint—demonstrated their deep understanding of Korngold's aesthetic. The work's balance of exuberance and melancholy was brought vividly to life, with the strings capturing the drama and passion of the composer's distinctive style.

The concert then moved into the world of film with John Williams' Memoirs of a Geisha, arranged by T. Kovac. This arrangement, originally composed for the film of the same name, showcased the ensemble's versatility in handling cinematic music. The lush orchestral textures of the film score were transposed into an intimate setting, with the string and woodwind players effortlessly evoking the beauty and elegance of the film's poignant story. The musicians excelled in capturing the emotional depth of Williams' score, with tender, evocative phrasing from Kusztrich and Götsch juxtaposed against the stirring melodies of Wex and Ruppe.

The arrangement's dramatic highs and introspective moments were expertly rendered, and the musicians'

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ability to bring cinematic music into the concert hall was one of the most remarkable aspects of the evening.

The concert concluded with Georg Breinschmid's Zwiefacher Suite, a work deeply rooted in the traditions of Austrian folk music. This piece offered a rhythmic and energetic conclusion to the program, with its infectious, dance-like rhythms that had the audience tapping their feet in time. The ensemble's execution of this lively work was flawless, as they navigated its complex rhythmic patterns with joy and virtuosity, seamlessly blending classical precision with folk-inspired energy.

What makes La Philharmonica such a standout ensemble is their ability to bring together a variety of musical styles, seamlessly blending classical masterpieces with contemporary commissions and even film music. Their unique interpretation of these diverse genres reflects not only their versatility but also their commitment to pushing the boundaries of classical music performance.

The evening was a beautiful example of the joy of live music and the passion of the musicians. Their cohesive performances across a broad spectrum of repertoire were a testament to their world-class musicianship.

Their ability to blend the distinct sounds of the violin, viola, cello, bass, clarinet, and bassoon created a rich tapestry of sound that captivated the audience from beginning to end.

In conclusion, the performance by La Philharmonica at Ehrbar Saal was an extraordinary celebration of musical excellence. Their virtuosic interpretations, emotional depth, and the thrilling world premiere of L'Opera left the audience awestruck. The evening was a testament to the ensemble's dedication to their craft and their ability to innovate within the classical music tradition. For anyone lucky enough to witness the performance, it was a night that will be remembered for its sheer musical brilliance and beauty.

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