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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Celestial Resonance and Earthly Delight: Harmonie

Christuskirche, 22.08.2025 [ENA]

On the evening of August 18, 2025, the serene Christuskirche in Innsbruck was transformed into a radiant sanctuary of sound. The concert titled “Harmonie” offered an evocative journey through Baroque elegance and spiritual communion—an experience that felt both transcendent and deeply human. At the heart of this luminous concert was the Portuguese soprano Ana Vieira Leite, a voice hailed among the brightest in the European Baroque scene. Her tone—capable of both warmth and crystalline clarity—brought an almost incandescent quality to the evening. Paired with the Spanish ensemble Concerto 1700, under the musical leadership of Daniel Pinteño Villaescusa, she wove a soundscape of remarkable refinement and emotional gravity.

Together, soprano and ensemble rendered Handel’s “Nine German Arias”—a striking and rare exploration of the composer’s native tongue, setting texts drawn from Barthold Heinrich Brockes’s collection *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*. The texts exude a pantheistic appreciation for nature’s beauty, and Handel’s music reflects this with a combination of lyrical fervor, melodic richness, and operatic expressivity. Each da-capo aria unfolded as a conversation between voice and instrument—a sonic metaphor for the dialogue between humanity and the divine. The soprano’s radiant coloratura and subtle phrasing found perfect counterparts in the violin or flute obbligato, and in the continuo’s sensitive support.

The result: an evening brimming with devotion, melodic beauty, and emotional integrity. The choice of venue played an essential role in the concert’s poetic success. The clear acoustics and spiritual aura of Christuskirche elevated the intimate musical moments—and lent grandeur to the most delicate inflections. One could imagine each note resonating amongst the pillars and arches, as if floating in conversation with ancient congregants. Though there was no pre-concert talk noted, the program itself acted as a portal into eighteenth-century sensibility: the rarity of Handel’s German-text arias, framed within nature-poetry inspired musicality, invited the listener into both reflection and celebration.

This concert exemplifies precisely why the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik remains a highlight of the baroque season. The festival—esteemed since 1976 for its historically informed performances and imaginative programming—continues to elevate both established luminaries and rising talents. Within its rich array of operas, vocal recitals, instrumental concerts, and intimate gatherings across sacred spaces, “Harmonie” stood out as a work of profound resonance and balance. Ana Vieira Leite’s vocal command was nothing short of luminous—her range nimble, her phrasing elegant, and her emotional investment

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

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unmistakable. She inhabited Handel's arias with both physical grace and lyricism, delivering cadences that felt lovingly shaped and deep

Equally, Concerto 1700 offered performance of exceptional clarity and stylistic refinement. Their blend of sensitive dynamics and rhythmic poise brought the arias to life in vivid yet understated detail. Under Pinteño Villaescusa's leadership, the ensemble embraced every nuance, creating an atmosphere of flowing musical conversation. The audience, enveloped in polished baroque dialogue, responded with palpable appreciation. There was a communal sense of uplift—as if transported into a realm of pure contemplation, yet alive with emotional intensity.

In sum, "Harmonie" was an evening of consummate artistry, spiritual resonance, and emotional generosity. It reaffirmed the power of historically informed performance to illuminate both the text's stillness and music's urgency. As a Baroque expert, I was captivated—not just by the sophistication of musical delivery, but by its capacity to move and elevate.

This concert was a radiant moment in the 2025 festival—a reminder that beauty, truth, and harmony can still live front and center in early music. For all who sought solace, inspiration, or simply exquisite sound, "Harmonie" was a quietly magnificent gift.

Bericht online lesen:

https://www.european-news-agency.de/kunst_kultur_und_musik/celestial_resonance_and_earthly_delight_harmonie-92009/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Nadejda Komendantova

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

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