

NHD (Amsterdam)

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MULLOVA: WHAT A VIOLINIST! WHAT AN INTERPRETATION!

The misfortune of Dawn Upshaw's cancellation for the concert of the Minnesota Orchestra quickly turned into a mood of celebration after the first notes from the violin of Viktoria Mullova. What a woman! What a violinist! And, above all, what an intense interpretation of Sibelius' Violin Concerto in D!

The Rebeco concertgoers not only renewed their acquaintance with Mullova (who appears, on average, only every 8 years in Amsterdam), they also got to know the perfection of the Minnesota Orchestra, which had never before appeared in Amsterdam. The orchestra had arranged for extra spotlights to give a brighter appearance, and Music Director Osmo Vänskä was able to put his score on his own podium, which resembled a totem pole.

Vänskä had his orchestra accompany the soloist in a whisper-soft tone, which resulted in a completely natural balance between the violinist and the orchestra. The sound of the Minnesota Orchestra had a character from which many European orchestras could learn a thing or two. It brought Mullova, who certainly had already prepared the concerto for the concert in England last evening, to a breathtakingly beautiful level of violin playing. Mullova, who is averse to any kind of theatrical dancing about, stands there purely in service to the music and knows how to couple her full expressive tone to impeccable timing through her efficient technique. Only in a few double-stops with octave-parallels did she have to reach for perfect clarity. In the orchestra, the quartet of dismal, sloppy horn players put a stain on the opening of the slow movement.

With many orchestras Mahler begins with a fat sound that then degenerates into an expanding oil stain. This Fifth Symphony by the Minnesota Orchestra is distinguished by its bright and transparent tone. But there's also a disadvantage to this: the Mahler doesn't flow, it actually gets stuck in an eddy. With Vänskä, a very mobile conductor and the undisputed master, this interpretation was dominated by a lot of detail work. Therefore, the title "impeccable" hung over this performance and emotional undercurrent remained as a typical qualification for European orchestras.