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Piano sonatas: How pianist Shai Wosner questions the Schubert habits

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Pianist Shai Wosner played Franz Schubert's last three piano sonatas at the Konzerthaus Berlin.

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Berlin - The last three piano sonatas by Franz Schubert have not enjoyed the reputation of being equal to Beethoven's for so long. Above all, the B flat major sonata, completed, of course, the last of the Triassic and two months before Schubert's early death, although the one in A major is undoubtedly the "successful", has acquired the rank of a cult piece: what in the appreciation genuinely is - Schubert as a "realistic" objection to the idealist Beethoven - is clouded by the sentimental beaver before the "last word".

The context of the work can be considered questionable, the finale too light, the slow movement for a not quite to the point brought draft of the string quintet Adagio, which Schubert then tackled.

The fact that the first movement of the B-flat major sonata is a miracle was also made clear in the interpretation of the Israeli pianist Shai Wosner on Sunday in the Concert Hall's Small Hall: The choral theme remains stuck, a deep, soft, dissonant trill sounds as the sound breaks off at Wosner after, as for a few anxious seconds, the music seems forever faded away, puts this element in a discrete-disturbing way in the center. The chorale now seems to be less a topic than a vain, yet urgently formulated request to close the abyss, to banish that formless monster.

Shai Wosner played the music very clearly

Nothing changes. While Beethoven builds each of his sonatas individually, Schubert stays with the four-movement scheme. Beethoven, child of the French Revolution, believes in the changeability of the world; Schubert, a child of the Congress of Vienna, sees solidification spreading, he does not turn to Beethoven's public, but to the citizen in the room. Wosner, meanwhile, plays this music so clearly that the dream escape into the warm euphony, which is so popular in Bürgerstuben, becomes impossible for her.

It is clarity that leads the first movement of the C minor Sonata into chromatic chaos, in which opposing motifs and scales make orientation more difficult than dense snowfall; Clarity creates the expression of restless insanity in the finale of the same sonata.

Clarity finally performs pianistic miracles like the phrasing of the deathly melancholy of the Andantino of the A major Sonata. In this work, however, Wosner's interpretation also seems threatened by a clarity that fails to be correct: the enigmatic thirty-second break at the end of an accompanying motif in the Andantino stands out as such, but its expressive meaning remains unclear, and the chromatic upward-looking storm swirls very hushed in the header.

Shai Wosner questions our Schubert habits

The 43-year-old interpreter has been able to present his view of Schubert on two evenings of the Berlin Piano Festival, and his approach is round and interesting, without being revolutionary - which indeed suits Schubert. He discovers him as a composer with a sovereign disposition and an original artist of expression, but also as an obsessed composer.

The three sonatas turn out of the imputed cycle, they do not complement each other in the sense of a narrative, but form very different stories: So gently Wosner questions our Schubert habits.

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