

Hamburger Abendblatt: December 03, 2007

Martin Grubinger had both hands full with his philharmonic debut in the Laieszhalle. The percussionist had a whole battery of drums, cymbals, bells and chime bars collected around him, and he hammered away at these distinctive instruments during the première of Avner Dorman's "Frozen in Time", sometimes with half a dozen sticks simultaneously. That seemed really athletic – and so like a virtuoso that at the end, the audience was virtually raised from their seats. It was a superior achievement that lent tremendous drive and excitement to Dorman's music which at times seems somewhat minimalistic. And although the percussion dominated, the philharmonic under General Music Director Simone Young became more and more carried away by this rhythm explosion.

Die Welt: December 01, 2007

One doesn't really know whether it was Bruckner, Grubinger, Dorman, Young or the Hamburg Philharmonic that drew the crowds. The fact is that the fourth philharmonic concert in the music hall on Monday had to begin a quarter of an hour later because the lines for the box office stretched out through the main entrance. Avner Dorman's wild, colourful percussion concert "Frozen in Time" was after all the opportunity to experience a première.

"Frozen in Time" by the 31-year-old Israeli Avner Dorman, is a piece that exceeds expectations to the extreme. It begins with rhythmic, bizarre jazz, hard grooves and an unbroken drive. With the programmatic title, Dorman refers to the geographical phenomenon of geological continental drift, but this title is actually more of a mask. It is not essential (in order) to understand the piece, which consists of quite a lot of intertwined motives. The philharmonic solo flautist Walter Keller sensitively adapted himself to Grubinger's melodious marimbaphone weave and when the orchestra in its big band role reinforced by two pianos celebrated its not so shy outbursts, the style was even reminiscent of the flashy mambo from Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story".

A dreamlike atmosphere in the adagio followed, in which Grubinger let his soli float around like a dancing feather in the wind.

The soloist really tore the audience from their seats during the presto finale, where Dorman reached deep into the compositional bag of tricks, from Cuban jazz to film music à la "Mission Impossible".