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Will this balancing act succeed?

Paavo Järvi has taken up his new post as Chief of the Tonhalle Orchestra in the Maag-Halle Zurich

"If Bach had bred bees" is the name of a piece written by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt in 1976 for strings and harpsichord and since then revised several times. At the beginning, in the background you will hear a low-pitched tremolo of each familiar four-tone motif, the lettering of which gives the name Bach. Its gradual swelling results in a whirring noise reminiscent of a swarm of bees. Involuntarily one associates natural sounds, as Lars Gustafsson has conjured in his poem "The silence of the world before Bach", as if Pärt wanted to hint at what one would have heard if his great colleague had not become a composer but a beekeeper.

For the inauguration of his compatriot and friend Paavo Järvi as the new chief conductor of the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra (TOZ), Pärt has now revised this clever miniature again. With the world premiere of the new version for piano, brass quintet, string orchestra and percussion, the 152nd season of the renowned ensemble was opened in the Tonhalle Maag. **Järvi developed the finely crafted colour combinations controlled by rhythmic pulsations and temporary pauses, but also demonstrated a sense of the ironic poetry,** which at the end pays homage to the Thomaskantor.

The applause after this exquisite concert opening was equally measured for the musicians and the composer present. The main work of the evening makes it abundantly clear that Järvi wants to pay more tribute to Nordic music than his predecessors did. Jean Sibelius's early monumental tone poem "Kullervo" is rarely performed anywhere. The TOZ has never played the piece before. In this respect, it was a risk to present this symphonic poem for soprano, baritone, male choir and orchestra to the rather conservative audience in Zurich for the season's opening. Of course, Järvi saw it as a special occasion in which to present the composition, which was first performed in Helsinki in 1892. What could have been optically and acoustically better suited to the mammoth work based on an episode of the Finnish national epic "Kalevala" than the hall of the Maag-Halle built from eighty tons of wood from Nordic spruce?

For two years, the TOZ has been performing here in the former industrial area of the Zurich-West urban development area, because the refurbishment of the Tonhalle in the banking and insurance district on the lake has necessitated an interim solution. In search of a replacement, after twenty-eight options were scuttled, the choice was finally made for the former Maag dental factory. In the record time of only seven months, a concert hall with more than 1200 seats was installed there. The cost of this must be borne by the TOZ itself, as the city is able to support the renovation of the existing venue, but not the alternative venue as well. The result has long since aroused international curiosity. In Munich and Stuttgart, where Gasteig and Liederhalle are similarly in need of renovation, it has been carefully noted that an attractive atmospheric and above-all acoustically astonishingly good space does not have to devour huge sums.

The "wooden box" at the Maag factory, based on the shoebox shape of the old Tonhalle, was almost a hundred times cheaper than the Elbphilharmonie. Like a large instrument, the bright natural material carries the sound of the orchestra. At the kick-off concert by Paavo Järvi, Sibelius' "Kullervo" in particular benefited. The five-movement opus lives from an imaginary theatricality that only unfolds its full effect live. The young Finn processed the epic breadth of everything he encountered in Helsinki, Berlin and Vienna in a symphonic way. Echoes of Bruckner and Tchaikovsky meet modal arches, five-quarter meters, strangely circling repetitions, and unexpectedly bold harmony. Powerful male choirs makes one think of Orff with their thumping unison. Raw gestures, abrupt pauses, and intrusions of elemental violence into the narrative sound flow tell of the unconditional will to make themselves heard alongside Mahler and Strauss.

Together with the soloist siblings Johanna and Villen Rusanen, the Zurich Sing-Akademie, the Estonian National Men's Choir and the Tonhalle Orchestra, Järvi achieved a magnificent rendition of the powerful work. Despite lovingly crafted details, he always kept in mind the seventy-minute arc of suspense and the ideal balance of the orchestral groups. With calm, inspiring movements and minimal gestures, the now eleventh conductor of the traditional Zurich ensemble proved to be an absolute coordinator. After almost twenty years of David Zinman and four less fortunate years with the young Lion Bringuier, the new boss born in 1962 in Tallinn is a stroke of luck for the TOZ.

The legendary Tonhalle am See is scheduled to be re-opened in March 2021 after extensive renovations. The Intendant Ilona Schmiel, who came to the TOZ five years ago, would like to bring the achievements of the interim venue as far as possible on return. In the Maag-Bau, musicians and audiences go to the concert hall at ground level and meet in the foyer. With its cool industrial flair and large bar area, it's attractive to students from the nearby College of the Arts and other creative people in this trendy neighborhood. This quality of concert experience and (luring of a) younger audience are to be transferred to the old Tonhalle, which was opened in 1895 by Johannes Brahms. Its conversion with a terrace open to the lake seems to create good conditions for this.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Werner Gimmel, 7 October 2019

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Paavo Järvi's inaugural concert in Zurich: Up into the wild world of the far North

How does one start? And when is the beginning? Was it already the announcement of Paavo Järvi's election as the new Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Tonhalle Orchestra in May 2017? Or even his unofficial conductor's trial in December 2016? Or only the hopeful first appearance with the Tonhalle Orchestra after the nomination with works by Liszt and Mahler? In the four concerts of the season 2018/19, the interregnum after the end of the short era of Lionel Bringuier, one had at any rate ample opportunity to get to know the "new". On the other hand, you had to wait for the regular start of Järvi's term - until now.

Of course, the inauguration concert, which many really long for, does not lead to the realm of the Central European repertoire, but to Eastern and Northern Europe, the home of the Estonian conductor. With the choral symphony "Kullervo" by the Finnish Jean Sibelius, Järvi has even selected a piece that hardly anyone in Germany knows and that the Tonhalle Orchestra has never played before. In addition, Arvo Pärt presented a new version of a short composition for the Zurich debut of his compatriot, which Järvi was allowed to premiere. Truly a brave program for the rather retrospective-minded Zurich audience.

You will already notice that there is something special ahead of you in the foyer. A striking number of familiar faces can be identified, and the wardrobe of most guests has a festive look. Before it really starts in the hall, the Tonhalle President Martin Vollenwyder and the Intendant Ilona Schmiel conjure the beginning of a new era in unison. Schmiel is particularly pleased to welcome Pärt personally and Neeme Järvi, the father of the newly appointed chief conductor, among the guests. Last but not least, a number of television cameras point to the special character of the concert. The French television station Mezzo broadcasts live, the Swiss television brings on Sunday a recording as part of the program "Sternstunde music".

After two minutes of almost breathless silence, which is due to the TV announcement, Järvi finally comes to the conductor's podium, bows confidently and raises the baton. But the concert does not begin with Sibelius' full-length symphony, but with Pärt's play "If Bach had bred bees. . .", to which Pärt has added a wind quintet in the new version. After this six-minute work, which pays tribute to the Leipzig Thomaskantor with the B-A-C-H motif and Baroque echoes, one wonders, though, whether this was really a good start. One must understand it probably from Järvi's perspective, letting his term begin with music from his homeland. However, Pärt's busy "bees" are quickly forgotten as the main piece of the evening picks up.

"Kullervo" is a Sturm und Drang work by young Sibelius, who studied in Berlin and Vienna, absorbing the music and life of these big cities. The legend comes from the Finnish national epic "Kalevala", a saga collection by Elias Lönnrot. Kullervo is a tragic hero from the far north, who has experienced a bleak youth and wants to avenge the murder of his father. In the center of the incident is an incestuous love story: The young woman, the Kullervo on his sleigh ride with

gold and sexually seduced, turns out to be his sister! Siegmund and Sieglinde from Wagner's "Valkyrie" greet each other.

Sibelius has formed the material into a work whose five movements are instrumental on the one hand and vocal soloists and one male choir on the other. In terms of genre, the wild composition unites elements of symphony, symphonic poetry, cantata and opera into an idiosyncratic combination. To understand their content, knowledge of the template is essential, which does not make direct access easy.

The first two movements are purely instrumental, and here Järvi's interpretive approach is already evident. He interprets the music from its opposites: he gives a lot of space to both the juxtaposed string sound and the brass melodies reminiscent of folk music, allowing the melancholic dark to shine in the same way as the bright moments. In the fourth movement, where Kullervo, according to the legend, kills the entire family of his criminal uncle, the scherzoic traits take on ironic traits. Compared to Esa-Pekka Salonen's reference recording with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Järvi takes eight minutes more time and does not hesitate to fully enjoy the pathetic moments of the score.

This is especially evident in the central third movement, the seduction scene. That the two vocal interpreters of Kullervo and his sister Sisar are actually siblings gives the scene its special charm. The baritone Ville Rusanen ensnares the woman with a rhetorically expressive voice, the soprano Johanna Rusanen defends herself with a large, opera-trained voice.

The epic element is the men's choir, which symbolically unites the Estonian National Men's Choir (rehearsal: Mikk Üleoja) and the gentlemen of the Zürcher Sing-Akademie (rehearsal: Florian Helgath). The chorus describes the event in a way that soon becomes narrative, sometimes evocative. The evocation of the incest is then left to the orchestra and thus to the audience's imagination: According to the words "Kulta kuihauttelevi" ("Gold seduced the Virgin") is followed by an instrumental interlude that leaves nothing to be desired in terms of clarity.

Conclusion of the inaugural concert: Järvi's debut performance is well done, the Tonhalle Orchestra literally carries it on his hands, and the doors for the compositions from Eastern and Northern Europe announced during the season are wide open. It is to be hoped that the euphoria shown by the new boss and the orchestra will be able to unfold the necessary virulence in the audience.

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Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Thomas Schacher, 3 October 2019

BRUGS KLASSIKER



"Everything's great, I'm very, very excited!" and then via skype there is a "Prost" with a wine glass from the swimming pool and sunset in Palm Beach, Florida. Paavo Järvi has spoken, and he doesn't usually say much. But what he says sits, as it does now. "The Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra has enormous potential, there is so much flexibility, skill and will, I am totally surprised. If we want to, then we can really fly. And I like it!" That was a few months ago. Now it became a reality with the boss. And not so inappropriately, in the alternative quarter of the Tonhalle Maag, in the new shabby area, so not by the Zürichsee, but in Hardbrücke - still only an S-Bahn station away from the main station. And now it is already clear: after the disastrous time with the failure of Lionel Bringuier this will be good, very good. And when the (of course belated) move to the renovated Tonhalle takes place, things will get even better.

They like each other. You could hear it on the well-considered inaugural evening. He mixed Estonian with Finnish, new with rare. Nonstop. Completely focused on the music and the program. Heavy-blooded and unfamiliar. Late romantic in line with the intended Tchaikovsky cycle, which Paavo Järvi plans to play as a honeymoon with his new orchestra in the coming months. "If Bach had bred bees..." it whispers and buzzes right at the beginning with an old Arvo-Pärt composition, which had been specially re-orchestrated for the present Estonian National Shrine. Baroque and insect flight blend into the usual Pärt mixture of meditation and irony, with piano "klong" and percussion "bäng" - and after only six minutes it has already been hummed out again. The Creator is applauded kindly.

The rarely heard, almost 80 minutes long, nationally romantic choral cantata "Kullervo" is more substantial. An early work (1892) by Jean Sibelius on the greatest ruffian from the "Kalevala" epic, so important for Finland's identity. Of course, the bombastic work has never been played in Zurich. And the Tonhalle Orchestra, whose DNA is fortunately still shaped by David Zinman's slender Beethoven ideal, is going to the full here, consciously challenged with the other extreme. Tough and wide, the tone stream rolls, but takes off when it comes to the wild hunt with the sledge.

The central, ramparts-like rape and incest scene between brother and sister (spicily sung here with vocal bursts of flame from Johanna and Ville Rusanen) is quite a great Nordic opera. "There is a situation here," said director Ilona Schmiel, who had previously described the welcome in a ladylike way, while Martin Vollenwyder, the president of the Tonhalle Society, proved to be a very witty, quick-witted Swiss animator. Later the melodies nestle nicely, crashing into the fight, a massive colourful "Moritaten panorama" stretches to the dawning death of Kullervo.

This is followed by an equally triumphant choral song from Sibelius' "Lemminkäinen" cycle as an encore. Once again, the virile penetration of the Estonian National Men's Choir RAM and the gentlemen of the Zurich Sing Academy can prove itself voluminously. Then there is beer from baskets - Estonian, of course, with a white shark on the label. Of course, no one was bitten on this promising evening. And the next morning, Papa Neeme and Mama Liilia are also there, it

was probably late, Paavo Järvi blinks again in the breakfast room sunlight. We head straight for the photo session with the whole orchestra for the next season: After the kick-off is before the kick-off.

And the new boss is bursting with enthusiasm and ideas. In addition to his NHK Symphony Orchestra in Japan and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, this is now the perfect match for the 55-year-old: here are shekels, awakening and will. His director, whose praise he sings, delivers the equally perfect backup. Together, the first twelve months were cleverly planned: "Our first season is dedicated to my Nordic roots. The Estonian composer Erkki-Sven Tüür, an old friend and companion, was recruited as the new owner of the Creative Chair. Also in the series In Focus I focus on Nordic talent: Martin Fröst, Pekka Kuusisto and Ksenija Sidorova visit us."

For a long time, the rather quiet Paavo Järvi was a silent star of the industry, an industrious worker in the musical vineyard. Appreciated in the classical music scene as reliable, gripping and efficient. Over the last 10 years, his orchestral empire has included the Bremen Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, the Estonian National Orchestra (which he advises), the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the fifth oldest orchestra in the USA, and the Orchestre de Paris. In the meantime, the USA, the Frankfurter and the French are a thing of the past, although he is still a welcome guest everywhere. For now, the people of Zurich will have to continue to share their Paavo with Tokyo. And the flexible North German Chamber Orchestra was and is a matter close to his heart.

Because it was precisely this that he made fly - like himself. The Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie under Paavo Järvi effortlessly pushed itself to the top of similar free formations with its symphonic Beethoven cycle, which was created shortly after the groundbreaking Beethoven cycle of The Zurich ensemble under David Zinman. They were the first to make music after the notes of the new Beethoven edition by Norman de Mar. And the Germans followed them: furious, fresh and unconsumed, as if in a breath, the composer is good for them as a teacher and toy, as an object of identification and warning, or simply as a source of never-consuming orchestral joy. And Paavo Järvi now wants to reconnect with this on Lake Zurich.

Järvi's fast-paced individual rhetoric, the orchestra's instrumental prowess, the common will that heralds dream-proof consensus with the chief conductor - one can certainly interpret such as a good harbinger of the Zurich partnership. "I feel the energy of awakening among my Swiss musicians," says Järvi. "I still hear a lot of Zinman, the orchestra has retained this identity. Here is money and energy and there is good management. I felt all this when I conducted there for the first time three years ago, then again. And then we were basically already partnered," he recalls with delight. "Often two out of four prerequisites are right, but here everything was fine."

He goes on to praise the fact that it is not just a cuddly rhetoric: "The orchestra stands for awakening. I am looking forward to the renovated Tonhalle, but also the Tonhalle-Maag replacement quarter has proven itself excellently, bringing new listeners and welding the musicians together. I would like to continue with that. We need to do even better, especially in the social media aspect, and we need to be visually present. Just like the Berliner Philharmoniker

with their Digital Concert Hall. Sponsors for this would have to be found on the spot. The Internet is a wonderful communication tool. The Estonians are very fit in this. Our concerts must not remain a one-sided affair. Music is exchange."

That's why Paavo Järvi has been busy recording CDs. With his silver discs on Telarc, Virgin, Erato and Sony, he is present in the recording market like hardly any of his generation besides Simon Rattle. And now Alpha released the first CD of the Tonhalle Orchestra under Paavo Järvi - with music by Olivier Messiaen, recorded live. "I wanted to surprise, challenge the musicians a little bit. They have passed that test brilliantly. Messiaen sounds sensual and awake, just right for us. Next, however, we prepare the Tchaikovsky cycle, because the orchestra should be able to play out its late-Romantic qualities. And I also think about Bruckner. For this purpose, Mahler, Berlioz and modern music will be more on the menu. Also, regular engagement with Haydn - which I also do in Bremen - Mozart and, once again, Beethoven, are intended to optimize the interplay, the common hearing."

One could of course have started with Jean Sibelius for the recording market, with Estonian, with late romanticism, all the music that lies in the blood of this new partnership. But they chose an unusual program with only one contemporary composer. Last year, a portion of representative orchestral music was recorded by The French Olivier Messiaen, who loves and explores french music as Catholic as the birds. And even the talking titles point to this background: L'ascension - the Ascension; Le tombeau resplendissant - the magnificent tomb; Les offrandes oubliées - the forgotten offerings; and the late un sourire - a smile. This is raucously iridescent sound dances, nervous and narcotic.

No doubt, this sometimes a little reserved, technocratic behaving conductor, has golden hands. And he uses them, too. What else does Paavo Järvi say about his Zurich era? "You can do a lot, but you can approach things relaxed." Just like your future boss right now. Next week, by the way, he will be back at the podium with the Berliner Philharmoniker. Conducting nobility obliges.

Brugs Klassiker, Manuel Brug, 3 October 2019

Like heavy-duty, the chords divide the space, zigzag, zigzag, dodge uselessly. Something bad happened in Jean Sibelius's "Kullervo", something that can no longer be made up. The girl, who couldn't resist Kullervo's gold, turned out to be her missing sister. And before he can judge himself for this blood-shaming, the music does.

A bleak piece? Oh yes. And certainly a surprising one for a concert with which a new chief conductor takes office. But if this chief conductor is Called Paavo Järvi: Then it fits perfectly. He could have made it easier. Programming a hit, letting a star soloist fly in, picking up the standing ovation. But Järvi wanted to show more, namely what he is about here in Zurich, and why he wears not only the title of Chief Conductor but also that of a Music Director: he not only wants to conduct, but also to shape the artistic orientation of the orchestra.

So instead of a star soloist, he imported the Estonian National Men's Choir RAM, which together with the men of the Zurich Singakademie took over the narrator function in "Kullervo": so strong and relentless that it shuddered. The solo parts were sung by Johanna and Ville Rusanen, who, in addition to the tones, also brought the old Finnish text to life (and are actually siblings).

And there was another guest: the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, who for this opening his 1976 work "If Bach had bred bees..." has been revised. This six-minute piece was played at the start of the evening, as a witty and whimsical counterpoint to the dramatic-archaic "Kullervo".

The Estonian Järvi brought his own world to Zurich - and at the same time emphasized that he is interested in nothing beyond working with the orchestra. Because the Tonhalle musicians were able to show what they can do in this program; and also how much energy and ambition they are ready to give in working with Järvi.

With Verve they interpreted Pärt's points, the buzzing of the violins, the B-A-C-H of the horn, the pseudo-baroque movement into which the whole thing ends. With "Kullervo" you could have painted the soundscape, moss green and simmering yellow, with a stab into the gloom already where the world still seems okay.

It takes a full half hour for the choir and singers to start in this 70-minute piece, and even after that the orchestra comes to the fore again and again: with descriptions of nature, with the most threatening love scene in music literature, with the tonal translation of inner as well as external struggles.

Järvi sharpened, adjusted the balance, lured orchestral soloists from the reserve, rounded the overall sound, in short: he ensured that this Tonhalle premiere deserved minute-long applause. And he already announced what lies ahead in the next project, the complete performance and recording of the Tchaikovsky symphonies. That he won't just celebrate these hits as hits - you can rely on that after this kick-off.

Very close to an unapproachable - an encounter with Arvo Pärt

The smallest movement, and it is already there. The protective hand in the back. It belongs to the chief conductor Paavo Järvi (56), the back to the cult composer Arvo Pärt (84). It is a gesture full of humanity and almost the first thing I see at the rehearsal in Zurich. The same hand will one day later tame those massive masses of sound that Sibelius has piled up in his choral symphony "Kullervo". Bright, big, but always full of elegance.

The concert is the season opening of the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich. A special opening, finally, ringing in the collaboration with the new chief conductor. "The eleventh in the 151-year history of the orchestra," announces Intendant Ilona Schmiel on the opening night visibly proud.

Much has been heard about this hand of Paavo Järvi. Muscled it was, even solid like steel, but always covered by a velvet glove. "I still do not know what the critics mean by that," the Estonian conductor told this newspaper at his recent guest appearance in Zurich.

Now you will have an opportunity to find out. Much opportunity: Järvi's contract runs from 2019/20 for five years. And the 56-year-old wants to be present in Zurich: audible, visible and perceptible - especially because one missed the latter with his predecessor Lionel Bringuier.

The fact that he personally joined the renovation tour of the Tonhalle in the context of the season opening, is attributable to this will to perceptibility. It is incomparably more beautiful to be allowed to watch Paavo Järvi and composer Arvo Pärt rehearsing together.

And on this Tuesday morning, one day before the opening, the Tonhalle Maag seems to have suddenly turned into an Estonian island (the country in the Baltics actually has over 2000 of them). Quiet and in gentle staccato they discuss in the local language.

In addition to conductor Paavo Järvi, Arvo Pärt sits in an orchestra chair. But it does not last long for the 84-year-old. Already, the tall man stands up surprisingly agile: "Maybe that's too loud," he says softly.

"Maybe" is a word that Arvo Pärt often uses anyway. For example, if he asks for more form in the music. "It develops and it disappears," he explains to the instrumentalist of the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, answering one of my long-held interview questions: How to play his music, which is made up of many small patterns.

Contemplative as a natural phenomenon or with will to form and direction? In the work just to be rehearsed "If Bach had bred bees ..." it is clearly the latter.

The media-shy composer hardly ever gives interviews. When I help him spontaneously to stow the notes in the full briefcase and ask how difficult it is for the orchestra to play his transparent music, Arvo Pärt takes a deep breath and answers: "Well, yes." I'm catching on: The fact that a single viola in the back of the orchestra starts the piece as a soloist is daring. I look expectantly, Pärt very friendly. After all, he just says, "Well, yes."

What a journalist disappoints is apparently the answer in Estonia to all questions of life, as I learn from natives. "Nu ja" is like Theodor Fontane's "This is too far afield" - with even fewer words. This fits the music of Pärt, which is also limited to a few notes.

But his newly edited version of this piece for Zurich and premiered at the season opening buzzes and buzzes. The first half is unusually full of suspense, performance and chromaticism - probably because of the four chromatic tones B-A-C-H, which structure the piece.

The Tonhalle Orchestra does not take it easy to stray and yes, even to indulge. Because: You could put the work under quiet kitsch suspicion, if Arvo Pärt itself would not be completely unkitschig.

But maybe kitsch has another meaning in the far north. After all, even Sibelius does not save on pathos in his orchestral saga "Kullervo", even though this is of a completely different caliber.

And the new chief conductor Paavo Järvi? He admits the heaviness of the music, brings it to shine - almost in the style of American orchestras - and supported by the majestic soprano Johanna Rusanen and Ville Rusanen as Kullervo. **Above all, he keeps the forces and masses in the most beautiful balance. There is nothing arbitrary, nothing forced, nothing trained.**

Much had to be read about Järvi's supposedly iron-velvet-bound hand. On this evening, he actually succeeds in modeling the heaviness of the music as if it were something fine and easy. And when at the end, with enthusiastic applause, a listener with a box of Swiss chocolates comes to the edge of the stage - there this hand moves involuntarily to Paavo Järvi's heart.

Tagblatt, Anna Kardos, 4 October 2019



Paavo Järvi in Zurich - Promising start with a visionary

The Finnish language, the intrusiveness of the mostly unanimously conducted choral part and the self-confident conviction with which Paavo Järvi lets the musicians present the epic tragedy of the avenger Kullervo: only that shows that in Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra is now again a visionary spirit at work.

Järvi once again lets the orchestra grow beyond itself when he makes his debut, spurring it to a high-class performance, as he has already done with previous guest conductors.

The overall sound is already more clearly balanced than in the time of his predecessor Lionel Bringuier, the individual instrument groups sound more homogeneous, the interplay is more precise. **Järvi was thus able to bring in his aesthetics, which are aimed at clarity and audibility. In this way he continues the work of David Zinman, who at the turn of the millennium earned the orchestra such an international reputation.**

The most obvious innovation on the podium is the orchestral line-up: Järvi lets the orchestra play again in the so-called German or antiphonic line-up, the first violins to his left, the second to his right and the deeper strings more profiled positioned in the middle. This was the usual line-up for all orchestras until the 1920s, until the American line-up with the violin groups prevailed side by side, mainly for recording reasons. Until then, however, the composers had conceived their works for the original line-up, and had composed a number of dialogue-setting passages for the violin registers, which only come into effect in the German line-up and thus in a kind of stereo effect.

It is compelling, for example, for the composed rift in the finale of Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique", which Järvi conducts in Zurich in October. The 56-year-old podium star thus pushes the integration of historically informed performance practice into the Tonhalle orchestral playing even further than David Zinman did in the past. Järvi also sets new accents in the program. "Kullervo" has never been seen in concert in Zurich, nor has the new version of Arvo Pärt's rather simple piece "If Bach had bred bees..." which Järvi premiered yesterday. Overall, the music of Nordic composers now has considerably more space in addition to the orchestra's classical-romantic repertoire: the new chef presents works by his contemporary Estonian compatriots Pärt and Erkki-Sven Tüür as well as symphonies by Carl Nielsen and Jean Sibelius.

So Järvi brings a breath of fresh air from the north-north-east to Zurich, bringing new vigour to the orchestra, which was confirmed in the performance of "Kullervo", which is as detailed as it is poignant. He conveys the drama of the work and guides the orchestra, the Estonian National Choir and the Zurich Singakademie as well as the outstanding vocal soloists Johanna and Ville Rusanen with a clear hand and superior vision through the giant work.

New Chief Conductor Paavo Järvi opens new Zurich season with stirring *Kullervo* at Tonhalle

Posters around the city, featuring a prominent picture of Paavo Järvi, proudly trumpet the arrival of the esteemed Estonian maestro for the start of his official tenure as Chief Conductor of the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich. A few years ago, it was the turn of a relatively unknown young Frenchman in that post, Lionel Bringuier, but while his arrival was announced with a degree of hope and optimism, Järvi's arrival is stated with palpable confidence and no little excited expectation. Järvi has nothing at all to prove: he can therefore start his programming with a statement of bold intent. (His next concerts, admittedly, feature Tchaikovsky symphonies - but halls do need to be filled).

So, who else to start us off on this journey of discovery but Järvi's fellow Estonian and very good friend Arvo Pärt. Pärt originally composed the piece with the intriguing title *If Bach had been a beekeeper or If Bach had bred bees* back in 1976 and the work has been repeatedly rearranged by the composer. Originally composed for harpsichord, instrumental ensemble and tape, Pärt then created a second arrangement for piano, wind quintet, string orchestra and percussion. Now, 35 years later, he has returned to the same material and revised the entire score yet again, making it more compact and engaging. The piece was a gift to the orchestra from the composer, not a commission: such is the friendship between Pärt and Järvi. The short (6-minute) work is based on the number four and the notes B-A-C-H. It only took a few notes to recognise Pärt's distinctive sound world. The work is in two separate parts, the first (in which woodblock and buzzing strings play prominent roles) is in Pärt's inimitable *tintinnabuli* (Latin for bell) style; the second, more melodic section is more expressive and pseudo-baroque. Pärt was present at the première, as was Paavo's distinguished father, Neeme, now in his eighties.

Sibelius was only 25 when he wrote *Kullervo*, and this was his breakthrough. It was a time when the Finnish people's feelings of national identity and resentment of their Russian overlords were reaching fever pitch. With this work, Sibelius became the cultural figurehead of the nationalist movement.

***Kullervo* is still a relative rarity in concert halls outside Scandinavia and the Baltics.** The work is a lengthy five-movement symphonic poem with soloists in one movement and a men's chorus in two. A first-rate choir with a firm command of the Finnish language is required, plus two preferably Finnish soloists who know the work and a conductor with a strong grasp of, and penchant for, Sibelius. Järvi had, of course, assembled exactly the right team. **The work takes 75 minutes and is not generally known to Swiss audiences - so not a sure-fire box office hit; however, three consecutive virtually sold-out performances said it all for Järvi's official debut.**

Sibelius was reluctant to have *Kullervo* performed in later life on two grounds. First, he had intended to revise it, appreciating that it was an immature work. Secondly, he wanted the piece to appear to be uninfluenced by other composers (Grieg often came to my mind) or folk music. *Kullervo* was not performed again until Sibelius's son-in-law conducted it in 1958, the year after the composer's death, and the work was not recorded until much later. Paavo's father Neeme, conducting the Gothenburg Orchestra, is just one of the few conductors who have recorded the work.

The rather gloomy story of *Kullervo* forms just one small part of the *Kalevala*, Finnish mythology. Kullervo, a young warrior, is on a journey seeking revenge for his father's death, when he encounters three maidens. He tries to seduce all three, but only the third yields to him. Afterwards he discovers the maiden is his own long-lost sister (shades of Siegfried and Sieglinde). She kills herself in shame and tries to drown his own disgrace by fighting wars. Eventually fate leads him back to the place of the seduction, where he kills himself. The piece is rather bleak, the chorus declamatory throughout. The soloists often sound tormented. It is an epic journey, expressed through galloping or trudging rhythms, interspersed by some beautiful moments. Few in the audience could follow, let alone understand the Finnish text, and the hall was too dimly lit to be easily able to follow the German translation. For some, I suspect, the work was somewhat of a feat of endurance.

How fitting that Johanna Rusanen and Ville Rusanen are brother and sister. Johanna trained at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and in Kuopio, her hometown. She has sung Turandot, Ortrud and Isolde in major opera houses and this season she will sing Brünnhilde at the Finnish National Opera. She should be well up to the task. Her solo role in *Kullervo* is apparently her trademark – she has recently sung it in Prague, Tokyo and Chicago. I cannot imagine it better, or more expressively sung; it was a veritable *tour de force*. Ville Rusanen's gravelly baritone almost paled in comparison, but he was always commanding. He has sung the role in recent years in Dublin, Sydney, Gothenburg and Savonlinna.

Almost stealing the show were the massive (80-strong) men of the Estonian National Male Voice Choir bolstered by the men from the Zurich Sing-Akademie. They often sang in unison and the effect was shattering. Some read from electronic tablets rather than printed scores, and one, impressively, sang by heart. They were on top of the Finnish language, as far as I could detect. The orchestra also had their chance to shine, especially the trombones and the hard-working tuba. **This was the first time the orchestra had played *Kullervo* and they clearly enjoyed it. They were also visibly proud of their new catch on the podium: Järvi swayed elegantly with the music, his beat easy to follow, with clear signals to soloists, principals and chorus.**

The orchestra and the people of Zurich can now surely look forward to many seasons of exciting music making of the highest quality.

Seen and Heard International, John Rhodes, 5 October 2019



New at the Zurich helm, Paavo Järvi points north

Paavo Järvi launched his tenure as the new Music Director and Chief Conductor of Zurich's fine Tonhalle Orchestra with repertoire that pointed to Scandinavia. It was fitting that he affirmed his northern roots, calling first on the work of his Estonian countryman, the composer Arvo Pärt. *If Bach had been a Beekeeper*, a short work which dates from 1976, had recently been revised for a full configuration of musicians - piano, wind quintet, string orchestra and percussion - and this new version was presented for the first time here in Zurich. "I wanted to make the work more compact and engaging," Pärt said, "to bring out the musical structure even more clearly."

Since the late 1970s, Pärt has worked in a minimalist style that underpins what he calls *tintinnabuli*, (from the Latin *tintinnabulum*, "a bell"), a compositional technique that is his own, highly personal and distinctive approach to stepwise, harmonic material. Pärt's music often bears resemblance to the stillness, austere simplicity and spiritual atmosphere of Gregorian chant, but also crucial to his work is its celebration of singing as a vital part of the Estonian national identity. Pärt is the living composer most frequently performed around the world today, so it was even more thrilling to find that he himself was seated in our concert audience.

The piece, which lasts only some six minutes, is based on the number four and the notes B, A, C and H. The strings largely sustain the hum of insects, and lend the work its "buzz" and fresh demeanour. Its whimsical world mesmerised the Zurich hall. Maestro Järvi pinned himself firmly to one spot, but his is a noble posture and, signalling his cues, his hands moved like those of a dancer cupping sounds. The musicians gave clear foundation to a score that oscillates between dissonance and consonance, between tension and welcome degrees of release. At its conclusion, Pärt himself came forward to acknowledge the honour paid him, and chivalrously, presented the bouquet designated for him to the gifted concertmaster, Julia Becker.

Jean Sibelius' *Kullervo* followed, a suite of five symphonic movements based on the character in the epic Finnish poem, the *Kalevala*. Premiered in 1892 in Helsinki, the work features a host of resounding choral voices and two soloists in the tragic roles of ill-fated brother and sister. Here in Zurich, those roles were sung by the Finnish soprano Johanna Rusanen and baritone Ville Rusanen who, incidentally, are also brother and sister. The large configuration of the Estonian National Men's Choir was joined on stage by members of the fine Zürcher Sing-Akademie. That made for a superb choir of some 70 singers behind the full orchestra, which was impressive by any standard.

Kullervo, which had never been performed by the Tonhalle before, is marked by a thick fabric of sound around a narrative that includes episodes of seduction, incest, overwhelming guilt and, ultimately, two suicides. Understandably, Järvi had to bring out the high drama with far more animation than he'd had to conjure up with the Pärt. And here, he underscored the conflict and confusion of the tragic drama with demonstrative gestures and real athleticism, barring any self-

serving or tiresome theatrics. He was able to elicit a maximum response with even modest signals - the twist of two fingers, or the bend of a knee underscoring the musicians' precision and dogged persistence.

Given that the piece ran some 70 minutes, was largely unfamiliar and sung in Finnish, some of its dramatic impact was compromised. Much of the drama went missing in the mix, while the orchestra, two choirs and both soloists, all of them excellent, took the foreground.

Järvi's focus may have been less on the glam or explosive effects, and more on the skill and carriage of the musicians' achievements with the monumental score. And that, at very start of his tenure in Zurich, is a promising sign. As seasoned music critic Christian Wildhagen recently reported in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*: "... up to now every ensemble in which (Järvi) has worked as principal conductor over a long time sounded better, more precise and, above all, more inspired in the end." That bodes well for an orchestra that's already shown itself as polished as the Tonhalle is today.

bachtrack.com. Sarah Batschelet, 4 October 2019

The veteran Tonhalle Orchestra, founded in 1868, isn't one to rest on its laurels. Its energy and administration these days is young, imaginative and determined. In its present temporary concert hall in Zürich's West district - a sonically flattering space built in seven months while the old Tonhalle, a magnificent lakeside auditorium inaugurated by Brahms in 1895, is being restored, scheduled for re-opening in March 2021 - artists, musicians and audience mingle freely. Airs and graces, diva pretensions, elitism, don't go down well here. Along corridors of industrial piping and rough-sawn wood, wandering reception areas, anyone can talk to anyone about anything, from music to murals, politics to psychology, art to aesthetics, life. The enthusiasm and drive, the urge to create a diverse, welcoming twenty-first-century environment, is palpable. During the 2019/20 season, forty-five orchestral concerts, thirty-six chamber programmes and eight guest-artist dates are planned. The spread is wide, including lunchtime, rush-hour and late-evening events, jam sessions, and family concerts and school/youth projects, the variety of themes taking in not just standard repertory but also film and literature. Focussed artists include the enticing prospect of Martin Fröst, Pekka Kuusisto and the Latvian accordionist Ksenija Sidorova. Pollini, too, is scheduled.

With Paavo Järvi taking up the reins as chief conductor, a grounded new chapter is under way. Bringing with him the experience of a chain of distinguished European appointments including the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Orchestre de Paris, he identifies well with the Tonhalle psyche. An approachable man of vision but pragmatism, eloquent with words, he speaks passionately about his ideas. Overseeing the orchestra's return to its original home, the prospect of rehearsing and making music in such an ambience, acoustic and atmosphere, of "playing the hall" like a matured instrument, the vibration of the stage flooring extending out to the audience, is something clearly meaningful. "You can build a new hall", he says, "but not an old one." Seeing the Tonhalle retake its place among the great European venues of its past - the Concertgebouw, the Musikverein, the Rudolfinum - is something he, like those around him, views with understandable pride and anticipation.

Järvi's previous tenures have seen significant recording or video projects - cycles of Beethoven in Bremen and Sibelius in Paris, for instance. With the Tonhalle, with whom he's just released a Messiaen album recorded earlier this year, he'll be undertaking the Tchaikovsky Symphonies for Alpha Classics. He'll also be in charge of a conductors' training academy. And under his watch the Estonian composer, islander and self-confessed Tausendsassa (jack of all trades) has been given the orchestra's Creative Chair. **There's a buzz in the air.**

Inaugurating Järvi's appointment, this gala concert was about statement, history and the big stage. The audience, with a healthy young to middle-age spread, included some famous faces. Arvo Pärt for one, a spry eighty-four-year-old. Paavo's father, Neeme, for another. The ghost of Paavo's godfather, Paavo Berglund - prominent in the revival of Sibelius's early, posthumously published symphonic cantata Kullervo, whose first London performance of it I remember reviewing in late-1970 - haunted the room, the orchestra playing from his marked parts.

At around seventy-seven minutes, Järvi took a resonantly spacious view of the work. **A musician who's lived all his life with the sound and engine of Sibelius's music, he set the pulse and temperature early on. The strings** – antiphonal violins, cellos and violas before the podium, double basses to the upper left – **possessed a rich, dark patina, digging deep in the third movement, their pizzicato accord penetrating and warm; the woodwinds excelled**, not least oboe and cor anglais; **the brass glowed and rasped**. Long gone the days when Sibelius's revolutionary timpani writing was apologised for, **the attack, precision and detail was remarkable, the swells and cadences** (the whiplash signing off the third movement for instance) **rattled home with the touch and drama of a complete master at the helm**. Järvi, a cultured presence, has never been the most demonstrative of conductors, but here he gave way to an animation and physical intensity that produced some startling moments, encouraging the orchestra to heightened levels of commitment and response. His long-breathed paragraphing, developing momentum and climax from circling, cellular repetitions, impressed, with especially characterful results in the fourth and final movements. Tempo too was finely attuned, that of the fourth movement, 'Kullervo goes to War' – as tricky to set (and for the strings to articulate) as the first movement of the Third Symphony – tightly sprung and inexorable.

The Finnish brother-and-sister duo of Johanna and Ville Rusanen brought their customary vocal authority to the third movement, she possibly more-fiery than I have heard before, and he certainly rising to a convincing progression of character and theatrical tensioning. Placed high above the orchestra, the men of the combined Estonian National Choir and Zürich Sing-Akademie, just under seventy strong, the former adding a gravelled, powerful timbre to the old Finnish dialect of the text, projected lustily, necessarily slightly rough-edged yet all of a piece. **By the end** – the demise of the ill-fated Kullervo impaled on his sword of the hour – **the orchestra thundering mightily, the choir at full voice, each pause immaculately sensed and delivered – the awareness of being at a great performance, of five tone-poems forged into a single entity, was inescapable**. Astonishing to think, reflecting on the virtuosity and stylistic breath of the evening, that this was the Tonhalle's first-ever outing of the work, and there had only been ten hours of rehearsal – two days – beforehand. The players, around a hundred of international mix but with a Swiss core, attributed it to the security of Järvi's beat and the clarity of his communication, getting what he needs with the minimum of fuss.

The concert opened with a little gem from Pärt, not a commission but a gift, an orchestral re-working of his brief B-A-C-H-based Wenn Bach Bienen gezüchtet hätte ... from 1976 (originally Portrait of a Musicologist Against the Background of a Wasp Nest), more familiar these days in its 2001 incarnation for piano, wind quintet, strings and percussion. Familiar music unfamiliarly slanted, it worked beautifully, its delicate casting suggesting a gentle prelude or entr'acte, the B-major close (the coda alluding to the B-minor Prelude from Book One of the 'Forty Eight') drawing a hushed curtain across time. "Tintinnabulation", Pärt says, "is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers – in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity." The reception was warm, the communication between conductor and composer touching in a familial way.

Bringing together the well-known and the unexpected is Järvi's ambition for his new orchestra. But not all, he promises, will be dark and northern, though it may well be emotional and intense. His encore, Sibelius's A Song for Lemminkäinen, Opus 31/1 (1895) - Lemminkäinen the shamanistic figure of Finnish mythology, the archetypal war-hero of the Kalevala - showcased choir and orchestra robustly, horns in full cry, rhythm at a premium, the cut and canter of things to come in ascendant, brilliant light. One of those memorable nights.

classicalsource.com, Ates Orga, 3 October 2019

Postimees

The era of Paavo Järvi has begun

Arguably, the head of the Zurich Orchestra has been a more influential authority than the city's own mayor, because they are counted as one of the best in the world, and in this list are included, for example, both the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic. The orchestra is therefore the pride and joy of the town. The city, in turn, is one of the world's leading financial centers. When you comment on this claim Järvi remains modest, saying, "Let's see what happens." But in his eyes, a spark is flying.

It is certain that it is an important moment for Paavo Järvi as he joins this 150-year-old collective. "It's one of the world's finest orchestras, they're mighty. I'm very happy. My dream is becoming a reality,» He announces with satisfaction after a successful opening concert - the applause of the audience was strong and loud.

As Chief Conductor the arrival of Paavo Järvi has been a major event not only for the orchestra, but also in the cultural world, and the number of journalists who were present for the opening concert confirmed that. On October 2nd the concert was streamed by Mezzo, a few days later the broadcast was also shown on Swiss television. On the 13th October a new documentary film is broadcast.

Paavo Järvi is feeling relaxed not only in front of the orchestra, but also in communicating with the media, on social media - his Instagram account is tracked by more than 23 600 people, on Facebook he has 13 160 and on Twitter 25 200 fans.

With the music journalists, the boss continues to focus on everyone, he throws a joke, posing for photographs, he is in every place because he knows that the more enjoyment the press have when they leave Zurich, the better for him. Because being the chief of the Zurich Orchestra is not

an easy task - the audience is aware, but are rather a conservative-tasting bunch of people who are accustomed to the best and know what they want. «They are demanding,» says Järvi-

The term of the previous Chief Conductor was limited to four years, and the previous but one was in office for 19 years. Paavo Järvi's contract has been set for five years and provides that he must spend 14 weeks a year with the Zurich orchestra. "It's a little tight, but it's fascinating," he comments, especially as in addition to his work with the Tonhalle orchestra he is still Chief Conductor of the Japanese NHK Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen. At the heart of Järvi's work is also the Estonian Festival Orchestra.

However, Paavo Järvi is not only the Tonhalle's Chief Conductor, but also the Music Director, and this second title gives him the opportunity to speak for the whole orchestra, including the final word that is being taken and called by the conductor. This is a great responsibility, but an even greater opportunity. «And here I also have very good partners, they are as ambitious as I am,» recognizes Järvi.

But how does the conductor choose the orchestra and vice versa? «It's like choosing a partner in life. If you feel that there is some kind of communication, common energy, you speak the same language, then there is a presumption of cooperation created,» says Paavo Järvi adding that first must be mutual interest.

Although the orchestra proposed the position to Järvi immediately after their first concert together, the "wooing" of each other took some time. Now, In addition to concerts, Järvi and the orchestra have also recorded their first CD with Olivier Messiaen music. "... I just wanted to give something that was not expected from us,» Explains Järvi, about why the Tonhalle and Alpha Classics record company recorded this disc.

During the extensive renovation of the old concert hall, the orchestra built a temporary home that gives concerts until 2021. March. The House of the Maag, which recalls the EMTA Concert hall and theatre house, was where Paavo Järvi greeted the audience for his inauguration concert. For this first concert as Chief Conductor on 2nd October, Paavo Järvi conducted Arvo Pärt's work "if Bach would have been bees..." The premiere of a new version and the creation of Jean Sibelius: Finnish national pride «Kullervo-Symphony» and Cantata «Song Lemminkäiselle», where, alongside the orchestra were soloists Johanna and Ville Rusanen, the Zurich Song Academy and the Estonian National Male Choir (Choir Master Mikk Üleoja).

Maag is modern, but with excellent acoustics and space for 1224 listeners. Based in the former industrial area, a temporary concert hall built by the Tonhalle Orchestra is the home of the musicians until March 2021. At which point the extensive renovation work at the 1895 concert hall on Lake Zurich will be complete. The new opening will be a major event, says Järvi, and already whilst the renovation is still ongoing, you can feel that it a particularly delicious venue with a unique acoustic. «It can now be even better,» believes Järvi who believes that the hall is not only the orchestra's home but also makes an invaluable contribution to the music.

On the press tour of the hall renovation, amongst the scaffolding and protective film-coated hall, Paavo Järvi has announced to the international Group of journalists that, in 2021, they will hear

«Kullervot» for a second time (*uh-oh she didn't realise it was a joke!*) – This Sibelius work was unexpected. The most controversial opinions in the concert for the ordination of Paavo Järvi.

Paavo Järvi admits that the works selected for the opening concert are unexpected and may even be difficult and dark for the Zurich audience. "Yes, but I wanted to let it go," says Järvi. "Everyone thought I would programme Mahler or Beethoven, something popular. But why do as others? I wanted to show that the change is happening, that not everyone goes the old way, not only to hear the music that the life time has already heard. I'm sure there will be Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and all the others. The Baltic and Nordic music is very often not played here, and my mission is to introduce it. Even though no one believed I was going to do such a plan, it was a big break, but they liked it!» explains Järvi.

Paavo Järvi also confirms in post-concert conversations ... that he was satisfied, the orchestra sounded wonderfully in his opinion, and everything went as he wished. «The whole gang was together,» added Järvi, bearing in mind that for the important evening his family were present: among others, Father Maestro Neeme Järvi and mother Lily, Sister Maarika, as well as composer Arvo Pärt.

In his first season as a Chief conductor of the Tonhalle Symphony Orchestra, Järvi wants to focus on introducing the works of the Nordic composers. During the season, Erkki-Sven Tüür is resident composer with the Tonhalle Orchestra, which means that his works are in focus in Zurich.

Speaking of the opening programme, Järvi says that the first concert could never be more devoted to Estonia: the Estonian national Male Choir was present (even for a rich orchestra, the flight of the male choir was a challenge, especially in a very expensive town, like Zurich, and this luxury was said to be allowed only for a special occasion in the case of Järvi), and Arvo Pärt was also present ...

Paavo Järvi and Arvo Pärt have already had many years of inspiring cooperation. «Paavo Järvi is not only my compatriot, but also a musician I highly appreciate and whose musical knowledge I trust. With all confidence, I can put my last work in his hands and I gladly look forward to our cooperation in Zurich,» said Arvo Pärt before the concert.

Arvo Pärt was also present at 3 October in Zurich, who remained very satisfied with the work of the orchestra and Paavo Järvi. The Tonhalle Orchestra performed "If Bach had had bees..." Written in 1976 the composer has repeatedly made changes in later years ... "I wished to make the work more compact and engaging and bring the musical structure forward even more clearly. To do this, it was necessary to carry out a "Partition", which was explained by Arvo Pärt. «Since this is a very strict system based on the number of four and the notes B-A-C-H, it was not possible to do so only with the eraser and scissors,» He adds, «But I had to do new calculations throughout the work and also to change a formula that is hidden in music.»

The National Male Choir and Paavo Järvi also bind a long collaboration. In 2004 the National Male Choir won the Estonian First Grammy Award – for the recording of the Sibelius Cantatas conducted by Paavo Järvi.

Sibelius' «Kullervo-Symphony» was presented by the Estonian National Male choir and Paavo Järvi for the first time in 1997 in Stockholm and following this collaboration they went on to record the work ...

"Summer is the festival in Pärnu, you must definitely come to Estonia, this is a great place and the Pärnu Festival is fantastic.» These utterances were picked up whilst Paavo Järvi was in conversation with the critics and music journalists. He never left out mention of Estonia. "The promotion of Estonia will never stop," says Järvi confidently.

But it wasn't just Paavo Järvi who initiated an Estonian advertising campaign in Zurich, the orchestra did too. On the Tonhalle website, for example, you can find video tutorials on how to say «Goodbye» or pronounce the word «Jäääär»... Such a Chief of the country's state diamond is by no means common, rather extraordinary, and it shows the importance of Zurich's cooperation with Paavo Järvi. «And Estonia is exotic to them,» comments Paavo Järvi. But not for long, at least in Zurich.

Postimees, Heili Sibrits, 8 October 2019

Additional quotes about Tonhalle am See (taken from Swiss reports on the Tonhalle renovation tour)

Für Paavo Järvi ist der renovierte alte Saal «a dream come true». Jedes Orchester brauche ein Zuhause und es gebe nichts wie den Originalsaal. Da der Raum dabei helfe, den Ton zu produzieren, werde der Konzertsaal selber zum Instrument.

For Paavo Järvi the renovated old hall is "a dream come true". Every orchestra needs a home and there is nothing like the original space. Since the space helps to produce the sound, the concert hall itself becomes an instrument.

Aargauer Zeitung

Mit dem restaurierten Saal, der neuen Orgel und der neuen Bühne werde ein Traum wahr, schwärmte Järvi. Ein alter Konzertsaal mit moderner Technik sei das Beste, was einem passieren könne. Dieser Saal sei auch ein Instrument, ein Teil des Sounds eines Orchesters.

With the restored hall, the new organ and the new stage, a dream came true, enthused Järvi. An old concert hall with modern technology is the best thing that could happen to you. This hall is also an instrument, part of the sound of an orchestra.

Neue Zürcher Zeitung