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ELBE PHILHARMONIC HALL

Sir John Eliot Gardiner captivates the audience

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Verena Fischer-Zernin



Sir John Eliot Gardiner in the Great Hall of the Elbphilharmonie.

Photo: Daniel Dittus

Sir John Eliot Gardiner fascinated the audience in the Great Hall for two hours with his view of Bach's Mass in B minor.

Hamburg. A suicide mission can look so unspectacular. On the far left edge of the stage in the **Elbphilharmonie**, still behind the trumpets, a woman is sitting on a chair, with the matt shimmering brass loops of her natural horn on the floor next to her.

Anneke Scott has the courage to start cold. It will be a good three-quarters of an hour before it starts playing in **Bach's B minor Mass , and it's a tough one.** The solo part in "Quoniam" is tricky.

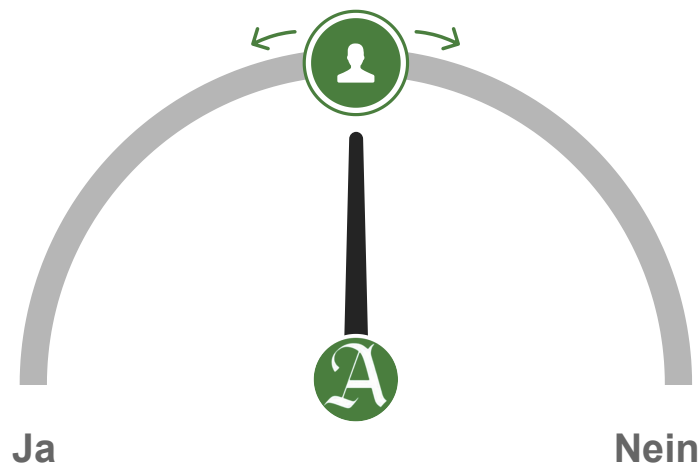
Elbphilharmonie: Sir John Eliot Gardiner captivates the audience

John Eliot Gardiner , who will soon be 80 and is still well known in Hamburg from his time as chief conductor of what is now the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra in the 1980s, can afford it. He came with two luxury ensembles. For two non-stop hours he, the Monteverdi Choir and the English Baroque Soloists will captivate the audience.

The Mass in B minor is considered to be one of the greatest creations in music history, the culmination of Bach's oeuvre. The complex and at the same time dramatic work unfolds like the architecture of a Gothic cathedral. Experiencing it changes you, and that is especially true on this evening.

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OPINARY 

Elbphilharmonie: the pinnacle of Bach's creativity

Choral fugues spread out along the Latin text of the mass, in which each voice can be followed as if in a delicate fabric, and the solo singers in the arias turn to God with moving humanity.

Even this change of perspective captivates the audience, especially since Gardiner takes the transitions so tightly as if he wanted to warn: Don't even think about clapping! No danger this evening. This is about last things, that communicates itself.

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The colorfulness of the old instruments combines wonderfully with the choir

The soloists step forward only for the arias from the choir. The countertenor Reginald Mobley is representative of this style of interpretation from a community spirit, whose flexible, naturally flowing voice ennobles the arias "Qui sedes" and of course especially the "Agnus Dei" to the heart of the performance.

He plays seismographically with the instrumentalists, especially with the continuo cellist. Anneke Scott also makes soulful chamber music. There is no sign of waiting. The horn with its long metal bows sounds delicate, and in terms of volume it can just about hold its own against the pleurably buzzing bassoons. The colorfulness of the old instruments has something untamed and combines wonderfully with the choir.

- Elbphilharmonie: Many roads lead to Bach - concert in the Great Hall in Hamburg
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Its unity is overwhelming. It begins with the consonants, which the singers hurl into the room prematurely in an exemplary manner, so that the sound of the voice is created punctually with the following vowel.

This choir can beg and anger, in the “Qui tollis” the voices nestle full of pain in the dissonances, and they complete the dreaded coloratura of the “Cum Sancto Spiritu” with rapid virtuosity. Only occasionally does the tempo seem to go beyond the message of the music. You can do it. And are rightly applauded at the end.

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Elbe Philharmonic Hall