
October 11th 2008 - Cologne - Altes Pfandhaus - a recital with narration

“IT MUST BE SO” – Leonard Bernstein on Guitar with classical guitarist Lucian Plessner



Very seldom does a recital begin in such an interesting and exciting way as it did on October 11th in the Altes Pfandhaus of Cologne. Simply and without fanfare, Lucian Plessner appeared with his guitar and proceeded to enchant the audience in the sold-out house for the next hour and a half. With an unusual combination of music, singing and narration, he took the public on a journey into the past. Plessner talked about the life of Leonard Bernstein and so offered a view of an unknown side of the famous composer to the audience. There was a lot to smile about, but also to think about, because in Plessner's tellings Bernstein emerged as both a humorist and a sensitive lover of people.

Bernstein himself suggested and authorized Lucian Plessner's transcriptions of his music for classical guitar, which premiered at Yehudi Menuhin's 90th birthday. Plessner's arrangements, the never-before-heard details from Bernstein's daily life, as well as the lighting and ambience of the Altes Pfandhaus, created a particular atmosphere that reflected fully the spirit of the composer. Initially restrained, the artist interpreted Bernstein in his very personal way, and in his playing expressed the maestro's sensitivity and passion.

Not only the mediations on love, grief, joy and hope, but the fine sense for the composer's thinking, caused the evening to be fascinating, interesting and varied. Lucian Plessner, who taught himself to play the guitar, then went through different schools and gained experience in several countries, demonstrated his virtuosity on the instrument this evening, showing both his skill and his creative imagination. The transcribed pieces from Bernstein's Anniversaries had special appeal for the enthusiastic audience in their particularly empathic narration and extraordinarily virtuoso performance. The climax of the evening was marked by the pieces from Bernstein's famous West Side Story. Extended applause rewarded his artistry.

source: <http://www.amerikahaus-nrw.de/rueckblick/74-qit-must-be-so>