

Japan tour with the Taiwan Philharmonic Orchestra

Much in the manner of George Szell in Cleveland more than half a century ago, Lü has worked patiently and steadily to develop an orchestra that responds to his every gesture with hair-trigger accuracy.

Indeed, Lü infuses every note in a musical line with purpose; every phrase, section, and episode has a place in the larger picture. He never loses momentum, and he has mastered the knack of knowing exactly how to pace unfolding dramatic structures so that when the big climaxes arrive, they are truly overwhelming.

Robert Markow, www.classicalvoiceamerica.org, May 25, 2019

Konzert mit dem Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landesorchester Flensburg – Rachmaninow, “Toteninsel”

Aus tiefsten Streicherbässen entspannt sich unter der nuancierenden Leitung von Gastdirigent Shao-Chia Lü langsam eine Klangfläche, die so ruhig scheint wie ein Gebirgssee im Nebel. Dabei gelingen die Klangveränderungen so subtil, dass man geradezu hineingezogen wird in dieses mystische Tongewässer.

Christoph Kalies, Schleswig-Holsteinische Landeszeitung, 30.3.2019

Concert with the Taiwan Philharmonic Orchestra in Seattle – Brahms, Symphony No. 2

In Seattle, Shao-Chia Lü [...] lifted me up and never let go until the end of each movement – such was the continuity he drew from the players. He brought to the Brahms total grasp of form, balances, transparent counterpoint and glowing melodies, especially in the sumptuous viola and cello sections. In the opening movement, the rich power of the development's climax was the perfect contrast for allowing the woodwinds' transparency to glow at the start of the recapitulation.

Gil French American Record Guide, March/April 2019

Concerts with the Taiwan Philharmonic Orchestra in Taipei – Sibelius, Mahler 7th symphony

Shao-Chia Lü, 58, who is truly someone special. Soft-spoken and completely without pretensions off the podium, he becomes an extraordinarily expressive figure on stage, whether with baton or just using his hands. He feels the European tradition intimately and is not afraid to dig beneath it, tapping into the primordial forces behind great music. Lü and his orchestra understood Sibelius's Lemminkäinen Suite (Four Legends from the Kalevala) perfectly well on their own terms, creating a mesmerizing Zen-like stillness that matched Sibelius's northern soundscapes, if with more warmth than one usually gets, as well as plenty of animation and huge crescendos. It was clear from this gutsy, propulsive, rhythmically sharp performance that Lü gets it, and the orchestra gets it too, never flinching from the score's essential

weirdness and exposed dissonances. Everywhere Lü was able to bring out details and fresh balances, making sense of the Rondo Finale without losing sight of its wildness.

Richard S. Ginell, American Record guide July/August 2018

„Tristan und Isolde“ in Peking

Großer Erfolg für die Baden-Badener Osterfestspiel-Produktion „Tristan und Isolde“ nun auch in Peking. Das chinesische Publikum war begeistert. Damit endet eine lange Reise dieser Inszenierung von Mariusz Trelński. Zu sehen war die Neuinszenierung an der Metropolitan Opera, am Warschauer Teatr Wielki – Opera Narodowa und nun eben auch am National Center for the Performing Arts in Peking. Festspielhaus-Intendant Andreas Mölich-Zebhauser und sein chinesischer Kollege Chen Ping wollen auch in Zukunft über gemeinsame Projekte nachdenken. „Tristan“-Cast im Reich der Mitte: Dirigent: ShaoChia Lü 呂紹嘉; Isolde: Ann Petersen; Tristan: Jay Hunter Morris; Kurwenal: Thomas Gazheli.

Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Facebook 08.09.2017

Concert with the Taiwan Philharmonic, December 2016 in Orange County, California

The Taiwan Philharmonic, founded in 1986, is scarcely older than its Chinese counterpart, yet it seemed to have a much deeper connection with the ethos and traditions of Western classical music. I would attribute a lot of this to its excellent Viennese- and American-trained conductor, Shao-Chia Lü, whose physical motions were far more expressive and flowing than those of Yu, and whose ability to get a wealth of nuances and charged-up fervor from his players made a big difference. ..Here Lii got them to play above their heads in a stunning performance of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5, creating suspense in even the most predictable spots with strategic pacing and shaping of climaxes, sharp rhythms, and all kinds of subtle internal details. That’s how you make the overplayed Fifth sound like the great symphony it is.

Richard S. Ginell American Record Guide, March/April 2017

Verdi, Otello in Taipei, Juli 2016

One does not normally attend an Otello production to hear the orchestra, but this one was different. In his mere 7 years at the helm, music director Shao-Chia Lü has brought the National Symphony Orchestra to world-class status. The sound alone is a marvel – beautiful, richly rounded, perfectly balanced, at times of staggering power yet never forced or brash, the latter a quality found only to the world’s very greatest orchestras....Lü is also a master at pacing. Climaxes were prepared so as to leave no doubt where the grand peaks lay....There was also poetry aplenty. Lü has mastered the secret of how to make his orchestra sound like a single, living organism that breathes as one.

Robert Markow, Der neue Merker 08+09/2016.

Bruckner Symphony No. 8 in Taipei, May 2015

Finally: a satisfying live performance of the Bruckner 8th from beginning to end. Finally! He (Shao-Chia Lü) is a passionate conductor and an effective communicator...It was also obvious that Lü is a conductor with fire in his belly...Lü's style is to maintain energy and tension. He pulled back the tempo a little to mark phrase ends, but never let the line go slack. Indeed, after the great brass outbursts, he typically began the softer sections that followed with quicker rather than slower tempos – just the opposite of the more usual loud goes fast/soft goes slow recipe that passes for interpretation these days.

Neil Schore

Taiwan Philharmonic (National Symphony Orchestra) in Geneva, November 2013

...the Taiwan Philharmonic returned to Europe for performances in Paris, Milan, Udine, Geneva and Berlin.....in Geneva magic happened. Taiwan native Shao-Chia Lü, the orchestra's music director since 2010, proved that hearing this warhorse (Beethoven, Symphony No. 7) even for the 1,000th time can still be an exhilarating ride when it is done with the rhythmic precision, carefully calibrated dynamic contrasts, and solid architectural vision he imposed...

The orchestra's sound deserves special mention: full, rich, rounded, and well-balanced in the tradition of the best German orchestras. The Taiwan Philharmonic may well be the most European-sounding of the major Asian orchestras...

Robert Markow, American Record Guide March/April 2014

Taiwan Philharmonic (National Symphony Orchestra) in Berlin, November 2013

Der gebürtige Taiwanese Shao-Chia Lü.....darf als musikalischer Kosmopolit gelten... In der Achten von Dvorak aber zeigt sich, was das Orchester an seinem Dirigenten hat: Als Pultvirtuose führt er es souverän durch die Tempi, haucht dem eher kühlen als seidigen Glanz der Streicher Melodiezauber ein und musiziert stimmungreich und temperamentvoll bis zum trompetenblitzenden Finale.

Sybill Mahlke, Der Tagesspiegel 21.11.2013

A felicitous performance of Dvorak's Symphony No. 8 concluded the formal program. Again, conductor Lü consistently drew luscious sounds from all sections of the orchestra, each of which played with a single, unified voice. He brought a light, lyrical touch to the numerous melodies, and exhibited a sure hand in building up with sustained tension the climaxes to the first and fourth movements. The burnished sound from the brass (of the half dozen or so major orchestras

in Berlin they would be second only to the brass section of the Berlin Philharmonic); the diaphanous dance rhythms from the strings; the flawless intonation from the woodwinds; and the tight, meticulous execution from the percussion proved beyond doubt that the Taiwan Philharmonie is a first class orchestra.

Earl Arthur Love, ConcertoNet.com

Die „Walküre“ in Taipei, Juli 2013

Musical direction was in the hands of the Taiwanese-born Shao-Chia Lü who has been the National Symphony Orchestra's music director since August 2010. Lü has acquired something of a reputation as a Puccini specialist (he has conducted all this composer's operas from *Manon Lescaut* onward on multiple occasions) but he is equally adept at the German repertory, including much Wagner, having spent considerable time in German houses over the past eighteen years, particularly in Hannover and Hamburg. Lyricism is at the heart of Lü's style, and he brought this quality to *Die Walküre* as well. The result was a fluid, flowing approach, not a ponderous or weighty one.....Strings soared gloriously, woodwinds sang with plangent sweetness, and the brass were suitably noble....the resulting balance between stage and pit was ideal; seldom have I understood so much of the libretto without resorting to surtitles....Lü has modeled the NSO into a world-class orchestra.

Robert Markow, Der neue Merker 08+09/2013