

# Flamenco artist Bettina Castaño and SWDKO fascinate audience

Pforzheim. Her foot began to tap softly, rhythmically, increasing in volume. She stamped and turned her head to the audience with a piercing gaze. Then she proudly stretched her arms out and increased the tension with the sound of castanets.



Bettina Castaño opened the Isaac Albéniz' Cantos de España op. 232 with her own prelude in Flamenco style. The orchestra began, and vigorously echoed the danced rhythm. Solo and accompaniment alternated – absolutely typical for the andalusian dance style. However, nothing was typical or classical on this evening, presented by the PZ at the Kulturhaus Osterfeld, despite the title of the performance being 'Flamenco meets Classical'. Bettina Castaño and the Südwestdeutsche Kammerorchester Pforzheim brought a variety of stylistic elements and choreographic finesse together in a self-created and extraordinary programme, lead by Thomas Herzog. The Orchestra's third joint project with the Kulturhaus Osterfeld, which opened the season, fascinated the audience with music from Spain, played full of expression, and the direct interpretation of this music in the form of dance.



Bettina Castaño is an exceptionally gifted flamenco and world dancer from Seville. She not only has access to an inexhaustible wealth of expressional forms, she also has a vibrant and elegant charisma. She dances with fans, scarf and with the train of her dark red dress. She sometimes glides lightly and noiselessly over the floor, sometimes her vigour oozes with energy and temperament. This could be seen while 'Cantos de España' (Vocals of Spain) by

Albéniz, originally written for the piano and reworked delightfully by Tillman Köster for string orchestra, were heard as promised upon entering.

The Südwest-deutsche played several movements alone, the mellow 'Sous le palmier' for example, or the fiery Seguidillas. Even the intimate and dynamically sophisticated 'La oración del torero' (The Torero's Prayer), op. 34 by Joaquín Turina was performed without dance.

### Open to nuances

The Swiss conductor Herzog showed an excellent hand for Spanish forms and tones. Castaño, the eye-catcher of the evening in her changing robes emphasised structure but at the same time was open for nuances from the orchestra. Castaño demonstrated this while she performed a variety of Manuel de Falla's 'Siete canciones populares españolas' (Seven Spanish folksongs) sometimes with minimal movements to the soft celli and violas (Nana), sometimes with quick legwork to the clicking bass and feathery violins (Polo), sometimes with enthusiastically clapping castanets to the solo of guest concertmaster Aureli Blaszcok. At the beginning of the concert by Pau Casals 'Cant dels Ocells' (Song of the Birds), she sat inconspicuously under the cellists, standing up for the first time for the expressive solo by Andrea Hanke, and danced seductively to the cello. She performed a soft, flowing dance of expression to Enrique Granado's impressionistic intermedio from the opera 'Goyes-cas' with shining trumpet solo (Szabolcz Schütt). Castaño's crown success was the solo zapateado, with which she clicked with her mouth, snapped with her fingers and drummed with her feet. An extremely moving evening with a lot of applause.



Author: Anita Molnar – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 (Pforzheimer Zeitung)