

SOUND CARTOGRAPHY

BY CLAUDIA REYES SEGOVIA

«La Mer», the third program of the orchestra season, proposed the exploration of sound poetics through three master composers: Anders Hillborg, Piotr Ilijtsch Tchaikovsky and Claude Debussy, all unified by the conductor Aziz Shokhakimov and the multi-talented Pekka Kuusisto as a soloist.

Hillborg's *Sound Atlas* transported us to the essential harmony, primal space of sound, which would surround Gea and Uranus in that chaos that was starting to shape up. Through the different states of glass that Hillborg visualizes, we can transport ourselves to the confines of the universe, thanks to the sound and atmosphere of other worlds that the glass harmonica creates. Although it is extremely difficult for the woodwind section to imitate the delicate and static sound of the glass harmonica, therefore at first the tuning was not perfect, after a few minutes, they entered into the fine atmosphere. The tuning and the blending of the sounds improved, thus enhancing the impressive sonorities to which the Swedish composer transports us.

Tchaikovsky's well-known violin concerto came as a poetic continuation: from the confines of the universe to the purest love. Pekka Kuusisto told us a love story. His great ability to communicate shook the audience so much that they started clapping with faces full of joy and enthusiasm after the first movement. Even with the most classic repertoire, Pekka found his way of breaking the fourth wall and always proposed a risky interpretation which didn't leave the public indifferent, as well as making them feel comfortable to react in the, normally, very tight concert protocol. As usual, he gifted us with an improvisation on a gloomy Finnish melody as an encore, appeasing the excitement with which the audience was left after the Tchaikovsky concerto and transporting us to the Nordic autumn. Without a doubt, it is a privilege to have Pekka as an «Artist in Residence», it will undoubtedly be a very fruitful relationship for our Sinfonieorchester Basel.

The work that gives title to this program shone thanks to the fact that the musicians of the orchestra made Debussy's exquisite instrumentation stand out with their magnificent interpretation of the score. As the notes to the program point out, it was

not *La Mer* what Debussy wanted to show through this work, but rather the possibility of painting with music, using the instruments as colors of a palette of inexhaustible possibilities.

A program which at «prima vista» doesn't seem to have a lot of matches between the pieces but which finally turns out to be a very interesting and complete laboratory of musical poetry.