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## **DANCE OF THE SUN, OR THE DANCING MUSICIANS**

***In the penultimate concert of the Moravian Autumn Festival, the audience witnessed a breathtaking and unforgettable artistic event. Beyond the beautiful musical performance, this was also a true journey, with musicians who were not only playing, but also dancing. "Dance of the Sun", presented by the Geneva Camerata, was the most daring and original project of the festival. Thanks to its innovative approach, the orchestra opened new horizons for audiences and artists alike, questioning the way we perform music and re-thinking the traditions of the classical music world.***

First, we can only imagine how complex and demanding it must have been for the musicians to learn such a detailed choreography. But it does end here: they also had to perform two major orchestral masterpieces by heart. Just for these elements, we should already applaud their courage and determination. As for Juan Kruz Díaz de Garaio Esnaola, the choreographer of "Dance of the Sun" – it must have been a unique challenge for him to conceive such an unusual performance. But his achievement is tremendous: the audience in Brno experienced a fascinating voyage between music, contemporary dance, theatre, psychology, and a wide range of emotions.

The first part of the show presented thirteen orchestral movements from "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme", a piece that Lully composed for Molière's play, following a commission from King Louis XIV. In Molière's work, the wealthy "bourgeois", Jourdain, dreams of becoming a "gentilhomme" – a true nobleman. The decision to revisit this masterpiece with such an innovative approach made perfect sense: a new kind of play was born, and the story was revealed in a new light by dancer Martí Corbera and the orchestra's musicians, who all became dancers and actors.

The beginning of the show was strange, but we soon realized that it was, in fact, part of the performance. The musicians appeared on stage, talking loudly, gossiping, as if they were the

noblemen in the King's court. The dancer, who could be seen as playing the role of Jourdain, was trying to draw everyone's attention, as if hoping to get some recognition from these aristocrats. Little by little, his actions became more violent, trying to forcefully convince the orchestra. The musicians did not surrender, and pushed him from side to side. This was an extraordinary moment of choreography, as the instrumentalists seemed to be in absolute harmony with each other's movements. The fears and threats became stronger, but the orchestra members were united, defending one another against the intruder. In those moments, one famous proverb came to mind: "One for all, all for one". While observing this choreography, spectators were surely asking themselves – is this a new expression of Molière's play, or is there a much deeper meaning?

After the fourth movement, the course of events started shifting. The dancer was finally able to enter the orchestra's "territory", dancing in circles inside of the musicians, as if Jourdain had finally managed to be accepted by the noblemen. The dances that followed brought the dancer closer and closer to the musicians. This culminated in a beautiful duo ballet between dancer Martí Corbera and conductor David Greilsammer, accompanied by a slow musical *Ritournelle* and by elegant shadows that seemed to be flying behind the group.

The conductor was dancing with great audacity, and in a way, his conducting gestures were part of the choreography throughout the whole show. While his hand movements displayed the character of the musical work, they were also creating a dance of its own. The final movement, *Marche pour la Cérémonie des Turcs*, presented the musicians in a square-shaped structure, disappearing little by little from stage, but not before they took off their shoes, while marching and playing, simultaneously. In this emotional farewell, the dancer – again in the role of Jourdain – tried to walk in the musicians' shoes, bringing Lully's work to an impressive end.

When the second part of the show started, the hall was completely dark. Only a narrow beam of light could be perceived, illuminating a chair under which the dancer was trapped. As he was crawling under this chair, moving slowly, Mozart's symphony suddenly started. The musicians were placed inside of the audience, on both sides of the venue. Then, gradually, they walked up the stage, while playing, forming a circle that conveyed the tremendous drama of the work. Great turmoil erupted once the musicians reached their chairs, jolting their bodies in a movement that expressed intense anxiety. In the second movement of the symphony, the dancer's soul seemed to be opening up, as if he was uniting with the musicians, in a profound act of spirituality. In those moments, through his gestures, he

appeared to be in peace with himself, with his body, with his mind, with his entire existence. But when the third movement began, a growing feeling of despair and pessimism took over the stage. With his ferocious gestures, the dancer revealed a strong sense of madness. Little by little, he started "taking down" the musicians, making their chairs collapse, forcing them to fall and perform the music while lying on their backs.

The storm continued, culminating in the fourth movement, which expressed the protagonist's desperate wish to find answers, hope, and redemption. Again and again, the dancer fell to the ground. Two musicians emerged from the orchestra, participating in this tumultuous tempest, dropping, crashing, vanishing. After the last chord of the symphony, when hope was definitely lost, the dancer fell into the arms of the musicians who quietly lifted him up, as if carrying him into the world of darkness.

Both parts of the performance were incredibly dramatic. The combination of sophisticated choreography and such an expressive musical interpretation resulted in a long and intense silence at the end of the show. The musicians' performance was overwhelming – they were at the same time instrumentalists, dancers and actors. Their "Dance of the Sun" should become an inspiration, for each and every artist.

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