



The Sky Above...



The Washington Post

“A musical experience out of the ordinary...”



On 12th September 2020, the Dresdner Sinfoniker staged an extraordinary concert on the rooftops of five East German tower blocks in Dresden-Prohlis. Orchestral musicians played from atop some of Dresden’s highest buildings, performing a piece from the Venetian Renaissance, a classic Fanfare, and a contemporary work.

The setting was spectacular- Sixteen alphorns, nine trumpets and four tubas were positioned on the roofs of neighbouring 50-metre-high residential buildings. Four Chinese Dà Gǔ drums and percussion instruments were set up below, on top of a local shopping centre.

The compositions performed at the open-air concert all embraced the concept of musicians communicating over great distances. The show started with film composer John Williams’ 1984 “Olympic Fanfare”. The spirit of the games came to life, welcoming the global diversity of all nations. Venetian compos-

er Giovanni Gabrieli’s subsequent composition composed 400 years earlier was no less impressive. Brass groups sent indulgent chord blocks from high-rise to high-rise, once written for a performance in Venice’s San Marco church. The evening’s highlight was the premiere of Markus Lehmann-Horn’s “Himmel über...” - commissioned especially for the occasion - which showcased the extraordinary sound of the alphorns.

The sky above Prohlis with its tower blocks transformed into an alpine setting- the entire neighbourhood became the show’s audience. Guests on street level, passers-by, an audience sitting on the local shopping centre’s roof terrace and residents on their balconies all listening to the open-air concert. With musicians being hundreds of metres apart and the audience spread across the district, it was an extraordinary setting and a solution to staging large-scale events in the Covid-19 pandemic.





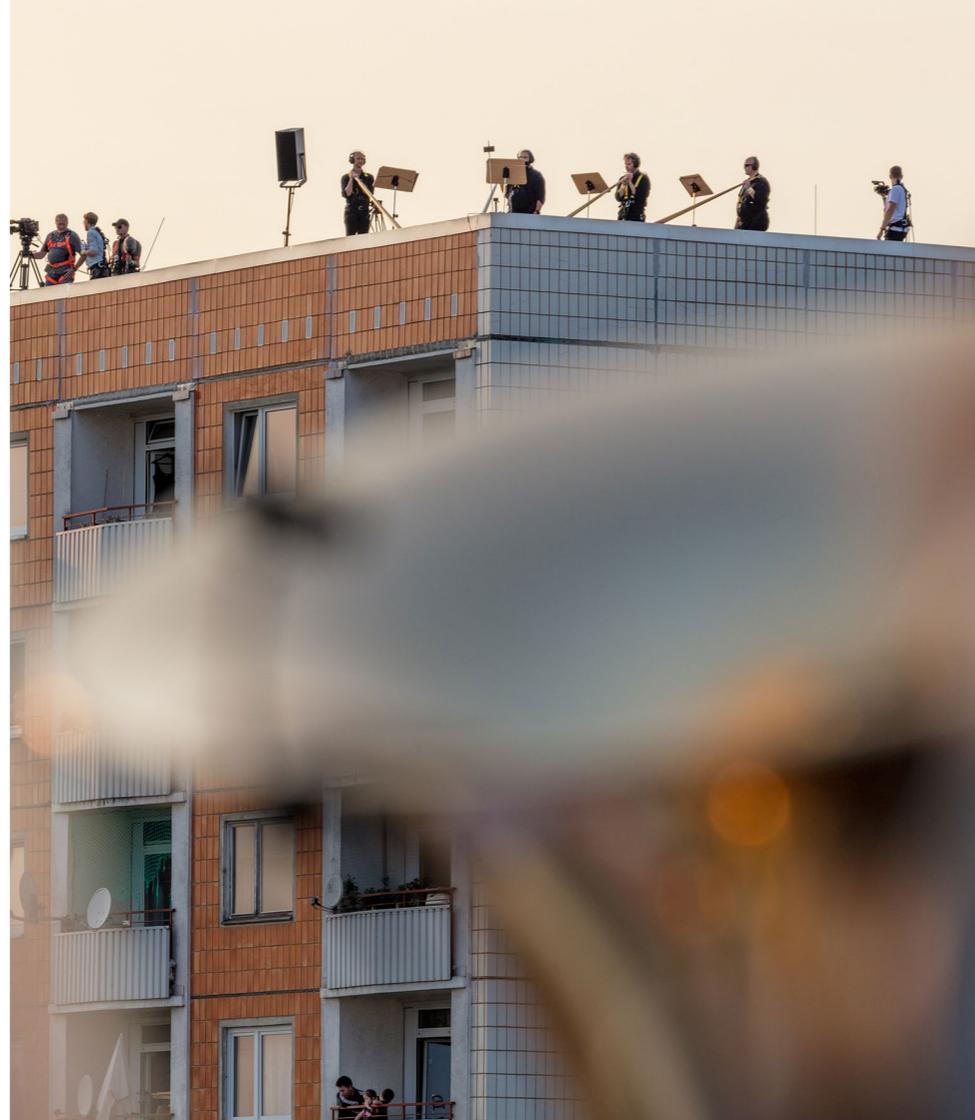
<< Click on the play button to watch the project trailer





Technologically a stroke of genius

The considerable distance between the respective instrument groups results in a beautifully expansive aural experience. However, this distance poses specific technological performance problems due to the time sound needs to travel. Conventional conducting of the musicians is impossible. With sound travelling at 343 metres per second but the conductor's hand gestures at light speed, the signals soon diverge. The solution requires a time-adjusted click track sent via directional radio links to each instrument group, ensuring that the auditory impression is synchronised centrally. With this in place, some groups play seconds earlier or later than others, depending on their relative positioning. These technical sound challenges add to the overall experience, however. The distance between musicians allows the audience to explore the interplay and complexity of communication between the different musical groups, adding a magical element to the event.



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DRESDNER NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN

14. September 2020

“The Dresdner Sinfoniker event on 12th September 2020 turned out to be a unique spectacle. A cast was spelled over seventies tower blocks in a post-modern district of Dresden and people gathered in the open, on balconies and behind open windows to listen to the concert “Himmel über Prohlis”. Performances on high-rise buildings are unheard of, especially in the midst of socialist architecture. And yet, music was simultaneously played on four seventeen-floor buildings, a long East German block of flats and on the roof of a shopping centre. No concert hall can offer such an extraordinary experience with the audience as an integral part of the event.”

<< Click on the play button to watch the full concert





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