

Konstantin Wecker & Spring String Quartet

"Stürmische Zeiten, mein Schatz"

"**Stormy Times, my dear**" is the title of the new program of Konstantin Wecker, his congenial long-term partner Jo Barnikel and the furioso Spring String Quartet.

Two grand pianos, four string instruments

This ensemble of world-class musicians surrounding Konstantin Wecker guarantees that the message of love cannot be ignored.

Jo Barnikel, who has been performing together with Wecker for as long as 18 years, doubtlessly ranks among the top pianists. Therefore we can look forward with great expectation to listening to the accomplished musical couple Wecker-Barnikel performing on two Bösendorfer grand pianos in their new programme, in which the two masters will be joined on stage by the **Spring String Quartet** – another first-rate ensemble consisting of Christian Wirth (violin), Marcus Wall (violin), Julian Gillesberger (viola) and Stephan Punderlitschek (cello), who has been trying to bridge the gap between classical music, jazz, genius and madness. The four musicians are going to contribute their share to this stormy program revolving around the topic of love in the form of new interpretations of Wecker's songs, classical works and free improvisation.



Foto: Angele Shat

Konstantin Wecker's report on the production:

About the rehearsals for the program in Tuscany Konstantin says, "You have to imagine a quartet looking like a group of Hell's Angels, whose inclination towards celebrating excessively matches that of a rock gang. During their stay, the four gentlemen considerably raised the proportion of long-haired people in the area. Apart from the cellist the members of the quartet constantly run round wearing cowboy boots and sunglasses. And then they reach for their instruments and produce the most divine sounds of the western hemisphere! Those rehearsals are simply incredible. I know I can always rely on Jo Barnikel 100 percent; we are simply a well-coordinated team, a musical couple happily advancing in years. But when the boys of the SSQ join in, it's amazing to hear how swiftly they put things into action that have merely been expressed, how they grasp the expression of a song in every little detail immediately; it's just marvellous. No hangover, no fooling around during the breaks can stop this quartet from turning into Hell's Angels of virtuosity as soon as they start playing. The arrangements develop an enormous power, as you would expect it from a Heavy Metal band, and within seconds you get this exquisitely mozartesque virtuosity – simply beautiful!!"

Love poetry and love songs

Of course the whole programme revolves around Konstantin Wecker's love songs. It contains old favourites in a polished- up form, like "Liebesflug" (flight of love) or "Was tat man den Mädchen" (What did they do to the girls) and "Liebeslied im alten Stil" (Love song in the old style). Furthermore there will be songs that we rarely played during the last few years, like "Du wolltest ein Stück Himmel" (You wanted a piece of heaven), "San koane Geigen da" (Are there no violins) or "Eine ganze Menge Leben" (Lots of life). From the world of film music there will be "Tango Joe" (Stonk). Of course a programme about love would not be complete without Wecker's ode to his late father Alexander.

The programme is complemented by extracts from Wecker's novels as well as love poems, which are of major significance for his way of thinking and feeling. Thus Wecker pays tribute to his favourite poets Rilke, Kästner and Goethe, who also appear in his anthology about love, which was published by Piper. The programme is rounded off by two stormy pieces played by the SSQ.

"Stürmische Zeiten, mein Schatz" Stormy times, my dear"

The performances of this programme promise an enormous Weckeresque lightening in all colours of the rainbow – a touching as well as inspiring, furioso as well as entrancing evening of love.

From the reviews of our concerts with Konstantin Wecker:

Main-Netz wrote about the concert in the Old Opera Frankfurt on Dec 3rd, 2009:

"On violins, viola and cello the four long-haired musicians of the »Spring String Quartet« surprise their audience by accentuating their groovy style with a mix of heavy metal, jazz and classical sounds. Not only for their passionate interpretation of the Deep Purple cult-hit »Smoke On The Water« did they receive rapturous applause."

Frankfurter Allgemeine:

"Already after the first few bars the hall goes wild, clapping and swinging. This is at least partly due to the Spring String Quartet, who manages to coax astonishingly fragile sounds from their string instruments and who adapts the rock-hymn "Smoke On The Water" with breathtaking velocity. A worthy accompaniment for Wecker, ..."

Nürnberger Nachrichten (concert in April 2009 in the Nurnberg Opera):

"Already the choice of his accompanying ensemble can be seen as an absolute stroke of luck. With their sensitive as well as powerful, rhythmically accentuated as well as humorously commenting string parts, the four scraggy gentlemen from the Spring String Quartet contribute a lot more than just sugar-sweet icing on Wecker's songs. On the contrary, they shape the program with their extremely witty and virtuoso instrumental pieces."

OVB (Concert in Rosenheim, Nov 2009):

"...and with their groovy sounds they enthralled their audience into sheer euphoria!"

Oberösterreichische Nachrichten (Linz09 harbour festival with Hubert von Goisern, July 2009):

"...Konstantin Wecker, and the marvellous Spring String Quartet from Linz are edging each other on towards groovy-exquisite new interpretations of his works."

Nürnberger Zeitung (concert at the Nuremberg Opera house in Nov 2009):

"...the «Spring String Quartet«, who successfully straddles chamber music, Salsa and a parody on «Smoke on the water«.