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Celebratory Dialogue of Cultures

Hofburg Palace, 05.03.2026 [ENA]

On February 26, 2026, the historic halls of the ancient and magnificent Hofburg Palace in Vienna were transformed into a vibrant space of artistic encounter as the Grand Exhibition & Concert brought together over one hundred artists from China, Austria, and beyond. Framed by the symbolic figure of the horse — a powerful emblem of movement, strength, and intercultural exchange.

The evening unfolded as a compelling celebration of shared imagination and creative dialogue. The exhibition, opening at 4:00 PM, presented a remarkable spectrum of artistic voices. Among the highlights were works by Xiaoyang Xu, grandson of the pioneering modernizer of Chinese painting Xu Beihong, whose legacy of bridging tradition and innovation resonates deeply within contemporary art. Austrian perspectives were equally strong, with Margit König's refined animal paintings capturing both anatomical precision and poetic vitality, while Peter Mahler, a relative of Gustav Mahler, offered a distinctive artistic lineage rooted in cultural heritage.

A work from the estate of the late Austrian artist Fritz Martinz added a poignant historical dimension, underscoring the exhibition's intergenerational reach. Together, these contributions created a visual narrative that honored history while confidently stepping toward the future of art.
The concert, beginning at 7:00 PM, elevated the evening into a multisensory experience. The Erhu Ensemble led by Master Zhou Wei and the Hulusi Ensemble introduced audiences to the expressive depth of traditional Chinese sound worlds, their timbres both delicate and emotionally resonant. These sonorities intertwined seamlessly with Western choral and classical traditions, forming a refined musical arc that felt both organic and deeply symbolic.

The mdw Talent Lab Ensemble demonstrated youthful virtuosity and stylistic versatility, while the Redtenbach Choir, Mozart Boys' Choir, Ensemble Junge Seestimmen, and Ensemble Diözesan contributed choral textures of remarkable clarity and warmth. Soloists Shirin Asgari and Martina Weixelbraun, accompanied sensitively by pianist Jörg Ziegelbauer, brought lyrical elegance and expressive nuance to the programme, embodying the festival's spirit of dialogue between generations and cultures.

Skillfully hosted by Alessa Däger of W24, the evening maintained a gracious and cohesive atmosphere throughout. The setting of the Hofburg — a historic heart of Vienna — amplified the symbolic resonance of the event: tradition meeting innovation, East meeting West, past meeting future.

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The Grand Exhibition & Concert stood not merely as a performance, but as a profound testament to the unifying power of art — an evening where cultural exchange was not abstract, but vividly lived in sound, image, and shared experience.

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