



Film Review – "Pianomania"

The FBW-Jury, with a 4:1 vote, gave the film its **"highly recommended"** rating.

A nice documentarial rarity. The subtitle of "Pianomania" outlines the subject, "The Search for the Perfect Tone".

The protagonist of this search is Stefan Knüpfer, the head technician of "Steinway Austria" in Vienna. Stefan Knüpfer is obsessed. In a sophisticated odyssey, along with world famous pianists (Lang Lang and Alfred Brendel among others), he endeavors to find the sound of perfection, just for the ideal of the perfect tone ("It is like a research project").

At the center of the film, however, is the year-long work with Pierre-Laurent Aimard on the recording of Bach's "The Art of Fugue". A time of experimentation and the tenacious struggle for the realization of a musical vision. It is a time full of stress situations, full of setbacks and creative impatience, but also full of magical and divine moments. The viewer experiences and "suffers" an insight into a totally distinct and intimate working environment, which normally remains barred to spectator eyes.

"That was a process that stretched out over years", so director Lilian Franck. But "Pianomania" does not bear the traces of this creative exertion, nor the scars of the massive effort of all participating parties. The film seems playfully light and fascinates through fantasy and lighthearted gaiety, is entertaining in the best sense of the word, and is especially interesting and appropriate for those viewers who don't consider themselves to be musical insiders!

The aspirations of the film makers "to bring out the complexity of the subject as lightly as on angel's wings" is not an empty promise, it is fulfilled in the most positive way. The unusual camera perspectives are also distinguishing, particularly those showing the "inner workings" of the musical instruments. All in all, this is a musical jewel and a contemporary artistic document of distinction!