

Where to Find Young Orchestra Audiences? Try a 'Lord of the Rings' Concert

Thursday, April 09, 2015 - 12:00 PM

By [Elliott Forrest](#) : WQXR Host



A concert-goer dressed as Gandalf at the 'Lord of the Rings in Concert' (Elliott Forrest/WQXR)

With the music ending, the composer was brought on stage by the conductor to be presented in front of the audience. Once spotted, the audience erupted. The enthusiastic applause was not just for the music heard that night, but also for his work over a lifetime. This is not a story of yore about a composer like Mozart, but for the Oscar-winning film composer Howard Shore.

Opening Night on Tuesday was just the beginning of a five-day run of performances of *The Lord of the Rings in Concert*. This is the first time all three films from the Peter Jackson film franchise are being shown altogether with live music. Below the big screen are 250 musicians on a packed stage bringing the highly evocative score to life. This includes the Lucerne, Switzerland based 21st-Century Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Ludwig Wicki, who has made a career of conducting live music to films. Joining the touring talent is the local Brooklyn Youth Chorus.

It's a totally different experience to see a live orchestra on stage during a movie. In this case, you can see the folk instruments on stage during the "Shire" scenes, like a hammer dulcimer; and when the evil Orcs are advancing you can see the percussionist with hammer in hand pounding an anvil in rhythm. For all the talk of the graying classical audience, this enthusiastic crowd was as diverse in age and ethnicity as I've seen in a long time, including a guy dressed as Gandalf! Most of the tickets are taken for the full run, but not all. All three "Lord of the Rings" films are being presented through Sunday at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center.



The Lord of the Rings in Concert at the David H. Koch Theater
(Elliott Forrest/WQXR)