



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Kingdom of Babylon and its destruction

Theater an der Wien, 26.02.2023 [ENA]

The Belshazzar opera of Fridrich Hendel is performed at the Theater an der Wien. The main focus of the opera is the ancient kingdom of Babylon. The topics of the impacts of climate change and water security are connecting ancient Babylon with nowadays reality. The performance at the Theatre an der Wien also connects the topics of water governance and equity while discussing issues of equal access to water resource.

Handel's opera "Belshazzar" is a three-act work that was first performed in 1745. It tells the story of the Babylonian king Belshazzar, who is confronted by the Hebrew prophet Daniel after he desecrates the sacred vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem. The opera features Handel's trademark vocal virtuosity, elaborate choruses, and rich orchestration, and it is considered one of his greatest works.

Originally The opera opens with a chorus of Babylonian priests praising their god, Bel. Belshazzar enters and orders his soldiers to bring in the sacred vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem, which he intends to use at his feast.

The Hebrews in his court are dismayed by this sacrilege, and their leader, Daniel, prophesies the downfall of Belshazzar's kingdom. The second act features several arias and duets, including Daniel's aria "Rivers of Babylon" and the duet between Belshazzar and Nitocris, his mother, "Great God, who yet but darkly known." The act ends with the famous chorus "See, from his post Euphrates flies," which depicts the defeat of Belshazzar's army by the Persian king Cyrus.

In the final act, Belshazzar is killed in battle, and his mother Nitocris laments his death in the aria "Ye sages, hoary-headed." The opera ends with a final chorus of praise to God for his justice. Handel's use of choral music in "Belshazzar" is particularly noteworthy. The opera includes several elaborate choruses, such as the opening chorus "Behold, by Persia's hero made," which features intricate counterpoint and striking harmonic shifts. The chorus "Sing, O ye heavens" is also notable for its use of trumpets and drums to create a dramatic sense of triumph.

The performance of opera in the Theater an der Wien is closely connected with the topic of climate change. Climate change is having a significant impact on water resources around the world, and is exacerbating existing water security issues in many regions. Water security refers to the ability of people to access clean

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and sufficient water to meet their needs, and climate change is making it increasingly difficult for many communities to maintain this access. Overall, climate change is creating significant water security challenges for many regions, with increasing frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, glacier melt, and water quality degradation.

Addressing these challenges will require a coordinated response, including efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, as well as increased investment in water infrastructure and management to ensure access to clean and sufficient water for all.

The performance in Theater an der Wien is also closely connected with the topic of governance of water resources as the corrupted king Belshazzar closed the access to water to people of his kingdom. The topic of governance goes as a red line across the entire performance.

Access to clean and safe water is a fundamental human right, and ensuring access to water is essential for achieving sustainable development and reducing poverty. However, in many parts of the world, lack of access to water remains a major challenge, particularly for marginalized communities.

One of the key issues related to water access is good governance. Good governance is the process of decision-making and implementation of policies that are transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of citizens. In the context of water access, good governance can mean ensuring that water resources are managed in a sustainable and equitable manner, with the needs of all stakeholders, particularly the most vulnerable, taken into account.

One of the main challenges related to water governance is corruption. Corruption can lead to inefficiencies in water management, including misallocation of resources and lack of investment in infrastructure. This can have a particularly negative impact on marginalized communities, who may be excluded from decision-making processes and may not have the resources to access alternative water sources.

Another issue related to water governance is the lack of legal frameworks and regulations to protect water resources. In many parts of the world, there is a lack of clear policies and regulations governing water management, which can lead to conflicts over water resources and exacerbate water scarcity.

In addition, weak enforcement of existing regulations can result in unsustainable and irresponsible use of water resources. Finally, participation and engagement of citizens and communities in decision-making processes related to water access is crucial for ensuring good governance. Communities that are affected by water management decisions should be consulted and included in the decision-making process, and their perspectives and needs should be taken into account.

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Good governance is essential for ensuring access to clean and safe water for everybody, particularly for marginalized communities. Addressing issues related to corruption, regulatory frameworks, and citizen engagement can help to ensure that water resources are managed in a sustainable and equitable manner, and that the needs of all stakeholders are taken into account.

In conclusion, good governance is essential for ensuring access to clean and safe water for all, particularly for marginalized communities. Addressing issues related to corruption, regulatory frameworks, and citizen engagement can help to ensure that water resources are managed in a sustainable and equitable manner, and that the needs of all stakeholders are taken into account.

Overall, "Belshazzar" is a masterful work that showcases Handel's skill as a composer and his ability to convey deep emotions through music. Its vivid characters, stirring choruses, and virtuosic arias make it a staple of the operatic repertoire to this day. And the modern performance at the Theater an der Wien brings it very close to nowadays with the major issues and challenges to sustainable development which are being carefully addressed throughout the performance.

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