



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Shifting Symmetries: A Triumphant Balletic Confluence

Vienna State Opera, 26.01.2025 [ENA]

Recently the Vienna State Opera presented "Shifting Symmetries," a compelling triple bill that masterfully intertwined the choreographic genius of Hans van Manen, William Forsythe, and George Balanchine. This meticulously curated program not only showcased the Vienna State Ballet's exceptional versatility but also offered a profound exploration of the evolution of neoclassical ballet.

The evening commenced with Hans van Manen's "Adagio Hammerklavier," set to the poignant adagio movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 29. Van Manen's choreography is renowned for its clarity and emotional depth, and this piece was no exception. The dancers embodied the music's introspective quality, delivering performances that were both technically precise and deeply moving. The simplicity of the staging allowed the audience to focus entirely on the nuanced interplay between movement and music, highlighting the dancers' impeccable control and expressive capabilities.

Transitioning from the classical to the contemporary, William Forsythe's "Artifact Suite" served as a dynamic centerpiece. Forsythe, a pivotal figure in redefining ballet's boundaries, infused the piece with his signature deconstruction of traditional forms. The choreography was characterized by sharp, angular movements and unexpected rhythms, challenging the dancers to push beyond conventional techniques. The Vienna State Ballet rose to the occasion, executing the complex sequences with remarkable agility and cohesion. The minimalist set design, combined with dramatic lighting, created a stark yet captivating atmosphere that intensified the audience's engagement with the performance.

Concluding the evening was George Balanchine's "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet," a piece that exemplifies the choreographer's ability to blend classical ballet vocabulary with modern musical interpretations. Set to Johannes Brahms' Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, orchestrated by Arnold Schoenberg, the ballet unfolded in four movements, each with distinct stylistic nuances. The dancers navigated the intricate patterns and brisk tempos with finesse, capturing the essence of Balanchine's neoclassical style. The vibrant costumes and elaborate staging added layers of visual richness, culminating in a finale that was both exhilarating and grandiose.

Under the baton of conductor Matthew Rowe, making his debut with the Vienna State Opera Orchestra, the musical accompaniment was nothing short of exceptional. The orchestra adeptly navigated the diverse musical landscapes, from Beethoven's introspective melodies to the avant-garde compositions

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accompanying Forsythe's work, and finally to Brahms' romanticism as reimagined by Schoenberg. The synergy between the musicians and dancers was palpable, each enhancing the other's performance to create a cohesive and immersive experience.

"Shifting Symmetries" stands as a testament to the Vienna State Ballet's commitment to honoring the rich traditions of ballet while embracing its evolution. By juxtaposing the works of van Manen, Forsythe, and Balanchine, the program offered a panoramic view of neoclassical ballet's trajectory, highlighting the genre's adaptability and enduring relevance. The dancers' ability to seamlessly transition between varying styles and emotional tones underscored their technical prowess and artistic maturity.

The Vienna State Opera's presentation of "Shifting Symmetries" was a resounding success, leaving audiences with a renewed appreciation for the art of ballet. The evening's thoughtful curation, combined with stellar performances and musical excellence, created a memorable experience that will undoubtedly resonate with audiences for years to come. This production not only celebrated the legacy of three monumental choreographers but also affirmed the Vienna State Ballet's position at the forefront of the dance world.

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