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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

A Mesmerizing Revival: Norma Captivates Audiences

Vienna State Opera, 10.03.2025 [ENA]

The Vienna State Opera unveiled a spellbinding performance of Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma*, reaffirming its status as a cornerstone of the bel canto repertoire. Under the meticulous direction of Cyril Teste and the baton of maestro Michele Mariotti, this production seamlessly blended vocal brilliance, dramatic intensity, and innovative staging, offering a fresh yet faithful interpretation of Bellini's masterpiece.

Soprano Federica Lombardi delivered an extraordinary portrayal of the titular role, Norma. Her vocal performance was a masterclass in bel canto technique, effortlessly navigating the role's demanding range and intricate coloratura passages. From the ethereal "Casta Diva" to the opera's climactic moments, Lombardi's voice resonated with clarity and emotional depth, capturing the multifaceted nature of Norma's character. Her ability to convey both the authoritative presence of a Druid priestess and the vulnerability of a woman torn by forbidden love was nothing short of mesmerizing.

Tenor Dmytro Popo, in his debut as Pollione, brought a compelling blend of vocal prowess and dramatic nuance to the role. His bright, agile tenor voice lent a persuasive charm to the Roman proconsul, effectively conveying Pollione's internal conflict and desires. Popo's chemistry with Lombardi was palpable, particularly in their duets, where the tension and passion between their characters were vividly realized.

Mezzo-soprano Vasilisa Berzhanskaya shone as Adalgisa, delivering a performance marked by rich, velvety tones and heartfelt sincerity. Her portrayal of the young priestess caught between duty and desire was both touching and authentic. The duets between Berzhanskaya and Lombardi were among the evening's highlights, their voices intertwining seamlessly to convey the deep bond and ensuing turmoil between their characters.

Bass Ildebrando D'Arcangelo lent gravitas to the role of Oroveso, Norma's father and leader of the Druids. His resonant bass voice and commanding stage presence provided a solid foundation for the ensemble, embodying the stern authority of a patriarch torn between his duties and his daughter's transgressions.

Conductor Michele Mariotti led the Wiener Staatsoper orchestra with precision and sensitivity, bringing out the lush harmonies and lyrical beauty of Bellini's score. His nuanced approach allowed the singers to shine while ensuring that the orchestral accompaniment enhanced the dramatic narrative.

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Mariotti's tempi were well-judged, capturing the ebb and flow of the opera's emotional landscape and maintaining a cohesive musical arc throughout the performance. Director Cyril Teste's contemporary staging offered a fresh perspective on this classic work. By incorporating modern elements and minimalist design, Teste highlighted the timeless themes of love, betrayal, and sacrifice central to Norma. The use of video projections by Mehdi Toutain-Lopez added a dynamic visual layer, enhancing the storytelling without overshadowing the performers. Valérie Grall's set design and Marie La Rocca's costumes struck a balance between modernity and tradition, providing a visually appealing backdrop that complemented the opera's dramatic intensity.

The supporting cast and chorus contributed significantly to the production's success. Anna Bondarenko as Clotilde and Hiroshi Amako as Flavio delivered commendable performances, adding depth to the narrative. The Vienna State Opera chorus sang with precision and fervor, effectively conveying the collective emotions of the Druid community and enhancing the overall impact of the performance. The performance of Norma at the Vienna State Opera was a triumph of operatic artistry. With stellar performances from a world-class cast, insightful direction, and masterful musical leadership, this production breathed new life into Bellini's masterpiece. It was an evening that celebrated the enduring power of opera to move and inspire.

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