



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Celebration of Bold New Voices: Hans-Gratzer-Preis 2025

Schauspielhaus Wien, 16.02.2025 [ENA]

The literary world witnessed a moment of true brilliance at Schauspielhaus Wien, where the Hans-Gratzer-Preis 2025 event unfolded with remarkable energy, intellectual depth, and artistic courage. This extraordinary evening celebrated emerging voices in theater, offering a platform for new works that challenge, provoke, and inspire. The five readings showcased during the Werkstattlesung were nothing short of revelatory, culminating in the much-anticipated award ceremony that honored the outstanding Guido Wertheimer's *Die realen Geister* as the recipient of the Hans-Gratzer-Preis 2024.

From the very first reading at 16:00, the audience was captivated by a diverse spectrum of storytelling, each piece bearing its own distinct signature while collectively reflecting the urgency and complexity of contemporary life. The sheer range of themes—from fear and trauma to personal identity and societal silencing—spoke to the vibrant and unflinching spirit of this generation's playwrights.

(hab doch bitte keine) *ANGST!* by Arad Dabiri

Dabiri's work opened the event with a powerful exploration of fear—its social, psychological, and existential dimensions. Through a poetic yet unrelenting narrative, the play dissected the ways fear permeates our lives, shaping our decisions and interactions. The reading's intensity was palpable, its rhythms echoing long after the final words were spoken.

Die benannten Plätze by Leo Skverer

Skverer's work transported the audience into a labyrinthine world of memory and identity, where places serve as both anchors and ghosts of the past. With striking precision, the play interwove personal and historical narratives, inviting us to contemplate the permanence of loss and the transience of home. Migration, cultural belonging and feeling of home were some of the major topics of the work.

Mundtot by Miriam Unterthiner

A highlight of the evening, *Mundtot* delivered a searing critique of silence—both self-imposed and externally enforced. Unterthiner's razor-sharp dialogue and layered structure challenged the audience to reconsider the power dynamics of voice and erasure. This reading left an indelible impact, sparking

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impassioned discussions during the intermission.

im vorbeigehen / u prolazu by Mâteja Kardelis

Kardelis, whose bilingual play resonated deeply, provided an introspective and lyrical meditation on migration, displacement, and fleeting moments of connection. The fluid interplay between languages created a mesmerizing rhythm, reinforcing the play's themes of impermanence and longing. The reading was both intimate and universal, a rare feat in contemporary theater.

BABYGIRL – Geschichten ohne Happy End by Carlotta Huys

Closing the Werkstattlesung, Huys's BABYGIRL shattered conventional expectations with its raw, unapologetic portrayal of fractured dreams and unresolved endings. With a keen eye for the brutal truths of modern existence, Huys refused sentimentality, instead offering a stark, piercing, and necessary confrontation with reality. The audience was left breathless, fully immersed in the unsettling brilliance of her storytelling.

Following a well-deserved pause at 18:30, the atmosphere remained electric with anticipation. Conversations hummed through the theater halls, with audience members animatedly dissecting the performances, drawn into debates about themes, execution, and artistic vision.

At 19:30 the Hans-Gratzer-Preis 2024 award work followed. Die realen Geister by Guido Wertheimer was the 2024 prize recipient. Wertheimer's work stood out for its masterful balance of the surreal and the profoundly human, a piece that pushed the boundaries of theatrical form while remaining deeply rooted in emotional truth. His achievement was met with resounding applause, a testament to the impact of his artistry.

The Hans-Gratzer-Preis event at Schauspielhaus Wien reaffirmed the vitality of contemporary playwriting. The evening was not merely a competition but a celebration—a space where artistic courage met rigorous craftsmanship, where voices that might otherwise go unheard were given the amplification they deserve.

Each playwright presented a piece that challenged, provoked, and moved the audience, demonstrating once again why this event is a cornerstone of the theatrical landscape. The 2025 iteration of the Hans-Gratzer-Preis will undoubtedly be remembered as an evening of revelation, an affirmation of theater's enduring power to reflect, question, and transform the world we live in.

The Hans-Gratzer-Preis, awarded annually by Schauspielhaus Wien, is a prestigious recognition for

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emerging playwrights, offering the opportunity for their work to be fully realized on stage. This year, the award went to Miriam Unterthiner for her play Mundtot, a gripping exploration of violence and resilience that captivated the jury with its intense physicality and bold dramaturgy. The prize includes a world premiere in the 2025/26 season, underscoring the commitment of Schauspielhaus Wien to fostering innovative theatrical voices. The jury praised Unterthiner's powerful language and her ability to create a collective female voice that defies oppression, highlighting her as a playwright with a deep understanding of the stage.

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