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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Daring Mesmerizing Fusion: Consistent Fantasy is Reality

NEST Neue Staatsoper im Künstlerhaus, 27.03.2025 [ENA]

Gaye Su Akyol's *Consistent Fantasy is Reality* is nothing short of a revelation—a groundbreaking piece of music theater that defies categorization and bursts with creativity, energy, and defiant artistic freedom. With its seamless blend of opera, Turkish classical music, post-punk, and psychedelic rock, this production is a dazzling spectacle of sound, visuals, and political urgency. It is not just a performance; it is an experience—one that leaves its audience both exhilarated and deeply moved.

The narrative of *Consistent Fantasy is Reality* is as unconventional as its musical language. What begins as a seemingly ordinary night in Istanbul transforms into a cosmic odyssey, where a minibus carrying a diverse group of passengers is transported into space. The metaphors are rich and layered: a microcosm of society thrown into an unfamiliar realm, forced to confront existential and political struggles while navigating personal differences.

Gaye Su Akyol crafts a story that is as playful as it is profound, tackling issues of oppression, freedom, individuality, and unity in the face of authoritarianism.

The gray planet, under threat from a faceless, repressive force, serves as an allegory for the very real societal struggles that exist on Earth. And yet, rather than succumbing to despair, the opera is filled with rebellion, resistance, and hope—elements deeply embedded in Akyol's artistic ethos. Musically, *Consistent Fantasy is Reality* is a breathtaking fusion of styles. Akyol's score is an electrifying tapestry that seamlessly blends Anatolian folk music with the raw edge of grunge and post-punk, all while incorporating the grandeur of operatic storytelling. The result is a sonic landscape that feels at once familiar and otherworldly, reflecting the narrative's journey from the streets of Istanbul to the vast expanse of the cosmos.

Her vocals are the heart of the production—rich, emotive, and utterly commanding. Whether soaring over sweeping orchestral passages or growling through distorted guitars, Akyol's voice carries a deep, almost hypnotic intensity. She does not merely sing; she inhabits each note, making every phrase a declaration of defiance and a celebration of artistic freedom.

The instrumentation is equally daring, with traditional Turkish stringed instruments conversing effortlessly with psychedelic electric guitars and pulsating basslines. This blending of old and new, East and West,

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tradition and rebellion, is a hallmark of Akyol's style, and here, it reaches its most ambitious and theatrical form.

Beyond the music, *Consistent Fantasy is Reality* is a stunning visual spectacle. The production design embraces a bold, surreal aesthetic, drawing inspiration from retro sci-fi, Turkish cinema, and contemporary avant-garde theater. Costumes shimmer in iridescent hues, evoking a blend of traditional Ottoman elegance and futuristic rebellion. The lighting design bathes the stage in ethereal blues and fiery reds, reinforcing the contrasts between suppression and resistance, reality and fantasy.

The use of movement and choreography further enhances the production's dreamlike quality.

The interactions between the characters—whether through stylized physical gestures or expressive contemporary dance sequences—add an additional layer of meaning to the narrative. Every element of the staging is meticulously crafted, ensuring that no moment feels static or predictable. Akyol is, of course, the centerpiece of the production, but she is surrounded by an ensemble that brings both vocal and dramatic excellence to the stage. Each character in the minibus—whether the conservative man, the politically engaged teacher, or the young queer individual—feels fully realized, each representing different facets of contemporary society. Their interactions are dynamic and charged with tension, humor, and ultimately, understanding.

The chemistry between the cast members is palpable, making their transformation from strangers to allies all the more powerful. As their voices join together in moments of unity, the emotional impact is profound—music, once again, becomes the bridge between difference and connection. What makes *Consistent Fantasy is Reality* so extraordinary is not just its musical innovation or theatrical brilliance—it is the fearless statement it makes. In an era where artistic expression is often constrained by political forces, Akyol refuses to be silenced. This production is a rebellion against conformity, a celebration of diversity, and a call to action for those who believe in the power of art to challenge, to heal, and to inspire.

For opera lovers, this is an opportunity to witness the evolution of the genre in real-time—proof that music theater is not confined to the traditions of the past but is alive, vibrant, and boundless. For those new to Akyol's work, this production serves as the perfect introduction to an artist who is not only redefining Turkish music but reshaping the very landscape of contemporary performance.

Gaye Su Akyol's *Consistent Fantasy is Reality* is not just a concert, not just an opera—it is a revolution. It challenges perceptions, breaks down barriers, and offers a vision of a world where fantasy and reality are one and the same. This is music theater at its most daring, its most exhilarating, and its most essential.

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With this production, Akyol cements herself as one of the most vital voices in contemporary performance. Whether you are drawn to the raw energy of punk, the soulfulness of Turkish folk, or the grandeur of opera, Consistent Fantasy is Reality is an experience that defies expectations and redefines what music theater can be. An unmissable triumph.

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