



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Spellbinding Triumph: Midsummer Night's Dream in Graz

Opera Graz, 11.05.2025 [ENA]

On May 10, 2025, The Opera Graz unveiled a mesmerizing production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Bernd Mottl. This rendition masterfully balanced the opera's intricate layers of love, mischief, and transformation, standing out as a luminous centerpiece. Bernd Mottl's direction brought a fresh perspective to Britten's opera, emphasizing the fluidity of love and identity.

The staging, designed by Friedrich Eggert, was both whimsical and evocative, transporting the audience into the enchanted forest with imaginative sets and lighting. Alfred Mayerhofer's costumes further enhanced the visual storytelling, blending traditional fairy-tale elements with contemporary flair. Under the baton of Johannes Braun, the orchestra navigated Britten's intricate score with finesse, highlighting the contrasting worlds of mortals and fairies through dynamic shifts in tempo and texture. The musicians' sensitivity to the singers ensured a harmonious balance between the pit and the stage.

From her first ethereal entrance, Ekaterina Solunya embodied the fairy queen Tytania with an arresting blend of vocal brilliance and dramatic nuance. Her soprano soared effortlessly through Britten's challenging coloratura passages, capturing the character's otherworldly essence. Solunya's interpretation highlighted Tytania's strength and sensuality, making her both a commanding presence and a figure of delicate allure. Particularly noteworthy was her rendition of "Come, now a roundel," where Solunya's voice shimmered with clarity and precision, weaving seamlessly with the orchestral textures. Her interactions with Oberon, portrayed by Rafal Tomkiewicz, were charged with palpable tension and chemistry, adding depth to their relationship.

Solunya's stage presence was magnetic; she navigated Tytania's complexities—from regal authority to enchanted infatuation—with grace and authenticity. Her portrayal left an indelible impression, marking her as a soprano of exceptional talent and versatility. The production's success was bolstered by a cohesive ensemble cast. Rafal Tomkiewicz's Oberon was both commanding and nuanced, his countertenor voice blending beautifully with Solunya's soprano. Fausto Israel's Puck brought mischievous energy and agility to the stage, serving as the perfect catalyst for the play's magical chaos.

The quartet of lovers—Ted Black (Lysander), Nikita Ivasechko (Demetrius), Sofia Vinnik (Hermia), and Sieglinde Feldhofer (Helena)—delivered performances that were both vocally robust and emotionally

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Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

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resonant. Their comedic timing and heartfelt expressions added layers of relatability to the fantastical narrative. Ivan Orešcanin's Bottom provided comedic relief with impeccable timing and vocal prowess, particularly during his transformation scenes, which were both humorous and oddly touching.

Oper Graz's A Midsummer Night's Dream was a resounding success, offering a production that was both visually stunning and musically sublime. At its heart was the performance that captivated and enchanted, setting a new standard for the role. Her portrayal not only showcased her exceptional vocal abilities but also her deep understanding of character and narrative.

This production stands as a testament to the power of opera to transport and transform, leaving audiences spellbound and yearning for more.

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**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
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Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
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