



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Italian Songbook of Hugo Wolf

Opera Zurich, 03.06.2025 [ENA]

On the evening of June 2, 2025, the famous Opera House of Zürich presented a luminous rendition of the Hugo Wolf's masterpiece called *Italienisches Liederbuch*, a song cycle that delves into the multifaceted nature of love and passion through 46 Italian folk poems translated by Paul Heyse. This performance, featuring soprano Hanna-Elisabeth Müller and baritone Yannick Debus.

The duet was accompanied by the Labyrinth Ensemble under the baton of Ann-Katrin Stöcker, offered a fresh perspective through Ralf Gothóni's arrangement for two voices and chamber ensemble. Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch* is renowned for its intricate portrayal of love's various shades—ranging from tender affection to biting sarcasm. Traditionally performed with piano accompaniment, this evening's arrangement for chamber ensemble added a new dimension, allowing for a richer exploration of the emotional landscape. The Labyrinth Ensemble, composed of musicians from Philharmonia Zürich, provided a nuanced and sensitive backdrop that highlighted the subtleties of Wolf's compositions.

Hanna-Elisabeth Müller brought to the stage a soprano voice characterized by clarity and emotional depth. Her interpretation of the songs was marked by a keen understanding of the text and an ability to convey complex emotions with apparent ease. Müller's dynamic range and expressive phrasing breathed life into each piece, making the audience feel the joys and sorrows encapsulated in the music. Her previous experiences at major opera houses, including the Bayerische Staatsoper and the Metropolitan Opera, were evident in her polished and confident performance.

Baritone Yannick Debus complemented Müller with his warm and resonant voice. His interpretations were marked by a deep connection to the material, delivering each song with sincerity and emotional resonance. Debus's background, including roles at the Theater Basel and the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik, contributed to his nuanced understanding of the repertoire. His performance added depth to the evening, capturing the complexities of love portrayed in Wolf's compositions. Under the direction of Ann-Katrin Stöcker, the Labyrinth Ensemble delivered a performance that was both cohesive and expressive.

The Opernhaus Zürich's presentation of Hugo Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch* was a masterful blend of vocal artistry and instrumental finesse. Hanna-Elisabeth Müller and Yannick Debus delivered performances that were both technically proficient and emotionally compelling, supported by the sensitive accompaniment of the Labyrinth Ensemble under Ann-Katrin Stöcker's direction. This concert not only

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honored Wolf's original compositions but also offered a fresh and intimate interpretation that left a lasting impression on all who attended.

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