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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

A Radiant Journey into Viennese Operetta

Langenlois, 10.08.2025 [ENA]

This summer, the lush baroque gardens of Schloss Haindorf in Langenlois once again blossomed into a temple of music, romance, and laughter with the staging of *Ein Walzertraum*—the silver-age operetta masterpiece by Oscar Straus—for the festival’s 30th anniversary. This enchanting production fully honours the genre’s glitter and wit—delivering a joyous, stylish, and emotionally uplifting evening.

Written in 1907 as Oscar Straus’s riposte to Franz Lehár’s *Die lustige Witwe*, *Ein Walzertraum* quickly entered the international repertoire. With the spirited waltz "Leise, ganz leise klingt’s durch den Raum..." and the playful ensemble choruses, the work brought Straus fame across Europe and Hollywood, even inspiring Lubitsch’s 1931 film *The Smiling Lieutenant*. Straus belongs to the celebrated Silver Operetta era alongside Lehár and Emmerich Kálmán. His melodies—effortlessly elegant and crisply orchestrated—embody both Viennese charm and emotional sincerity. *Ein Walzertraum* remains his signature creation, embodying both comedy and heartfelt longing.

Operette Langenlois has established itself over three decades as Austria’s summer-long homage to operetta. Set beneath the golden façade of Schloss Haindorf, performances take place in the open-air baroque garden, offering a unique, inviting atmosphere where audience and performers breathe the same summer air. The seasonal "Winzerdorf"—a charming wine-pavilion with local producers—sets the mood early: sipping Kamptal wines as twilight unfolds ensures a pleasure that is cultural, sensory, and social.

This festival is not merely local folklore—it attracts top voices from the Volksoper and Staatsoper, chamber orchestras, creative direction, and loyal audience around 200-300 nightly attendees. It offers both professional polish and genuine proximity. Artists breathe, laugh—and occasionally improvise—with the crowd in ways rarely possible indoors. In 2025, *Ein Walzertraum* brought together a stellar ensemble. Conductor Lorenz C. Aichner, a returning mainstay, infused the score with graceful sweep, rhythmic verve, and orchestral warmth. Under his baton, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra delivered Straus’s swirling waltzes, pastoral serenades, and ensemble comedy with crisp clarity and emotional color.

Paul Schweinester (Leutnant Niki), new to Langenlois, charmed with a tenor voice of subtle brightness and dramatic nuance. His transformation from reluctant husband to romantic idealist unfolded with vocal conviction. Domenica Radlmaier (Prinzessin Helene) blended regal poise with vulnerability, while Nicole Lubinger (Franzi Steingruber), the vivacious violinist, enchanted with sparkling tone and charisma,

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embodying the free-spirit that Niki yearningly follows. Supporting roles such as André Bauer, Cornelia Horak, and Erwin Belakowitsch added ensemble richness—each contributing strong comic timing or heartfelt lyricism, as needed.

The chorus Alea and chamber ensemble stayed fabulously tight, offering seamless backing for Strauss’s lush orchestration. Under the direction of Isabella Gregor, Ein Walzertraum achieved a refined balance between whimsy and sincerity. Gregor keeps the tone light, letting the humor breathe: comedic interactions feel fresh, refrains are playful, and the final couplets shimmer with anticipating delight. Yet those light moments never undermine the emotional core—Niki’s dilemma, Franzi’s integrity, Helene’s sense of duty.

Gregor avoids caricature. She imbues the court scenes with gentle satire, allowing the music to carry the weight. The garden party scenes reveal a pastoral warmth—choreography of dancers, elegant ensembles, and crisp staging all grounded in musical rhythm.

Audience reaction in the first weeks of July 2025 was overwhelmingly positive. Each performance concluded with sustained applause, multiple curtain calls, and delighted cheers. Ein Walzertraum seemed to resonate with both seasoned operetta lovers and newcomers alike, many moved to tears or laughter by favorite numbers carried live under open skies.

Standout Scenes & Musical Highlights

The Dream Waltz (“Leise...”): Schweinester’s lyrical delivery, buoyed by swelling orchestral strings, turned this beloved melody into a sublime moment—the introduction of longing embodied both visually and vocally.

“Piccolo, Piccolo, tsin-tsin-tsin”: A zany, rhythmic showstopper. Lubinger and supporting cast danced and sang with joyful abandon—comic but musically controlled—and the entire audience clapped along.

Ensemble duets and trio passages: Crisp vocal blends make the love triangle between Niki, Franzi, and Helene palpably human. Musical direction maintained blend without sacrificing projection.

Final couplet and ensemble finale: A sense of collective sparkle closed the evening: couples reconciled, orchestral chords brightened, and the audience joined the laughter—ending on emotional and musical uplift.

Langenlois has built its reputation by delivering operetta with authenticity—honouring classic repertoire while injecting contemporary vibrancy. From *Zwei Herzen im Dreivierteltakt* (1996) to rarities such as *Gasparone* or *Das Dreimäderlhaus*, the programming proofed the organizers’ commitment to both heritage and rediscovery. Productions like *Die Fledermaus* in 2021 reinvigorated younger audiences through modern staging without betraying musical roots.

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Their 30th season—celebrated through an anniversary gala and programmatic return of the castle-garden atmosphere—feels both nostalgic and refreshing. It reminds us operetta is not escaping reality, but refracting it in melody and merriment. This production illustrates the enduring power of operetta as a form that celebrates music, romance, and community. In an era when high art festivals lean heavily toward spectacle or academic reinterpretation, Langenlois affirms that classic operetta maintains relevance through honest joy and musical integrity.

For first-time visitors, the evening offers the perfect gateway into Viennese song tradition—opera-trained voices, orchestral finesse, popular nembel melodies, and clear dialogue.

For seasoned fans, it's a refined celebration of Brettel's number one of Straus's oeuvre, lovingly staged under open skies. Ein Walzertraum at Operette Langenlois 2025 is an operetta lover's dream: free in spirit, radiant in melody, and confident in heart. It honors the legacy of Oscar Straus while inviting a new generation to smile, sway, and believe once again in the transportive power of the waltz.

In the warm evening air of Schloss Haindorf, under the soft glow of twilight, one is reminded of operetta's unique promise: to lift burdens, to unite through song, and to leave audiences lighter than they entered—smiling, dreaming, and dancing through the night.

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