EUROPEAN-NEWS-AGENCY.COM

EUROPEAN NEWS AGENCY

International Press Service

Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

# Theatrical Waltz Into the Absurd

Odeon Theater, 18.01.2026 [ENA]

In an era marked by relentless reinvention in performance art, Fleder.Strauss – Ein Künstler Innen Leben presented this month emerges as one of the most exhilarating and thought-provoking theatre pieces of the 2025–26 season. Presented at Vienna's Odeon Theatre by the visionary collaboration between Serapions Theater and das.bernhard.ensemble, this production defies easy categorisation.

Equal parts homage, satire, and physical theatre experiment, Fleder.Strauss transcends conventional dramaturgy, inviting audiences on a wild, rollicking journey through the psychological and cultural legacies of Johann Strauss and beyond. At its core, Fleder.Strauss brilliantly subverts the traditional operetta form associated with Strauss's legacy. Instead of offering a nostalgic revisit to the melodic charm of Die Fledermaus or the triumphant waltzes that made Strauss an emblem of Viennese musical identity, this production takes those familiar motifs and launches them into an unpredictable, richly layered narrative.

A motley group of performers — musicians, dancers, and actors — embark on what initially appears to be a celebratory world tour to spread the spirit of Strauss's music. However, when their airplane crashes in an indifferent, snowy wilderness, the framework of a conventional performance collapses almost immediately, giving way to a fiercely imaginative theatrical terrain where survival, identity, and artistic purpose collide. What distinguishes Fleder.Strauss is its daring physicality. From the moment the audience steps into the Odeon's performing space, the boundary between spectator and participant is thoughtfully suspended.

The stage becomes an immersive environment — an airport lounge, a crash site, a psychological landscape — where every physical gesture matters. The ensemble's use of movement, breath, and spatial dynamics evokes the physical theatre traditions of Europe, yet always with a fresh, almost anarchic energy. There is a palpable sense that each member of the cast is fully present not just in body, but in interpretive intent. This vitality translates into a performance that constantly surprises and engages, never allowing its audience the comfort of passive observation.

Musically, Fleder.Strauss is nothing short of revelatory. Co-directors Max Kaufmann and Ernst Kurt Weigel — who also contribute concept and direction — have orchestrated sound and live performance in a way that reframes the familiar rhythms of Strauss. Composer Mario Bergamasco and live sound artist Bernhard Fleischmann transform Strauss's motifs with electronic textures, interspersing them with references to other musical idioms, from emotive film soundscapes to contemporary sonic experimentation.

**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:**
**European News Agency**

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

**Haftungsausschluss:**

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.






These inventive juxtapositions generate an aural environment that is both reverential and subversive — evoking Strauss's genius while simultaneously dismantling the mythic narratives woven around his music.

Underlying this musical and physical inventiveness, Fleder.Strauss offers profound intellectual depth. It is both a playful satire and an incisive critique. The production explores the romanticised narratives of cultural heritage, probing what remains of artistic legacy once the applause fades and the performer is left, metaphorically and literally, amidst the wreckage. What does it mean to carry forward a tradition? How do artists negotiate identity in a world saturated with expectation and nostalgia? The post-crash dynamic turns these questions into humour, absurdity and, ultimately, reflection.

In this context, Strauss himself becomes a mirror through which the anxieties of contemporary artistic practice, and the burdens of cultural expectations, are vividly reflected. Visually, the world of Fleder.Strauss is arresting. The production design by Max Kaufmann and Eva Grün — from its striking airplane fuselage centerpiece to the evocative use of space, costume, and projection — creates a mise-en-scène that is at once surreal and immediately compelling. There is a kinesthetic quality to the aesthetic; each countermovement, each stage tableau, seems crafted to elicit not just visual appreciation but visceral response.

Choreography by Leonie Wahl ensures that even in moments of stillness there is tension, purpose, and theatrical narrative. Importantly, the humour in Fleder.Strauss is as intelligent as it is infectious. There are moments of complete absurdity, moments in which the cast inches into exaggerated pantomime, physical comedy, or wildly inventive interpretation of character and circumstance. Yet, beneath these moments runs a sincere affection for the spirit of performance itself — for the joy of play, for the audacity of artistic creation, and for the complex, messy humanity that makes theatre alive.

In sum, Fleder.Strauss stands as a testament to the power of experimental theatre to reimagine tradition without cynicism, to embrace complexity without losing joy, and to engage an audience without ever underestimating them. It is a production that dances effortlessly between homage and critique, past and present, absurdity and earnestness. Rarely does a piece so richly combine intellectual rigour with visceral engagement; Fleder.Strauss does so with style, heart, and boundless creativity.

Bericht online lesen:
https://culture.en-a.eu/kunst_kultur_und_musik/theatrical_waltz_into_the_absurd-92875/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:
V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Nadejda Komendantova

**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:**
**European News Agency**

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

**Haftungsausschluss:**

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.