EUROPEAN-NEWS-AGENCY.COM

EUROPEAN NEWS AGENCY

International Press Service

Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Triumph of Theatricality, Satire, and Ensemble Energy

Scala Vienna, 18.01.2026 [ENA]

In a theatrical season saturated with revivals and reinterpretations, Extrablatt! Extrablatt! arrives at the Theater Scala as a revelation — a production that not only celebrates the exuberant pace and tonal wit of its classic source material but also reshapes it for the present moment with intelligence, verve and unbridled joy. The piece represents one of the most singular and entertaining event.

Directed by Bruno Max it is a true testament to the vitality of contemporary Austrian stagecraft and the enduring power of theatrical comedy to illuminate cultural truths. At first glance, the title Extrablatt! Extrablatt! evokes the frenetic energy of old-fashioned headline culture — the yelp of newsboys hawking the day's biggest story at the top of their lungs. This is no accident: the play is a fresh stage adaptation by Bruno Max, freely reworked from the 1928 American play The Front Page by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, itself a foundational work in the canon of newspaper satire and screwball comedy.

Max's version, meticulously staged in the intimate confines of the Scala's space, captures both the historical spirit of the piece and its startling contemporary relevance. The narrative thrust is irresistible: in the press room of the Cook County courthouse in 1951 Chicago, a cadre of feverish reporters awaits the execution of Earl Williams, a man condemned to die for the murder of a police officer. But when Williams escapes in the most improbable of ways, the journalists — driven by relentless ambition and a blithe moral compass — see only one thing: the exclusive scoop that could make or break careers.

The would-be retiree Hildy Johnson, determined to marry and abandon the newsroom grind, finds himself ensnared once again in the chase for the next great headline. From the outset, Max's direction establishes a pace that borders on orchestral; this is theatre that breathes through rhythm. The ensemble moves with what might best be called choreographed frenzy: not a step or telephone ring out of place, not a hand gesture without impeccable timing. The staging, imagined by Marcus Ganser, evokes a claustrophobic newsroom buzzing with static cords, ringing telephones and flurries of overlapping dialogue.

Costumes by Anna Pollack — with their period authenticity — imbue the characters with the swagger and paranoia of a bygone era, yet under Max's vision these details never feel like costume drama. They feel urgent. Central to the production's success is the ensemble itself — a richly textured cohort of actors who handle the play's rapid shifts in tone with extraordinary skill. Paul Barna's Hildy Johnson is a revelation: his performance encapsulates the existentially comic tension between domestic aspiration and journalistic

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.

adrenaline. Barna's Hildy is not merely a caricature of the hard-boiled reporter, but a fully rounded, agonizingly human figure torn between the promise of love and the seduction of the scoop.

Barna invests every line with kinetic comedic tension, and his physicality — the swift pivots, the half-whispered conspiratorial looks — is nothing short of masterly. Opposite him, Alexander Rossi as Walter Burns, the cunning editor who refuses to let his star reporter escape the newsroom's orbit, matches Barna's energy with grounded precision. Rossi's Burns balances menace with mischief; he is the trickster at the heart of the piece, and Rossi's deft control of comedic timing ensures that Burns never lapses into broad caricature but instead remains sharp-elbowed, hard-smiling and wickedly entertaining.

Yet it is the larger ensemble that truly distinguishes this production. With sixteen actors taking the stage, Extrablatt! Extrablatt! showcases a range of comic types — from the pompous Bensinger (Hermann J. Kogler), who manages to turn every small victory into an existential triumph, to the comically oblivious Sheriff Hartman (Robert Notsch), whose absurdist blend of bluster and confusion elicits uproarious laughter without ever robbing the character of integrity. Even minor roles are given full theatrical lives — Ulrike Hübl's Putzfrau Jenny, for example, repeatedly steals scenes with a combination of sly intelligence and unexpected emotional depth.

The script itself — Max's adaptation — is a triumph of dramaturgical creativity. By retaining the structural backbone of The Front Page yet updating its comedic rhythms and satirical edge, Max positions the piece as both a tribute to the classic and a mirror for contemporary media culture. The play's relentless critique of sensationalism, journalistic opportunism and political manipulation finds new resonance in an age of 24-hour news cycles and social media virality. Despite its mid-century setting, the production feels startlingly modern — a testament to the universality of its themes.

What is most remarkable about Extrablatt! Extrablatt! is how it navigates the fine line between biting social satire and unabashed theatrical pleasure. There are moments when the audience is prompted to reflect — on the ethics of news reporting, on the corrosive pursuit of exposure at any cost — but there are just as many moments of pure, exuberant comedy. The laughter generated in the theatre is not polite chuckling but full-bodied guffaws, the kind that testify to the production's mastery of comic elasticity.

Bruno Max's direction deserves special note for its lightning-fast pacing; in a play built upon rapid exchanges, overlapping conversations and slapstick twists, clarity and momentum are essential. Max keeps the machinery of the play running with remarkable precision, ensuring that even the most complex scenes — multiple characters on multiple phone lines — never descend into chaos. Instead, audience members are treated to a tightly structured carnival of wit and performance artistry.

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.



In its design, performances, and conceptual boldness, Extrablatt! Extrablatt! upholds every best expectation of what vibrant, dynamic theatre can — and should — be. It is a piece that engages the intellect while igniting genuine theatrical pleasure. For theatre lovers and newcomers alike, this production offers an unforgettable evening: funny, incisive, and, above all, alive with the joy of performance.

Bericht online lesen:
https://culture.en-a.eu/kunst_kultur_und_musik/triumph_of_theatricality_satire_and_ensemble_energy-92876/

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.