EUROPEAN-NEWS-AGENCY.COM

EUROPEAN NEWS AGENCY

International Press Service

Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Between Marmalade and Konfitüre

Volksoper , 07.03.2026 [ENA]

The Volksoper's new production of Ralph Benatzky's Im weißen Rössl emerges as a spirited and knowingly ironic love letter to the operetta tradition, refreshed with a sharp contemporary intelligence rather than smothered in tourist-kitsch nostalgia. Director Jan Philipp Gloger approaches this operetta classic as both joyous entertainment and a subtle sociological study of tourism, desire, and national self-mythologizing.

Rather than simply reproducing the picture-postcard Wolfgangsee idyll, he treats the "White Horse Inn" as a stage within the stage, a place where guests, staff, and even the Kaiser perform roles prescribed by cliché and expectation. This framing allows the evening to oscillate elegantly between revue and satire, between heartfelt feeling and pointed observation. Gloger leans into the piece's inherent comedy of social friction—Austrians versus Germans, locals versus visitors, "Marmelade" versus "Konfitüre"—yet never reduces the characters to caricatures. Underneath the farce runs a steady undercurrent of melancholy: what does it mean to sell happiness "with lake view" by the night, and who pays the emotional bill when the season ends?

Christof Hetzer's set design embraces the iconography of the Salzkammergut while constantly reminding us that it is constructed, curated, and merchandised. The famous waterfront hotel appears as a flexible, multi-level structure that can read as real architecture from one angle and as theatrical scaffolding from another, a visual metaphor for the production's play with façade and backstage.

Costume designer Justina Klimczyk extends this doubleness into the clothing, juxtaposing stylized traditional dress with modern resort wear and tourist uniforms. Her palette captures the postcard brightness of alpine holiday brochures, but small dissonant details—overdone logos, slightly exaggerated traditional elements—hint at how identity becomes costume in a commercialized idyll. Florian Hurler's choreography animates this world with bustling tour groups, photo-ready tableaux and tightly drilled ensemble numbers, suggesting a tourism industry that runs on well-rehearsed movement and choreographed spontaneity.

Under the musical leadership of the Volksoper's team (including Alfred Eschwé among the conductors), the score is treated not as lightweight fluff but as a finely crafted engine for rhythm, wit and sentiment. Tempi are alert, dance rhythms springy, and the orchestra relishes Benatzky's shifts from cabaret-tinged numbers to sweeping operetta lyricism. The choral forces, prepared by Roger Díaz-Cajamarca, function as

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.

both musical mass and dramaturgical commentator, embodying the ever-arriving tide of tourists who give the inn its pulse.

Annette Dasch's Josepha Vogelhuber anchors the performance with vocal assurance and dramatic nuance. She refuses to play the Rösslwirtin as merely a plucky operetta heroine; instead, Dasch reveals the businesswoman who has learned to weaponize charm and warmth while fiercely guarding her autonomy. Her big moments combine gleaming top notes with a fine sense of text, allowing irony and vulnerability to coexist in the same musical phrase.

As Leopold Brandmeyer, Jakob Semotan offers a winning blend of comic agility and genuine emotional ache. His portrayal makes clear that the head waiter's servility in his job contrasts painfully with his insistence on being taken seriously in love: when he turns from juggling trays to pleading with Josepha, the emotional gear shift is both credible and moving. The supporting gallery is luxuriously cast, reinforcing the production's character-driven approach. TV entertainer Harald Schmidt, as Professor Dr. Hinzelmann, brings a dry, understated wit that cuts through the sugar of the holiday atmosphere.

Rather than dominating the stage, he shapes punchlines with the ease of a seasoned satirist, allowing the intellectual tourist to become a wry observer of the madness around him. Julia Edtmeier's Klärchen—fresh from Nestroy acclaim—sparks with quicksilver presence and rhythmic precision, her scenes crackling with youthful energy and emotional sincerity. As the German industrialist Wilhelm Giesecke, Götz Schubert (later alternated by Matthias Matschke in some performances) embodies the archetype of the grumbling, self-important guest, yet the portrayal never slips into lazy stereotyping. His confrontations with the world of the Rössl become miniature studies in cultural misunderstanding, status anxiety, and the comic fragility of male ego.

Opposite him, Nadja Mchantaf's Ottilie sings with radiant clarity, suggesting a young woman quietly negotiating between romantic yearning and familial expectations. Robert Palfrader's Kaiser appears, as so often in the history of this work, as the ultimate guarantee that everything will "come out right", yet Gloger and Palfrader give the figure a gently ironic sheen. This Kaiser is both benevolent and strangely out of place, a visitor from a long-vanished political order whose presence throws the present-day tourism circus into relief. When he blesses the happy ending, the moment is both sincerely uplifting and knowingly theatrical—a curtain call for an entire idea of Austria.

What makes this Rössl particularly compelling is that it understands operetta not as museum repertoire but as a living form capable of self-reflection. By probing what happens "behind the façade" of the luxury holiday, Gloger and his team echo current debates about over-tourism, cultural branding, and the commercialization of "authenticity", yet they do so with a light touch and abundant musical charm.

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.



The result is an evening that sends the audience out humming “Die ganze Welt ist himmelblau” while quietly inviting them to ask who paints that sky, who controls the view, and who washes the dishes once the song is over. It is precisely this blend of effervescence and reflection that makes the Volksoper’s Im weißen Rössl a significant and genuinely delightful contribution to Vienna’s operetta tradition.

Bericht online lesen:
https://culture.en-a.eu/kunst_kultur_und_musik/between_marmalade_and_konfituere-93180/

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.