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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Reimagining of Gogol Satire: Revisor of Koležnik

Akademietheater, 03.06.2025 [ENA]

In the latest production of Nikolai Gogol's "Der Revisor" at Vienna's Akademietheater, director Mateja Koležnik delivers a compelling and visually arresting interpretation that resonates with contemporary audiences. This staging, under the auspices of the Burgtheater, showcases a meticulous blend of design, performance, and thematic exploration, reaffirming the enduring relevance of Gogol's classic satire.

Koležnik's direction is marked by a stringent formalism that enhances the narrative's satirical edge. The set, designed by Klaus Grünberg, presents a stark, institutional environment that underscores the bureaucratic malaise at the heart of the play. Ana Savic-Gecan's costumes further accentuate this atmosphere, with characters adorned in attire that reflects their social standing and moral decay. The lighting design complements the mise-en-scène, casting shadows that metaphorically represent the characters' duplicity and the pervasive corruption within the town.

The ensemble cast delivers performances that are both nuanced and impactful. Roland Koch, as the beleaguered Mayor Anton Antonowitsch, embodies the desperation and absurdity of a man ensnared by his own machinations. Andrea Wenzl portrays Anna Andrejewna, the Mayor's wife, with a blend of vanity and opportunism, while Lola Klamroth's Marja Antonowna captures youthful naivety entangled in societal expectations. Tim Werths' portrayal of the impostor Chlestakow is particularly noteworthy; his interpretation balances charm and deceit, effectively manipulating the town's officials who are eager to curry favor with the supposed inspector. Oliver Nägele, as Chlestakow's servant Ossip, provides a grounded counterpoint, highlighting the absurdity.

This production astutely underscores the timelessness of Gogol's critique of bureaucratic incompetence and moral corruption. The director's choice to maintain the play's original setting while infusing it with modern sensibilities allows for a reflection on current societal structures and the often farcical nature of power dynamics. The characters' frantic attempts to conceal their misdeeds from the presumed inspector mirror contemporary instances of institutional cover-ups and the fear of accountability. Bert Wrede's musical composition and Magdalena Reiter's choreography contribute significantly to the production's atmosphere.

The sound design employs rhythmic patterns that echo the mechanical operations of bureaucracy, while the deliberate movements of the actors emphasize the performative aspects of their roles within the corrupt system. These elements coalesce to create a sensory experience that reinforces the play's central themes.

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Mateja Koležnik's "Der Revisor" at the Akademietheater stands as a testament to the enduring power of Gogol's satire and the potential of theater to reflect and critique societal flaws. Through precise direction, compelling performances, and cohesive design elements, this production offers a thought-provoking and engaging experience that resonates with contemporary audiences.

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