





# ISICA





The Catalogue

















Setting the Stage for the Stars.

VBW International – The Vienna Licensors of Premium Musical Productions.

Take part in our success: we offer exclusive licenses of our cutting edge musical productions to leading stages all over the world.



# At home in Europe's music capital VIENNA



# VEREINIGTE BÜHNEN WIEN

Our passion for setting the stage for the stars has gained us international star status in our own right as the only musical producer in German-speaking countries exporting in-house productions successfully all around the world.

The name Vereinigte Bühnen Wien (VBW) is synonymous with van Laast, Anthony Ward, Hugh Vanstone, William Dudley, musical theatre of the very highest quality. The Viennese company stages top-class opera and musical productions at its four historic theatres: the Theater an der Wien (built 1801), the Blane. Raimund Theater (1893), the Ronacher (1872) and the Kammeroper (1953). Every year, up to 600,000 people from Austria and abroad attend performances at these theatres, with about 500,000 of them enjoying Austrian and European German-language premieres of hit international musicals at the Raimund Theater or the Ronacher.

VBW attracts the most talented artists in the international musical scene - directors, choreographers, set designers, composers and librettists - to create outstanding in-house productions. Being one of Europe's largest multi-genre theatre enterprises, VBW even has its own 80-piece orchestra. The top international quality of its productions means that it plays a key role in upholding Vienna's reputation as a centre of culture and

The Theater an der Wien is one of the world's leading opera houses. It was built by actor and impresario Emanuel Schikaneder who was also Mozart's librettist. After decades as a musical venue it reopened as an opera house in January 2006 to coincide with the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. Regular performers have included Riccardo Muti, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, René Jacobs, Robert Carsen, Thorsten Fischer, Peter Konwitschny, Placido Domingo, José Carreras and Cecilia Bartoli.

Since 2012/13 the Theater an der Wien has also staged productions at the Kammeroper, giving its Young Ensemble (JET) the chance to showcase their exceptional talents.

The Raimund Theater and the Ronacher are dedicated to firstclass long-running musicals, created in Vienna by artists of the highest international standing such as Sir Trevor Nunn, Stephen Schwartz, Vincent Paterson, John Malkovich, Roman Polanski, Francesca Zambello, Peter J. Davison, Patricia Field, Anthony

Frank Wildhorn, David Leveaux, Harry Kupfer, John O'Connell, Dave Stewart, Hans Schavernoch, Mark Fisher, Yan Tax and Sue

Since 1992, VBW has been producing its own original musicals and began exporting them in 1996. Hit musicals such as ELISABETH (the world's most successful musical production of German-speaking origin), DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, MOZART!, REBECCA, RUDOLF, THE VISIT, SCHIKANEDER and DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE have made the "Viennese musical" a globally renowned brand and have brought drama, emotion, thrilling dance sequences, breathtaking set design and of course first-class music by worldfamous composers to top stages in 21 countries from Finland to Japan, and even to Broadway, where they have been performed in 16 languages and been seen by more than 24 million people.

VBW productions have been delighting audiences for over 50 years. We are constantly developing new ideas to attract our audiences of tomorrow - children, young people and nontraditional theatre-goers.

The latest original musicals by VBW are SCHIKANEDER -THE TURBULENT LOVE STORY BEHIND THE MAGIC FLUTE with music and lyrics by WICKED composer Stephen Schwartz, book by Christian Struppeck, directed by Sir Trevor Nunn, and I AM FROM AUSTRIA, a witty and charming story of love, friendship and family based on the greatest hits of the legendary Viennese singer-songwriter Rainhard Fendrich.

The combination of superlative artistic standards in historic theatres has made Vienna one of the musical capitals of the world, rivalling London and New York. Musical productions by VBW guarantee long runs, rave reviews and audiences captivated by the magic of state-of-the-art musical theatre.

VBW: A European player on a global market.

At work on a global scale with leading international stages















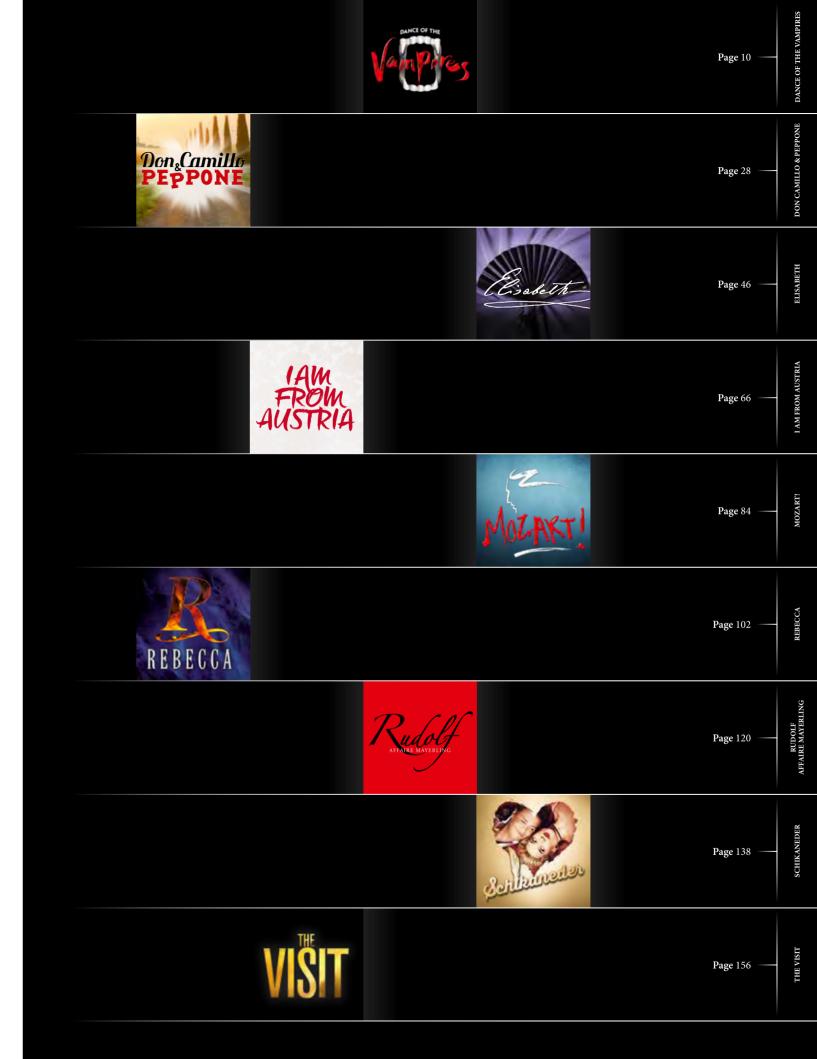




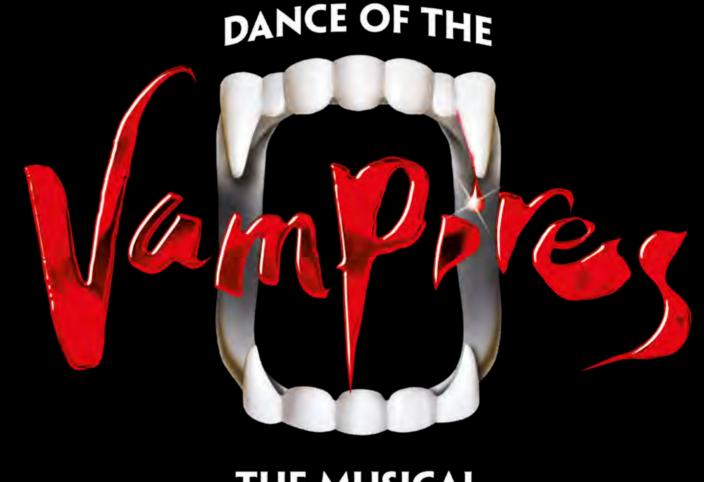
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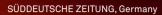
Based on Roman Polanski's legendary Sixties cult movie, DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES by VBW is a truly thrilling and marvelously entertaining musical take on the popular vampire genre, presenting the immortal bloodsuckers in a new and hilariously rock 'n' rolling vein.



THE MUSICAL

BASED ON THE MOTION PICTURE "THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS"

DIRECTED BY ROMAN POLANSKI, WRITTEN BY GÉRARD BRACH AND ROMAN POLANSKI



"To tell the truth the result marvels everyone."

VEDOMOSTI, Russia

"The show, directed by Polanski, is the sort of elaborate spectacle that is familiar to theatergoers on Broadway and in the West End of London."

"The bloodsucking will continue for a long time to come."

**WORLDWIDE** *over* **MILLION**  "Every character is fascinating."

THE PRINTED BLOG Russia

**SHOWS** WORLDWIDE over **8,000** 

AUSTRIA / BELGIUM / CZECH REPUBLIC / ESTONIA FINLAND / FRANCE / GERMANY / HUNGARY / JAPAN POLAND/RUSSIA/SLOVAKIA/SWITZERLAND/USA COUNTRIES "What happens on the stage (and the aisles in the auditorium) is arranged to perfection. The vampires will conquer the world."

NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG, Switzerland

## **CREDITS**

WORLD PREMIERE 1997 Austria / Vienna (Theater an der Wien/VBW)

**BOOK & LYRICS** Michael Kunze MUSIC & ADDITIONAL MATERIAL Jim Steinman

MUSICAL SUPERVISOR &

**ARRANGEMENTS** Michael Reed

**ORCHESTRATIONS** Steve Margoshes, Michael Reed (2009)

BASED ON Turner Entertainment Co.'s motion picture The Fearless Vampire Killers.

produced with the kind permission of Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures Inc.

directed by Roman Polanski and written by Gérard Brach and Roman Polanski

DIRECTOR Roman Polanski,

Cornelius Baltus (2009, 2017)

CHOREOGRAPHY Dennis Callahan

SET DESIGN William Dudley (1997), Kentaur (2009, 2017)

COSTUME DESIGN /

MAKE-UP / MASKS / WIGS Sue Blane (1997), Kentaur (2009, 2017)

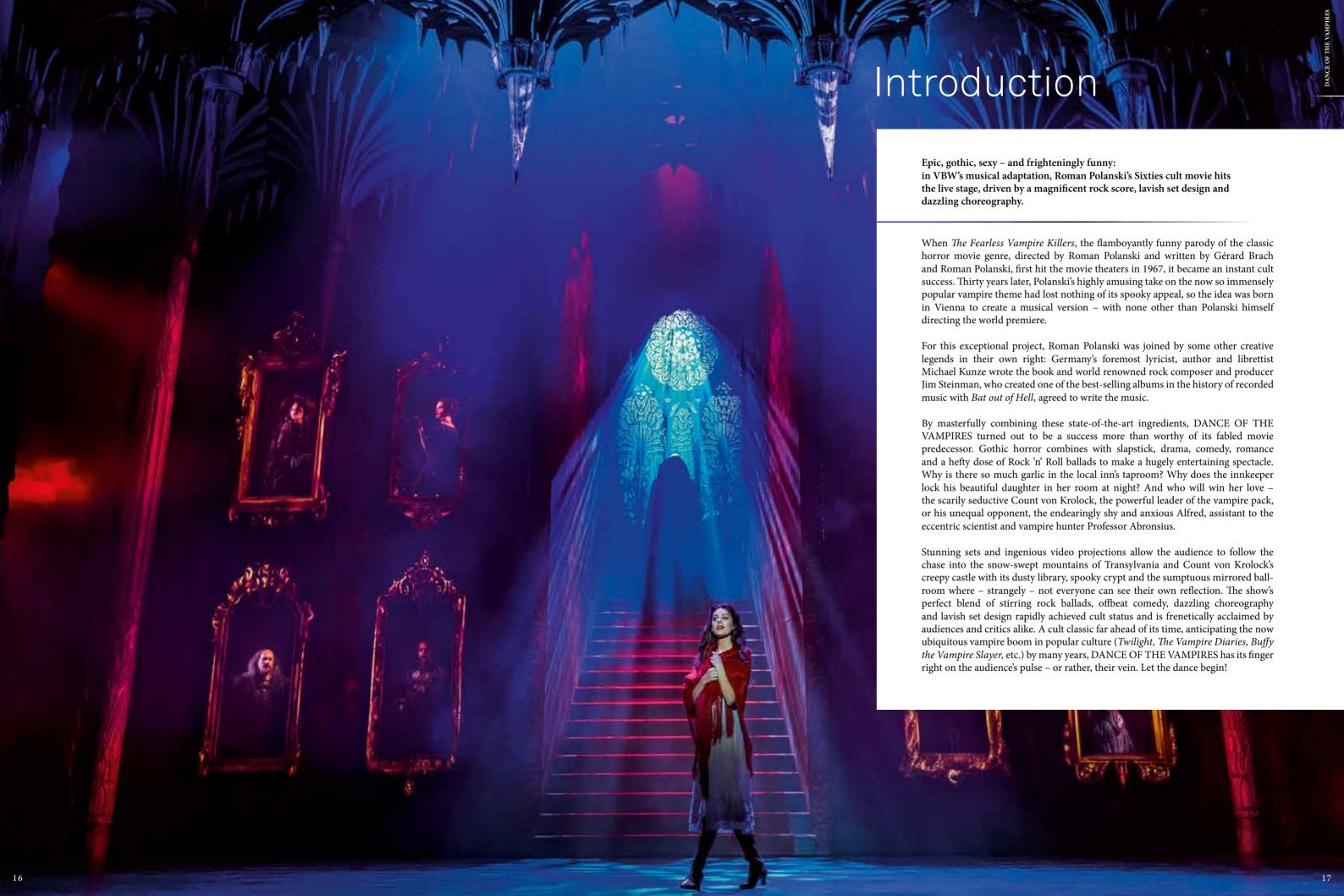
LIGHTING DESIGN

SOUND DESIGN Richard Ryan (1997), Matthias Reithofer (2009), Thomas Strebel (2017) MUSICAL DIRECTOR Adrian Werum (1997), Caspar Richter (2009), Koen Schoots (2017)

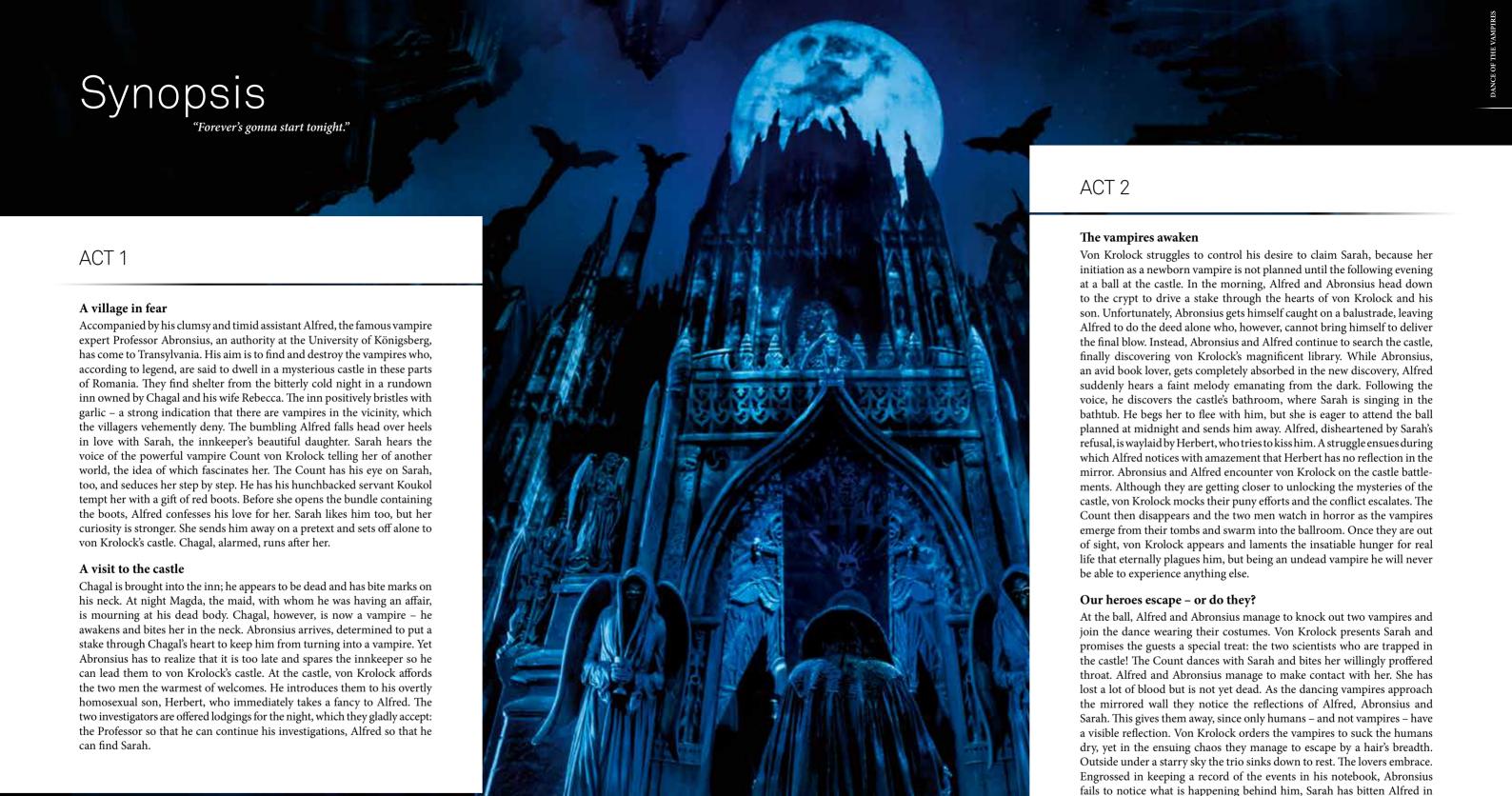
> "Roman Polanski has just launched the best-ever German musical. The show has few equals in its genre."

BERLINER ZEITUNG, Germany









the neck and is drinking his blood. The vampires have won. In a pulsating victory dance that has the audience on their feet, they celebrate their arrival

in the here and now.







# AUTHOR / COMPOSER

Michael Kunze and Jim Steinman: the duo that made the vampires rock

#### MICHAEL KUNZE

An internationally successful author and librettist and the foremost German-language lyricist of his era. With ELISABETH he pioneered a new European form of musical theater, the drama musical, following it with DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, MOZART!, REBECCA, MARIE ANTOINETTE and LADY BESS. He also wrote the German versions of international hit musicals such as EVITA, CATS, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, A CHORUS LINE, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, THE LION KING, MAMMA MIA!, DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE and MATTERHORN. He has not only written countless German pop hits, but also many international smashes and holds both a Grammy and an Echo.

#### IIM STEINMAN

The world-renowned composer and producer is perhaps best known as the writer of Meat Loaf's legendary Bat Out Of Hell, the third best-selling album of all times, and the only record in the all-time top 50 whose music and lyrics were written by a single artist. He wrote Meat Loaf's hits "Paradise By The Dashboard Light", "Dead Ringer For Love", "Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad", "I'd Do Anything For Love (But I Won't Do That)" - the alltime best-selling rock single - and "It's All Coming Back To Me Now", the most played single worldwide. Bonnie Tyler scored a massive worldwide hit with "Holding Out For A Hero" and Steinman reworked another of her hits, "Total Eclipse Of The Heart" as "Totale Finsternis" for DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES. He has also written film music for Footloose, Streets of Fire, The Shadow and The Mask of Zorro as well as the song lyrics for Andrew Lloyd Webber's WHISTLE DOWN THE WIND and for the musical BAT OUT OF HELL.

# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

Over 8.8 million tickets sold worldwide Performances in 14 countries and 12 languages A triumphant success for a truly spine-tingling spectacle

The original Viennese production, directed by international movie legend Roman Polanski himself, premiered in October 1997 at the Raimund Theater in Vienna – a lavish production featuring sophisticated set design by Olivier Award recipient William Dudley and sumptuous costume design by Sue Blane (THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW) – and closed in January 2000. From Vienna the vampires went on to conquer Belgium, Estonia, Finland, (Helsinki, Seinäjoki) France, Germany (Berlin, Hamburg, Köln, München, Oberhausen, Stuttgart), Hungary, Japan, Poland, Russia (Moskau, St. Petersburg, Slovakia, Switzerland and the USA (Broadway-albeit in a revised version).

A truly spectacular success which brought the show back to Vienna in September 2009: after traveling the world for twelve years, the vampires finally made a triumphant return to their birthplace. From 2009-2011 and again in 2017 for its 20th anniversary, fearless vampire hunter Professor Abronsius and his not-quite-so-fearless sidekick Alfred set out once more to much acclaim to hunt down the formidable Count von Krolock live on stage at Vienna's fabulous Ronacher Theater. Director was Cornelius Baltus, who had already supervised the show various times and was Polanski's assistant in 1997. Sets and costumes, make-up, masks and wigs are by Kentaur. Dennis Callahan (Broadway Choreographer, ELISABETH, MOZART!) reworked the dance sequences to Steinman's pounding rhythms and rocking refrains.

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

Czech, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Slovak

Missing the music? Check out: vampires.vbw-international.at

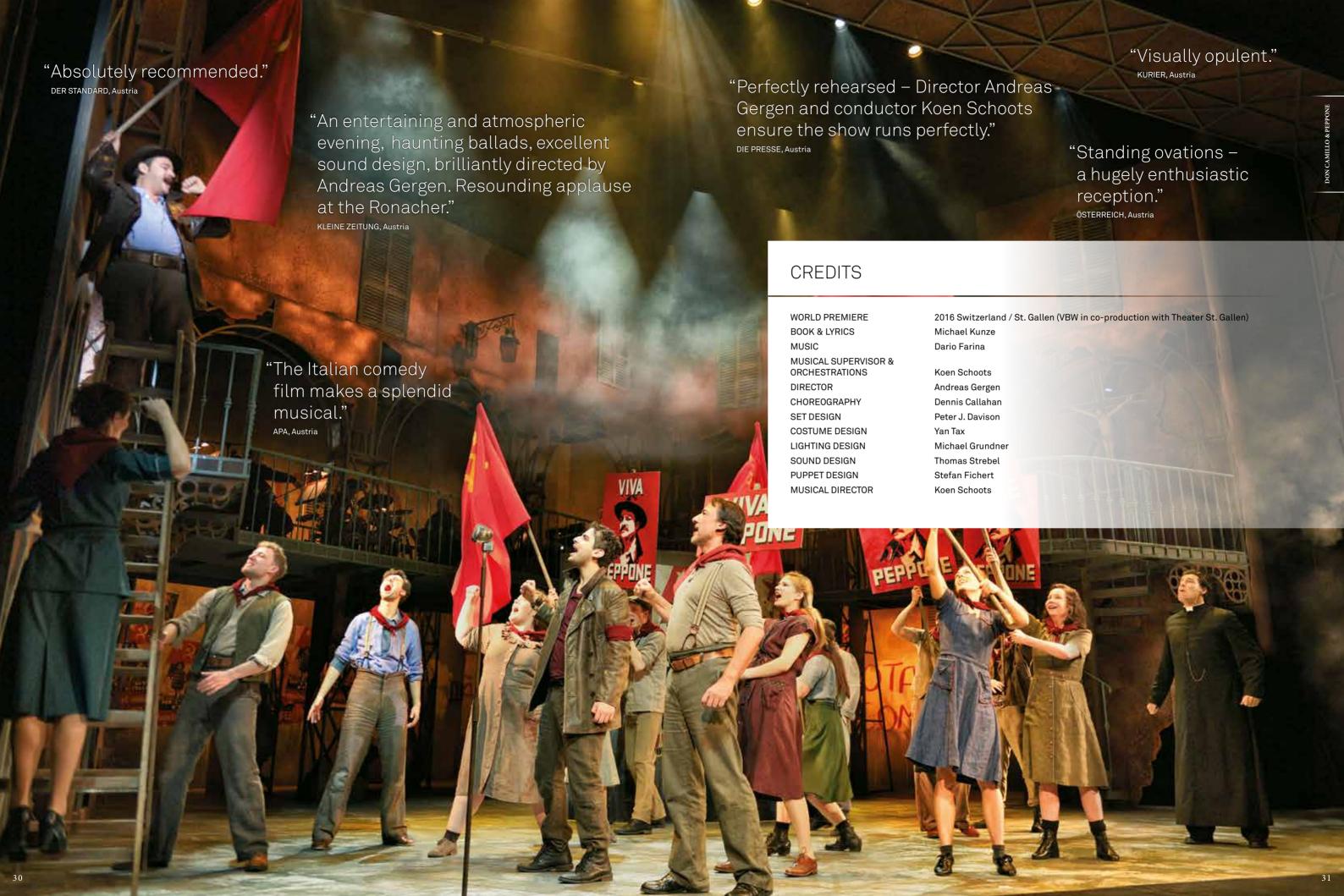
Contact: international@vbw.at





VBW unleashes Giovannino
Guareschi's much-loved
rivals in a joyous, pulsating
show brimming with sweeping
ballads and spectacular
dance numbers before they
see that some things are
more important than
cherished convictions.









# Introduction

VBW brings the antagonists from Giovannino Guareschi's internationally bestselling short stories, priest Don Camillo and communist mayor Peppone, to the musical stage in a light-hearted tale of fierce rivalry set aside for the good of the village. A stirring evocation of post-war rural Italy which is entertaining, thought-provoking and heart-warming.

Don Camillo, Boscaccio's village priest, is outraged. He gazes reproachfully up at the cross. "How could you let this happen?" Jesus replies that this is what democracy is about. After all, the poor have plenty of reasons for voting in a communist mayor. So begins our light-hearted musical about the Catholic priest Don Camillo and his rival Peppone, the new mayor of Boscaccio. It is 1947 and we find ourselves in a village in the North Italian Po Valley. This apparently sleepy little village is the setting for a battle between traditional values and the ideals of a social revolution. Not even Jesus can calm the furious priest down. In the war that has just ended, Don Camillo, unlike other clerics, fought with the partisans against the Fascists. Now he must fight against Peppone and his comrades. If necessary using the gun he has hidden in the sacristy.

The new mayor is no stranger to Don Camillo. They fought side by side when they were both part of the resistance to the now-toppled dictatorship. But Don Camillo vehemently rejects Peppone's political views. His opponent's attitude is equally vehement. Peppone sees himself as the representative of a new and better era. He is fighting for a better world, even if the Communist Party slogans he spouts sound odd coming from this man of the people. He considers the Church a force for evil, holding back progress.

These are our two combatants: the one cunning and eloquent, the other stubborn and intransigent. On Don Camillo's side are the wealthy landowners and conservative churchgoers, while the poor labourers and progressive intelligentsia stand behind Peppone. Each side despises the other and this contempt not infrequently turns into burning hatred.

As long as it is confined to words, ideas and demands, the quarrel sows discord in the village, but nothing worse. But a devastating flood makes it clear that in an emergency they all need each other. When soon afterwards a strike threatens to destroy all the livestock, Don Camillo realises that uncompromising confrontation will plunge the village into calamity.

However, it is a pair of star-crossed young lovers who bring about the real change of heart. Gina, the daughter of rich landowner Filotti, is in love with Mariolino, the son of Brusco, a poor peasant farmer. As with Romeo and Juliet, their feuding families will go to any lengths to break up the relationship between their children. We all know how it ends in Shakespeare. Here, too, the young couple can see no way out except joint suicide. Fortunately, Don Camillo and Peppone find out in time that the pair intend to drown themselves. They sound the alarm and the whole village forms a search party. The despairing lovers are found just in time. The shock brings everyone to their senses. Boscaccio will never belong completely to either Don Camillo or Peppone. Instead of fighting each other, they will have to come to an understanding and learn to put up with each other. Gina and Mariolino's wedding does not resolve every quarrel between the villagers, but it is a festival of tolerance, celebrated in harmony by the entire village.





## ACT 1

## A new mayor and a divided village

Shortly after World War II the situation in the Italian village Boscaccio changes. The communists obtained the majority at the elections and Peppone is the new mayor. This is bad news for the village priest Don Camillo, who regularly communes with Jesus, as he fears to lose his dutiful parishioners due to the new political leadership.

Gina, the daughter of the catholic landowner Filotti, and Mariolino, the son of the communist Brusco, whose different political convictions regularly lead to heated discussions but also passionate spectacles, meet at the piazza. Unexpectedly Don Camillo is called to the house of Filotti, where grandfather Nonno is on his deathbed. But once the attractive teacher Laura Castelli appears the old Nonno does not want to die anymore.

At the local council meeting in the town hall Peppone decides to raise a monument to the working man. In the church tower Don Camillo is reflecting on his community when suddenly Peppone asks him for a ceasefire. But the two cannot stop quarrelling. The conflict escalates when Laura asks Don Camillo to baptise the son of Peppone with the name Lenin. Only Jesus can persuade Don Camillo to agree to a compromise with the mayor. The hate between Filotti and Brusco culminates in building a fence to separate not only their lands but also their children from one another. At the piazza Peppone indulges in his memories.

#### A holy vandal?

At night Don Camillo is sneaking over the marketplace where only a few cats are straying. In the morning the villagers discover that the decree announcing the construction of the memorial is overwritten with the word "donkey" and are amused about the eternal rivalry between the priest and the mayor. Peppone, who already knows who is behind this act, asks Don Camillo due to his writing disability to help him writing a manifest against the culprit. While Laura persuades Peppone to complete his school graduation, Gina and Mariolino dream at the river from afar.

The discovery of an old regimental cashbox comes at the right time for the communists. But when Laura states that it is worthless money from the Mussolini era that only belongs to the state, all agree to firstly keep this discovery secret.

On Sunday Don Camillo, who prohibited the wear of communistic flags at the procession, starts his way to the river blessing firstly alone. But although even the communists join him by and by Don Camillo wishes angrily for a flood.

A miracle and mutual favours

Due to the continuous rain the river threatens to overflow. The communists make Don Camillo responsible, whilst the catholics blame Peppone. Whereas the mayor tries to evacuate the village, the priest calls people to

The village is desperately regretting its incredulity. Once the flood really stays away everyone believes in a miracle. But Laura knows that Don Camillo must have heard about the closure of the dams on the radio. She offers him to undo his deceit by exchanging the money from the regiment cashbox and pretending that it is from the offertory. But Peppone only convinces Don Camillo, when he promises him a share of the found money for the renovation of his church tower.

At a joyful celebration at the piazza Nonno is losing his strength again. But when Laura reaffirms how much she would miss him he postpones his own death again. During the final examination Don Camillo is handing over Peppone the answers for the questions – albeit only in exchange to his promise to take over the costs for the new church bell.

There is a lot of excitement in front of the town hall: Due to the fact that Filotti wants to distrain the farmyard from his tenant, Peppone calls for a strike. Only after days Don Camillo can convince Peppone to secretly milk the cows. And also Filotti lets himself be finally persuaded by Don Camillo, so that the strike is declared as finished and the victory of Peppone is celebrated.

## Lovers saved and a village united

In the evening Gina and Mariolino desperately ask the priest to marry them. But when they hear that the approval of Gina's parents is necessary they lose hope and run away. Shortly after that Filotti arrives excitedly with a message of them at Don Camillo. He fears that his daughter and Mariolino are on the way to the river to end their lives.

While the whole village of Boscaccio is searching for Gina and Mariolino, they swear eternal love and intend to die together. At the last moment some villagers pull them out of the water. When Brusco and Filotti quarrel again Don Camillo and Peppone put them with joined forces in their place. Don Camillo affirms the wedding of Gina and Mariolino, which finally takes place at the piazza of Boscaccio – this time without any dispute.







# AUTHOR / COMPOSER

Michael Kunze and Dario Farina: Hit writers give us a joyous reunion

#### MICHAEL KUNZE

An internationally successful author and librettist and the foremost German-language lyricist of his era. With ELISABETH he pioneered a new European form of musical theater, the drama musical, following it with DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, MOZART!, REBECCA, MARIE ANTOINETTE and LADY BESS. He also wrote the German versions of international hit musicals such as EVITA, CATS, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, A CHORUS LINE, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, THE LION KING, MAMMA MIA!, DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE and MATTERHORN. He has not only written countless German pop hits, but also many international smashes and holds both a Grammy and an Echo.

#### **DARIO FARINA**

Dario Farina was born in Cairo and studied in Rome, where his career as a musician and composer began. He made his name with songs like "Felicità", "Tu soltano tu" and "Ci sara", composed for the duo Al Bano and Romina Power, and "Sara perchè ti amo", "Come vorrei", "Mamma Maria", "Piccolo Amore" and "Se m'innamoro", composed for Ricchi e Poveri. He has also composed songs for German singers like Howard Carpendale ("Die Nacht mit Laura Jane"), Gitte Hennig, Caterina Valente and Milva, and he composed the theme tune to the cult TV series "Monaco Franze", directed by Helmut Dietl. He has also composed scores for other films by Dietl such as "Rossini" and "Vom Suchen und Finden der Liebe". In Germany, he founded the orchestra projects Munich Symphonic Sound Orchestra and the Golden Sound Academy, where he was also a pianist. He has been a producer for Placido Domingo and has composed songs like "La luna che non c'e" for Andrea Bocelli. His songs have twice won the Sanremo Song Festival. He has had numerous number one hits and won many platinum and gold awards.

# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

An international chart-topping songwriting team
Drawn from stories that were bestsellers in 27 countries
A touching tale of clashing ideologies overcome for the
common good

Grammy winner Michael Kunze (79 gold and platinum records!), the most successful German-language musical author, lyricist and translator of his age teams up with Dario Farina, one of Italy's foremost contemporary composers (pop hit "Felicità", movie score for Rossini), to breathe new life into the muchloved cult figures of Don Camillo and his arch-rival Peppone. The first of Giovannino Guareschi's short stories about the pair appeared in 1948, and the books became bestsellers in 27 countries. Countless adaptations have been made for cinema and television. Now the pugnacious priest and equally hotheaded communist mayor lock horns on the musical stage, battling each other and the problems of life in post-war rural Italy in a new original musical comedy produced by VBW in association with Theater St. Gallen.

The world premiere of this version of the classic tale of social upheaval, tolerance and the power of reconciliation took place in April 2016 in Switzerland, and the show opened in Austria to rapturous reviews at the Ronacher in Vienna in January 2017. Once again the VBW assembled a leading team of supreme talent and experience. The evocative sets by Olivier Award and Drama Desk Award-winner Peter J. Davison (THE VISIT, REBECCA) reflect both the hardships and the hopes of 1950s rural Italy and are sympathetically lit by Michael Grundner (LES MISERABLES, JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR). Tony Award nominee Yan Tax (ELISABETH, MOZART! etc.) provides meticulously designed costumes, while choreographer Dennis Callahan (DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, ELISABETH, MOZART!) returns to VBW with pulsating dance routines ranging from the enchanting to the violent!

A welcome reunion with much-loved characters, stirring, poetic and wise: a comedy to restore faith in the fundamental goodness of humanity!

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

German

Missing the music? Check out: doncamillo.vbw-international.at



Contact: international@vbw.at



The most successful Germanlanguage musical production of all time: ELISABETH by VBW recounts the legendary Austrian Empress's biography in a new and touching way, presenting her as an exceptional woman tragically ahead of her time, longing for freedom and finding fulfillment only in the arms of Death.



# Caught in Love's Deadly Triangle

A solitary empress who fights for love

A passionate woman who risks all for liberty

A lost soul who finds solace only in the arms of Death



# Introduction

Based on the tragic fate of legendary Austrian Empress Elisabeth – the mythical and celebrated "Sisi" – and told from the mouth of her convicted murderer, ELISABETH recounts the enthralling tale of her fatal, lifelong love affair with Death, heralding the decline of the Habsburg Empire.

For more than a quarter of a century, ELISABETH has been playing in a class of its own: since its world premiere in 1992 at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, over 11 million people worldwide have seen the solitary, mythical Austrian Empress in her dramatic struggle for love, liberty and, at long last, a redeeming death.

But what makes ELISABETH so extraordinary is not only the fact that this remarkable production by VBW ranks unchallenged as the most successful, record-busting German-language musical of all time. It is also the fact that ELISABETH to this day is a truly touching, riveting and strikingly contemporary portrait of a woman far ahead of her time in her quest for self-awareness and self-fulfillment, dreadfully suffering from being born in the wrong era and the wrong surroundings.

By no means just another romantic continuation of the prevalent and one-dimensional "Sisi myth," ELISABETH paints an entirely different and therefore even more relevant picture of its enigmatic and ambiguous protagonist. By focussing on Elisabeth's struggle against the stifling constraints of imperial protocol, her determination to assert her own identity, her reaction to the tragic fate of her son, Rudolf, and her morbidly romantic, lifelong love affair with Death – who is here presented as a dashing and darkly charming seducer – writer Michael Kunze and composer Sylvester Levay have innovatively introduced an exceptional measure of emotional depth and significant meaning into the musical genre, thereby creating an entirely new form of European musical theater: the drama musical

Yet ELISABETH would not be truly one of a kind if the musical were only dealing with the dark shadows of its troubled heroine's soul. A moving musical score, stunning choreography and lavish sets bring the pomp and intrigues of the Austrian imperial court back to spectacular life, allowing the audience to rediscover the historical world of the Habsburgs in a captivating way. Empress Elisabeth, her husband Emperor Franz Joseph, her mother-in-law Archduchess Sophie and her son Crown Prince Rudolf reenact their historical roles in a way that is sometimes tenderly romantic, often intense, sometimes grotesque, but always enthralling. An impressive, bitter-sweet swan song not only for its protagonist but also for a bygone, magnificent era on the verge of its decline.

Critically acclaimed as a benchmark of the musical genre and "the rebirth of European musical theater" (The European, London), ELISABETH is an engrossing dance of death – and with Death – on the deck of the sinking ship of the Habsburg Monarchy.

# Synopsis

"The world is a ship. And the ship is sinking."

## ACT 1

#### A fateful choice

One hundred years after the event, Elisabeth's assassin, Luigi Lucheni, is being cross-examined by an invisible judge. Leading through the musical's plot as a vibrant and sardonic narrator, Lucheni claims his murder of Elisabeth was only what she herself had longed for. He summons their dead contemporaries as his witnesses and starts to recount the story of a haunting love affair: the fatal romance between Elisabeth and Death. The 15-year-old Princess Elisabeth would rather ride the horses and climb mountains than attend social functions. At one such gathering, her mother announces that Elisabeth's elder sister, Helene, is to marry the young Emperor Franz Joseph. The tomboyish Elisabeth shocks the aristocrats with her antics, performing a circus act during which she falls and encounters Death for the first time, who is presented as a seductively attractive and darkly charming young man. Franz Joseph meets Helene, his intended wife, at his summer residence Bad Ischl but instead falls in love with her sister Elisabeth. His strict and domineering mother, Archduchess Sophie, is horrified. Commenting on the events, Lucheni makes a somber prophecy: Franz Joseph's love for Elisabeth will bring about the end of the Habsburg Empire.

#### Trapped and liberated

Following her wedding, Elisabeth soon feels stifled in the straitjacket of court life and smothered by her despotic mother-in-law, Archduchess Sophie. The couple's first child, named Sophie after her Grandmother against Elisabeth's will, is taken away from her by the Archduchess and soon claimed by Death. The Archduchess also keeps Elisabeth from having any contact with her son, Rudolf, who, also against her will, is designated for a soldier's career. Eventually, Elisabeth presents her husband with an ultimatum, insisting on her right to educate her children herself. The Emperor yields, and Elisabeth wins in the power struggle against her mother-in-law. She sings "I Belong To Me" as a passionate declaration of her refusal to be dependent on anyone, and even rejects Death.

# ACT 2

## Triumph and withdrawal

Elisabeth's political support of Hungary in the country's fight for independence is her greatest triumph. But Lucheni predicts that these events will initiate the decline and collapse of the Habsburg Empire. At least temporarily, Elisabeth also triumphs over Death, proclaiming that she will dance her last dance only when she is ready. She withdraws into splendid isolation, neglecting her duties and her son, Rudolf. In her place, Death steps in and befriends the lonely little boy. In an effort to break Elisabeth's hold on the Emperor, Sophie and her entourage send a prostitute to seduce him. Death continues his advances to Elisabeth and, to prove the Emperor's infidelity, tells her that her husband has passed on a venereal disease to her. But again, Elisabeth resists his temptation, regarding this incident as her final liberation from all obligations.

#### United at last - with Death

Travelling restlessly around Europe, Elisabeth hardly ever visits her residence in Vienna. In her absence, Death incites the now adult Rudolf to politically oppose his father and a dispute ensues. The pressure exerted upon Rudolf becomes unbearable. Isolated and desperate he turns to his mother for help, but she refuses to support him. Bereft of his last hope, he sees no other choice but to commit suicide. Devastated, Elisabeth realizes that her quest for independence and self-fulfillment has taken her too far. Now, she is finally ready to meet Death. But in a chivalrous move, Death refuses to triumph over the weakened Empress: he wants her to be strong when he takes her. In a last attempt to save his failed marriage, Franz Joseph tries to persuade the aimlessly wandering Elisabeth to return back to Vienna. But she refuses, arguing that some wounds even love cannot heal. A decade later, Death finally takes pity on Elisabeth and the final dance begins. In a nightmarish vision, Franz Joseph sees the fall of the House of Habsburg. He now meets his invincible rival for the first time and tries to save Elisabeth, but Death throws the murder weapon, a file, to Lucheni. Lucheni ends his tale by describing how he attacked the Empress on the shore of Lake Geneva. Elisabeth finally submits to her yearning and enters a passionate embrace with Death.









# AUTHOR / COMPOSER

Michael Kunze and Sylvester Levay: the international hit makers behind ELISABETH

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An internationally successful author and librettist and the foremost German-language lyricist of his era. With ELISABETH he pioneered a new European form of musical theater, the drama musical, following it with DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, MOZART!, REBECCA, MARIE ANTOINETTE and LADY BESS. He also wrote the German versions of international hit musicals such as EVITA, CATS, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, A CHORUS LINE, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, THE LION KING, MAMMA MIA!, DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE and MATTERHORN. He has not only written countless German pop hits, but also many international smashes and holds both a Grammy and an Echo.

#### SYLVESTER LEVAY

A pianist, arranger, composer and conductor, he created the musicals ELISABETH, MOZART!, REBECCA, MARIE ANTOINETTE, LADY BESS and THE CREST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY together with longtime partner Michael Kunze. The pair's first musical was the hugely successful HEXEN HEXEN in 1990. Before concentrating on musicals he wrote and produced hits for Elton John, Donna Summer, Herbie Mann and Sister Sledge. He won a Grammy for Silver Convention's US #1 Hit "Fly, Robin, Fly" and has worked on over 100 American TV shows and movies with such Hollywood greats as George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Sylvester Stallone and Whoopie Goldberg.

# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

Over 11 million tickets sold worldwide Performances in 12 countries and 7 languages "A benchmark of musical theater"

The original 1992 Vienna production of ELISABETH, directed by the worldrenowned music theater director Harry Kupfer and choreographed by Dennis Callahan, was revived in October 2003 and ran until December 2005 in Vienna and again in Vienna from 2012 until 2014. This production uses a stage with a revolving section (17.5 m in diameter) that allows internationally acclaimed set designer Hans Schavernoch to present a vivid array of scenes from late 19th-century Viennese life, such as the Emperor's Court, a Viennese coffee-house and typical street scenes, a house of ill repute and an asylum for the insane.

Choreographer Dennis Callahan makes full use of the technical possibilities in the stunning dance routines, not least in the opening number when Elisabeth's dead contemporaries emerge from the night-world of the dead and the dreamers.

During the fourth of the original six seasons in Vienna (1992–1998) the first international production of ELISABETH opened in Takarazuka, Japan in 1996 and in Tokyo a few months later. Since then the spectacle has proved a huge draw in Belgium, China, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden and Switzerland.

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

Dutch, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Swedish





Missing the music? Check out: elisabeth.vbw-international.at



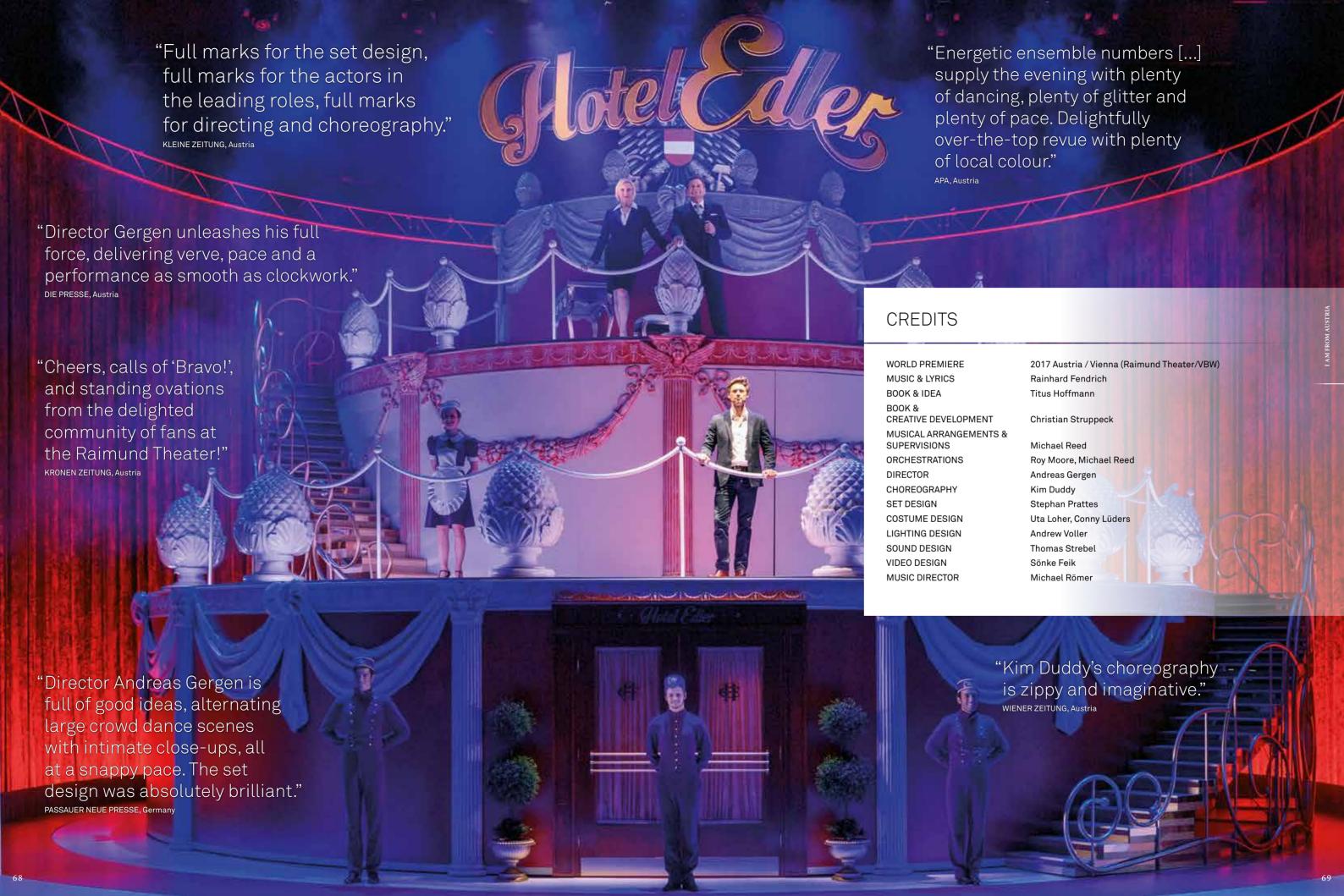




VBW ingeniously weaves a sharp-witted love story around the chart-topping hits of Austro-Pop legend Rainhard Fendrich in an affectionate tribute to the culture, countryside and cake that make Austria so special: a foot-tapping, clap-along, laugh-out-loud explosion of fun and colour!



THE MUSICAL BASED ON THE SONGS OF RAINHARD FENDRICH



# I am from Austria – A Viennese love story

A classy Viennese hotel

A Hollywood superstar's visit causes chaos

New love is found, old love rekindled





Amid the elegance, charm and wit of Vienna, VBW's new romantic comedy explodes in a blaze of colour and verve fuelled by the sharp insights and catchy melodies of Rainhard Fendrich.

Rainhard Fendrich, a true son of Vienna, has been a fixture in the Austrian pop charts since 1980. His songs, catchy and keenly observant, often encapsulate what it means to be Viennese and Austrian. Now they form the lifeblood that flows through this very Viennese tale of glamour, ambition, friendship, deceit, love and, of course, cake.

"It's where I'm from, where I belong" sings Hollywood superstar Emma Carter, the leading character, in Fendrich's song I AM FROM AUSTRIA. But how many of us can say that with certainty nowadays? We are more mobile than ever before. Where can we really call home, where can we truly be ourselves? Emma left her native Austria years ago for the glitz and glamour of Hollywood. Now she returns on a promotional trip, a global superstar. All she wants to do is get her PR job done and leave the country again as soon as possible. And no way does she want any fans or press hassling her! But a stray tweet puts paid to that idea, and she is besieged by paparazzi and hangers-on. Her anger at this blunder soon gives way to more tender feelings as she falls in love not only with the hotel managers' son Josi Edler, but also with her native country. At last she can say for certain where she belongs....

VBW's writing team of Titus Hoffmann and Christian Struppeck took on the gargantuan task of whittling down the several hundred songs in Rainhard Fendrich's catalogue to 21, most of which were chart-toppers. With their profound, wry lyrics and catchy melodies they might have been written for a musical. Around these songs, arranged by Michael Reed, the authors have woven a humorous and touching story that is itself a declaration of love that celebrates Vienna, both old and new, and evokes all the history, culture, charm and stunning scenery that gives Austria its own special magic. Driving pop/rock interspersed with soaring ballads reflect both the stylistic breadth of Fendrich's music and the emotional turmoil of love.

When we return to a place we know after a long absence we often see it in a new light, and this spectacular show certainly gives the audience a new perspective. Pulsating dance routines with ever-changing costumes whisk them from the superficiality of tabloid gossip and the glitterati to the strobes and sleaze of night in the city, the splendour of the Alps and the sparkle of the Opera Ball. An ingeniously staged sequence takes them through the streets of Vienna in a fiacre with Emma and Josi, while a brilliantly imagined and executed helicopter ride flies them high across the mountains of Austria to a cosy alpine cabin. And all the action revolves – quite literally, at times! – around the luxurious Edler Hotel, cunningly constructed to resemble the cake it is famous for, a cake that plays a key role in the love story that unfolds.











# ACT 1

## A superstar arrives

The famous Hollywood star Emma Carter returns to her native Austria for the first time after a long absence. She will be staying incognito at the Edler Hotel, a renowned establishment with an emphasis on tradition, where the preparations for her arrival are in full swing. Romy Edler, the owner and manager, warns the staff, especially Elfie Schratt the concierge, of the need for absolute discretion, in the hope that a perfect stay for Emma Carter will bring the hotel the fifth star she has wanted for so long. Unfortunately, Felix Moser, the hotel's bellboy, has already tweeted the news – without considering the consequences – and the hotel's welcome reception for the star is hijacked not only by the press but by the Viennese smart set. Felix's friend Josi, the son of Romy and Wolfgang Edler, takes the blame for the indiscretion and is scolded by his parents. They insist he put things right in order to preserve the hotel's reputation.

Josi's modernisation plans and ideas, such as getting the football star Pablo García to open the hotel's new fitness centre, meet with little enthusiasm, particularly where Romy is concerned. Emma Carter and her manager, Richard Rattinger, are outraged by the hotel's lack of professionalism. Emma wants to leave immediately and cancel her planned PR appearance at the Opera Ball. As a gesture of apology for the faux pas on her arrival, Josi brings an Edlertorte, one of the hotel's famous cakes, to Emma's room. The two hit it off immediately and Josi offers to show Emma around the hotel.

# Young love's rocky road

Meanwhile, at the hotel bar, Romy complains that her husband, Wolfgang, is not understanding or supportive enough. Wolfgang has been behaving very secretively and is unable to counter her accusation that he is having a midlife crisis. In the meantime, Josi and Emma arrive at the patisserie's cold storage room. They go in, and the door suddenly closes behind them. Trapped in the cold storage room, Emma tells Josi how she became a Hollywood star and ends up asking him to accompany her to the Opera Ball. The two are eventually freed by Josi's parents and Richard, who has been imagining horrific kidnapping scenarios and flinging accusations at everyone. Thoroughly worked up, he forbids Emma to have anything to do with Josi. In the hotel lobby, Richard enquires about Pablo García's arrival. He tells Josi that he doesn't stand a chance against Pablo, which is why Pablo and not Josi will be taking Emma to the Opera Ball. Josi is deeply dejected. At the hotel bar, his father tells him the story of the rocky start to his relationship with Josi's mother, Romy, and advises Josi not to give up. Encouraged, Josi seeks Emma out and together the two of them sneak out to explore Vienna by night, with no regard for their own security. The last stop is at a soup kitchen for the homeless that Josi runs. Back at the hotel, Richard is furious and worried about Emma. His fears are justified when on the way home Emma is recognised and attacked by dark figures.



# A night of passion

The police are busily searching for Emma Carter and Josi Edler. The two have spent the night in Felix's attic room, having been rescued and sheltered by him. Over breakfast, Emma tells Josi about her family and her difficult relationship with her parents. Josi lends Felix his car in gratitude for their rescue, while he himself has to rush back to the hotel for the grand opening of the fitness centre. The police search is unsuccessful and all they find is a ladle from Josi's soup kitchen. In the manager's office, Richard gives Romy and Wolfgang hell because there is still no sign of Emma.

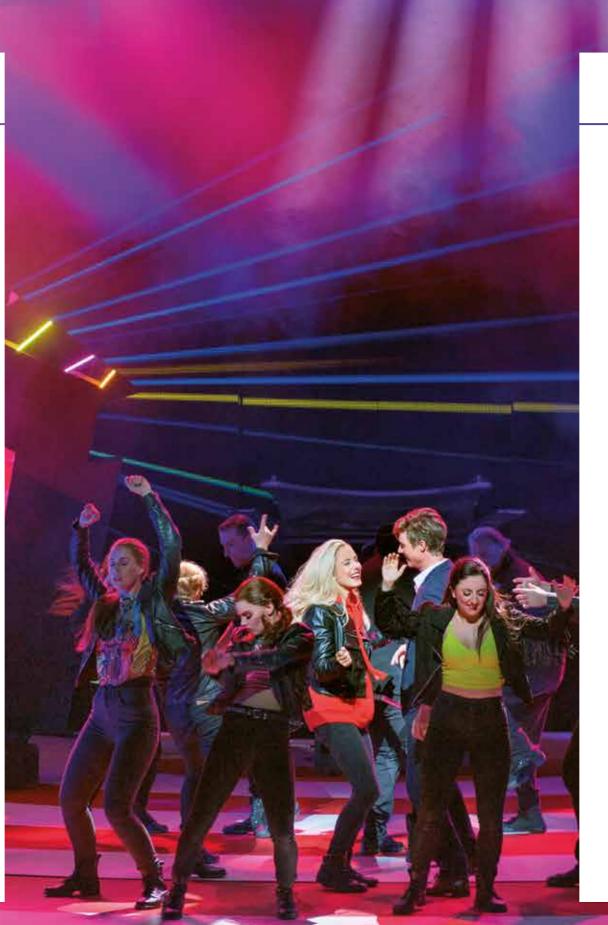
Romy and Wolfgang's marital crisis worsens. Romy suspects that her husband has a mistress. At the fitness centre, the press are waiting impatiently for the grand opening to begin, when Elfie receives a phone call from Emma, telling her that Josi is on his way. Until he arrives, she and Pablo entertain the media representatives.

Emma has slipped backed into the hotel and together with Elfie presents Josi with a surprise: A helicopter ride to the mountain cabin belonging to Emma's family. Emma falls in love with Austria, her homeland, all over again. After a night of passion, Emma wants to go skiing the next morning, but finds the press waiting for her on the doorstep. Shocked by the incident, Emma accuses Josi of tipping off the media. When Richard suddenly turns up at the door to rescue her, she is relieved and begs him to take her away.

## The Vienna Opera Ball and startling revelations

At the Edler Hotel, the preparations for the Opera Ball are in full swing. Elfie still has to find a tailcoat that fits Pablo and Felix is devastated because he has wrecked Josi's car. When Josi gets back to the hotel, he tries to talk to Emma, but Richard fends him off and tells him that Emma is going to announce her engagement to Pablo García at the Opera Ball. Wolfgang and Romy find the heartbroken Josi in front of the Imperial Suite. At first, they reproach him for his inappropriate behaviour towards a hotel guest and superstar, but then they realise that Josi is genuinely in love with Emma and attempt to comfort him. They also promise their support for his work with the homeless.

Wolfgang spoils his own planned surprise by revealing to Romy that he has booked them a holiday on the Strada del Sole. Emma refuses to announce her engagement to Pablo at the Opera Ball. However, when Richard tells her that in that case he will not prevent the publication of the suggestive photos taken at the cabin, she gives in. In the lobby, Felix and Josi come across Elfie, who has good news for Josi. Emma wants to see him. They agree to meet at the patisserie. Josi confesses his love for Emma, but she can see no future for them as a couple. At the Opera Ball, however, instead of announcing her engagement, Emma reveals that she has found the love of her life. Pablo also has exciting news: he finally comes out about his boyfriend in Argentina. But that is by no means all: the Edler Hotel is awarded its fifth star and Wolfgang and Romy finally take time off and hand the hotel over to Josi.











# COMPOSER / AUTHORS

Rainhard Fendrich, Christian Struppeck and Titus Hoffmann: The creative team behind I AM FROM AUSTRIA

#### RAINHARD FENDRICH

Pop/Rock singer and actor Rainhard Fendrich holds several double platinum, platinum and gold discs. He started his career on Vienna's Musical stages, starring in JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR and CHICAGO among many others. In 1980, he released the first of over 50 albums including hit singles like "Strada del Sole", "Schickeria", "Es lebe der Sport", "Macho, Macho" and "Blond". The single "I am from Austria" also went platinum and has since become "Austria's unofficial national anthem". In 2008 his song "Wir sind Europa", recorded with the Vienna Boys' Choir, was the official anthem of the European Football Championships in Austria and Switzerland.

Among his many accolades are an Amedeus award as Best Composer in 1985 and another as Best Pop/Rock Singer in 2002. In 1993, he was featured on a stamp issued by the Austrian post office and in 2015 received the Grand Decoration of Honour for services to the federal province of Lower Austria.

#### **TITUS HOFFMANN**

Titus Hoffmann translated and directed the original German production of the Broadway musical NEXT TO NORMAL, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and 3 Tony Awards, which was rapturously received by audiences and the press alike in Fürth in 2013, Vienna in 2016 and Dresden in 2017. He wrote the German version of Green Day's double Tony-Award-winning musical AMERICAN IDIOT (premiere 2018 in Frankfurt). Titus Hoffmann wrote the lyrics of the shows HEISSE ZEITEN - Die Wechseljahre-Revue (Hot Flush - the menopause revue) which had sellout runs in Hamburg, Zurich, Berne, Basel, Dresden, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Cologne, Leipzig, Munich and Vienna, and for the follow up show WIR SIND MAL KURZ WEG -EINE MUSIKALISCHE MIDLIFE CRISIS (We're just popping out for a bit - a musical midlife crisis) in Hamburg, Zurich and Düsseldorf, Dresden, Berlin, Bremen and Kassel. He authored and directed I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU, a musical theatre production about the relationship between Marilyn Monroe and her therapist Dr Ralph Greenson, and was resident director and co-translator of the German-language premiere of Mel Brooks' Broadway musical THE PRODUCERS at the Ronacher in Vienna and the Admiralspalast in Berlin.

#### CHRISTIAN STRUPPECK

Christian Struppeck took on the position of Artistic Director of Musicals at the VBW in 2012. He has worked in musicals for over 30 years, first as an actor and singer, then as a creative developer of shows, director, playwright, producer and artistic advisor. As Artistic Director and Head of the Creative Department of Stage Entertainment Germany, he helped to develop 23 major productions, including THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, WICKED, TITANIC, 42ND STREET, DIRTY DANCING and CATS. He is co-author and director of the Udo Jürgens hit musical ICH WAR NOCH NIEMALS IN NEW YORK ("I Have Never Been to New York"), and together with Andreas Gergen he developed the concept for the musical DER SCHUH DES MANITU ("Manitou's Shoe"). He and Gergen founded the Creative Agency Berlin, and during this period directed over 40 musicals and operettas. As well as numerous adaptations of operettas, Christian Struppeck has also co-written the successful major Swiss musical DÄLLEBACH KARI, as well as writing and developing the VBW musicals THE VISIT, DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE, SCHIKANEDER and I AM FROM AUSTRIA.

# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

A sharp-witted love story with chart-topping hits by singer-songwriter Rainhard Fendrich Greatly successful musical scoring uppermost pre-sales and sales figures

Even before its world premiere at the Raimund Theater in September 2018, VBW's newest in-house production I AM FROM AUSTRIA broke sales records, triggering the highest pre-sales and sales since record keeping began and its run was already extended for a second period due to the persistent great demand. The superbly successful musical with the hit singles by Austrian Pop/Rock legend Rainhard Fendrich and written by VBW's Artistic Director Christian Struppeck and Titus Hoffmann plays to a full house night after night. It seems that audiences, like leading character Emma, just can't help falling in love with Austria all over again.

After DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE, THE VISIT and REBECCA at the Open Air Theater in Tecklenburg, Germany, I AM FROM AUSTRIA is the next VBW production directed by Andreas Gergen, renowned opera director of the Salzburger Landestheater from 2011-2017. With its superb choreography by Kim Duddy (THE BODYGUARD, WEST SIDE STORY, HAIR, JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR), magnificent set design (Stephan Prattes) and shiny costume design (Uta Loher and Conny Lüders), I AM FROM AUSTRIA evolves into a delightful explosion of colours, sparkles and a marvelously entertaining

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

German

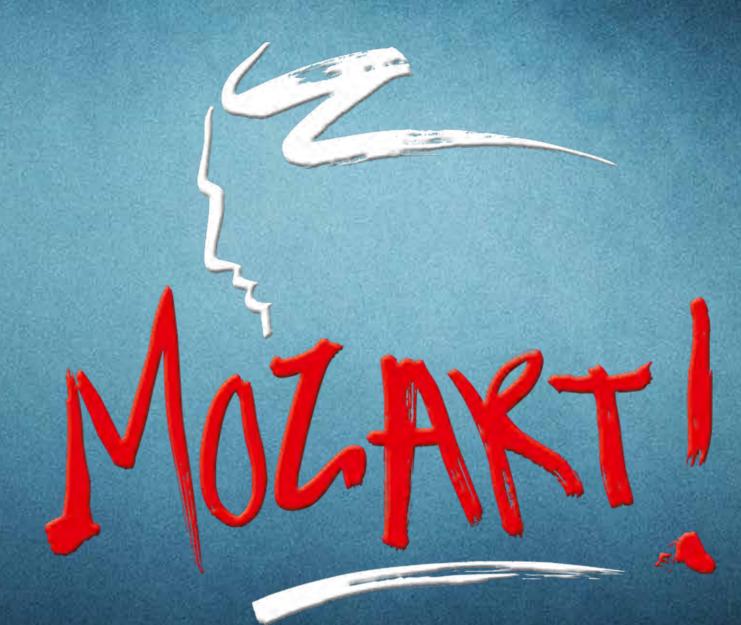
Missing the music? Check out: austria.vbw-international.at



Contact: international@vbw.at



A Rock Star in a Rococo World: MOZART! by VBW presents a fabulous new take on a worldrenowned historical figure and classical musical legend, revealing the true soul of an exceptionally gifted yet deeply troubled artist who struggles with real life's hardships.



"Wonderfully catchy melodies that range from ragtime to rock to ballads. This work is more grand opera than musical, it is serious, tragic and problematic. Its charm stems from characters who, unusually for the genre, are not good or bad but always both."

BERLINER ZEITUNG, Germany

"This perfect show is the result of two decades' experience in musicals on the part of the Vereinigte Bühnen Wien." VARIETY, USA

**VISITORS WORLDWIDE** OVER **MILLION** 

> **SHOWS WORLDWIDE** OVER **2,200**

AUSTRIA / BELGIUM / CHINA CZECH REPUBLIC / GERMANY / HUNGARY JAPAN / SOUTH KOREA / SWEDEN COUNTRIES

"The rapturous applause at the end dispelled any last doubts: the musical

SALZBURGER NACHRICHTEN-ONLINE EDITION, Austria

MOZART! promises to be a major success.

"Generous, prolonged applause."

TZ MÜNCHEN. Germany

"A performance of dreamlike effects [...] enjoyment guaranteed." LA REPUBBLICA, Italy

"The visuals are world-class. What Hans Schavernoch (set design) and Harry Kupfer (director) conjure onto the stage is poetic, spectacular and in parts breathtaking beautiful [...] pure stage magic." KURIER. Austria

> "... cements Vienna's reputation as Europe's capital of musicals."

LEIPZIGER VOLKSZEITUNG, Germany

# **CREDITS**

WORLD PREMIERE

**BOOK & LYRICS** 

MUSIC & ORCHESTRATIONS

DIRECTOR

CHOREOGRAPHY

SET DESIGN

**COSTUME DESIGN & MAKEUP** 

LIGHTING DESIGN

SOUND DESIGN

VIDEO DESIGN

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

1999 Austria / Vienna (Theater an der Wien/VBW)

Michael Kunze

Sylvester Levay

Harry Kupfer, Dennis Callahan (Co-Director 2015)

Dennis Callahan

Hans Schavernoch

Franz Peter David (1999), Jürgen Hoffmann (2015)

Tony Meola (1999), Thomas Strebel (2015)

Thomas Reimer (2015)

Caspar Richter (1999), Koen Schoots (2015)



"The splitting of Mozart into the genius and the lusty bon vivant has a charm of its own. Visual attractions with ingenious ideas." SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG, Germany

"In Vienna Amadeus becomes a pop star."

KÖLNISCHE RUNDSCHAU, Germany





# Introduction

Based on the biography of world-renowned Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, this hit production by VBW shines a new light on a legend: far from the established cliché, MOZART! presents the brilliant artist as a complex and ambiguous character, haunted by his own genius while struggling with life's cruel challenges.

Building on the successful strategy by VBW to integrate historical biographies into musical concepts, MOZART! presents another celebrity of Austria's rich history as the lead character of an exceptional musical production: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), one of the most celebrated classical composers of all time, famous for his masterful melodies and infamous for his extravagant lifestyle - reminiscent in many ways of modern pop star antics -, who, after an unprecedented and feverishly rapid career, died a premature death at the age

Following ELISABETH (1992) and predating RUDOLF - AFFAIRE MAYERLING (2006), MOZART! is based on a related narrative idea, dedicated to a protagonist who is at odds with the world that surrounds him. Although set in the historical world of the 18th century, 21st-century audiences will have no problem instantly sympathizing with the obstacles faced by the main protagonist and will recognize many familiar elements from their own life experience. MOZART! deals with a fate that no one can escape - the drama of growing up and growing older and as such is a timeless and touching tale.

MOZART! - a rock star in a Rococo world. This collision of styles sums up the approach taken by Michael Kunze and Sylvester Levay in their smash hit musical. The clash of the irreconcilable – the past and the present – reflects the ambiguity of the main protagonist. Mozart, the man, feels stifled by the conventions of life in Salzburg: as an artist he is little more than a lackey at the service of the nobility. But he longs for artistic and personal freedom to live his own life, dreaming, drinking, playing cards and pursuing love. Amadé, the prodigy he once was and the impersonation of his genius, relentlessly pursues him in the guise of a haunting "porcelain child" who writes music almost incessantly and is visible only to him and the audience.

This thrilling psychological ambiguity is greatly underlined by Sylvester Levay's musical concept: the score integrates powerful modern styles such as ballads, ragtime and rock with the delicate original Rococo themes by Mozart, played whenever Amadé, Mozart's nagging, puerile alter ego, sits at the piano.

Instead of focussing on the prevalent myth and the genius Mozart, the musical presents the legendary composer as a flawed, fragile and thus very tangible human being. MOZART! aims to free the figure of Mozart from the clichés and superficial adoration that attach to him and allows the audience to sense, as they leave the theater, having caught a glimpse on Mozart, the real man, as a living and breathing person.



# Synopsis

"How do you shake off your own shadow?"

ACT 1

# A wunderkind and a naïve genius

Wolfgang Amadé and his sister, Nannerl, both child prodigies, are taken round Europe by their father to perform for high society. As an adult, Mozart is unruly and defiant. He angers his patron, Prince-Archbishop Colloredo, with his unpunctuality and insubordination. He wants to lead his own life, but his genius, embodied in the "porcelain figure" of the child Amadé, is always with him, composing incessantly at his father's behest. Mozart asks why his father cannot love him as he is. Mozart, fed up with being ordered around in Salzburg, leaves to seek his fortune elsewhere. Leopold worries that Mozart is too innocent for the wicked world, and sure enough the young man is ensnared by the impoverished Weber family and their four daughters, who take all his money.

#### Love and the illusion of freedom

When he hears of this, Leopold is appalled and orders Mozart to leave for Paris immediately. Mozart obeys, but continues to send the Webers money, although he and his mother, his only companion, are now destitute. When his mother dies in a squalid room, Mozart returns to Salzburg, chastened. Leopold tries to regain control over him by showing him how much money he owes. Colloredo orders Mozart to Vienna, promising him an audience with the Emperor. In Vienna Mozart meets the Webers again and falls in love with Constanze, one of the daughters. Leopold suspects he will stay there forever now and feels betrayed. Colloredo, who regards Mozart as his chattel with whom he can do as he pleases, breaks his promise to present him to the Emperor and orders him back to Salzburg. The furious composer confronts the Prince-Archbishop and is booted out by his chamberlain, Count Arco. Initially relieved to be free of his engagement, Mozart soon realizes he is not free at all. His genius, the porcelain child Amadé, continues to dog him and is increasingly turning into a demon. The bitter struggle between the genius and the man becomes more intense.

ACT 2

# Failed reconciliation

Constanze has fled to her lover Mozart after a family quarrel, but her mother finds her and accuses Mozart of seducing her. She and her new partner see this as a chance to blackmail Mozart and force him to sign a contract, binding him to marriage and lifelong payment of maintenance to her mother. Constanze, enraged by this scheming, tears up the contract. Colloredo, enchanted by a score by Mozart, asks Leopold whether he has passed on his offer to reinstate the composer. Leopold advises him to forget Mozart, promises him a new wunderkind and is promptly dismissed. After years of separation, Leopold visits his son in Vienna. Mozart, now successful, wealthy and respected, tries in vain to make peace with his father. But seeing his son's success, Leopold realizes he is no longer needed. Mozart offers him money that would allow him to resign his post at the Prince-Archbishop's palace. Leopold misunderstands the gesture, saying, "Your debt cannot be repaid in money!"

#### Failed reconciliation

Mozart is so shocked and confused by this final rejection that he temporarily loses his mind. The struggle with his genius reaches new heights. The Webers, having taken all of Mozart's money, now want him to write begging letters to his friends and patrons. He refuses. Their furious quarrel is interrupted by the news that Mozart's father has died in Salzburg. Mozart, while still in shock at this news, is commissioned to write a requiem. A little later he begins to work on The Magic Flute, but is unable to enjoy the spectacular success of the work for long, as he falls ill. Amadé sits on his sickbed, composing the requiem. The conflict between the genius and the man has become a life-and-death struggle. When Amadé runs out of ink he sticks his quill into Mozart's arm and continues writing with his blood. Eventually Amadé stabs the quill into Mozart's heart. The composer dies, and with him Amadé disappears. Time and space merge. The composer's dead body is robbed by souvenir hunters. Figures from his life appear and stand about his bed. In St. Marx Cemetery Nannerl finds a mysterious casket and opens it. A little melody sounds as a reminder of his days as a wunderkind.







# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

Over 2.2 million tickets sold worldwide Performances in 9 countries and 7 languages A timeless subject personified by a historical figure

The show premiered in Vienna in October 1999 at the Theater an der Wien under the direction of world-renowned stage director Harry Kupfer (Komische Oper Berlin, 220 productions in 11 countries). Its run lasted until May 2001.

To date, over 2.2 million visitors have been captivated by Mozart's inner struggle for personal and artistic freedom in productions in Belgium, China, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Japan, South Korea and Sweden.

In keeping with the timelessness of the subject, the costumes also form a link between the past and the present: the historical costumes are authentic and sometimes garish, while Mozart himself appears wearing clothing in a young modern style. The sets by internationally acclaimed set designer Hans Schavernoch (Vienna State Opera, FREUDIANA) follow the show's dynamics, alternating between dark and empty stages and brilliantly colourful recreations of palaces, streets, state rooms and gardens, transporting the audience into an enchanted world.

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

Czech, Dutch, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Swedish Missing the music? Check out: mozart.vbw-international.at





# AUTHOR / COMPOSER

Michael Kunze and Sylvester Levay: the musical masterminds who created MOZART!

#### MICHAEL KUNZE

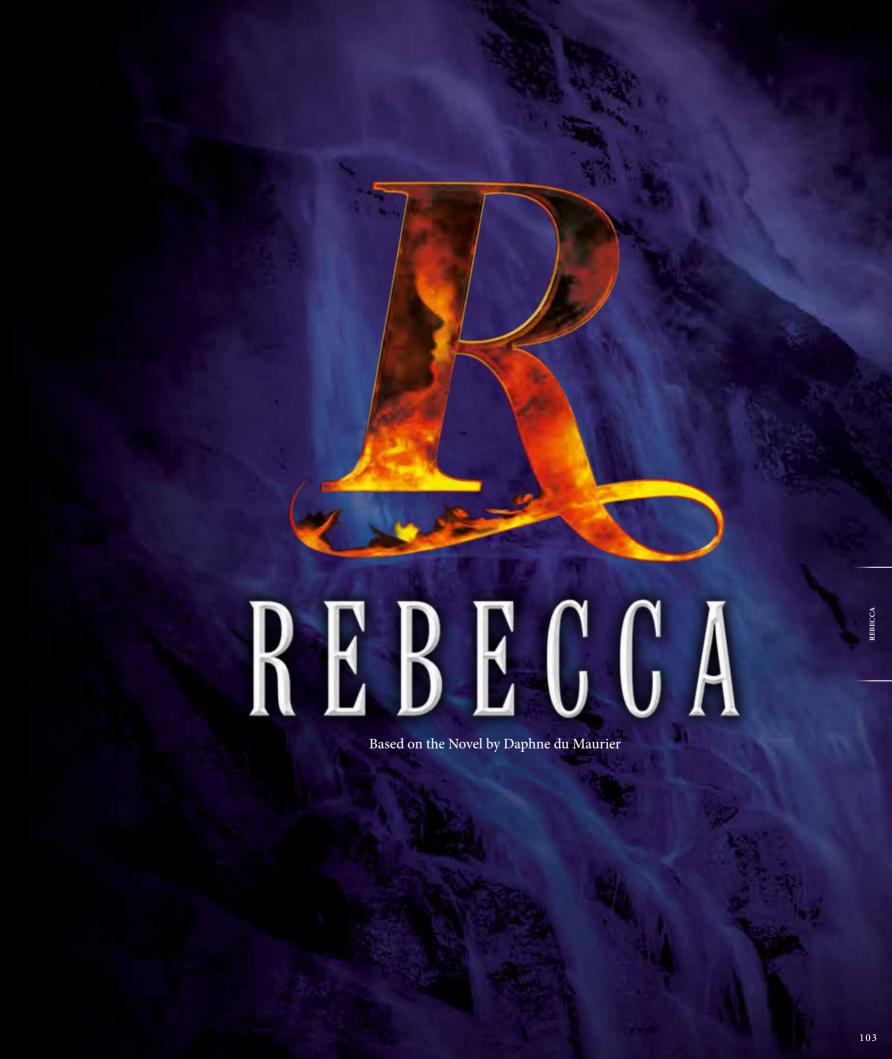
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A faithful reverence to its legendary literary original: REBECCA by VBW presents a psychological riveting, romantic Hollywood thriller live on stage: a flamboyant and magnificent experience full of drama, sweeping melodies and marvelous mystery.







# Introduction

Based on Daphne du Maurier's bestselling mystery novel, VBW created a classic Hollywood film noir for the musical stage, romantic, riveting and full of sinister suspense.

A shy and naïve young girl falling in love with the worldly, elegant millionaire Maxim de Winter. A man with a troubled mind and a dark secret, obsessed by a shadow from the past – his late wife, Rebecca. A sinister yet charismatic female villain–thevicious Mrs. Danvers–, slyly pulling all the psychological strings the classic thriller genre has to offer. And a magnificent mansion by the seaside – the legendary de Winter family estate Manderley – as a backdrop, endangered by looming catastrophic events: REBECCA has all the ingredients of a classic Hollywood film noir, with one crucial difference: instead of the silver screen, this production by VBW has been created for the live stage.

Based on Daphne du Maurier's eponymous bestselling novel, adapted by thriller mastermind Alfred Hitchcock in 1940 as the equally fabulous movie version – his first and only movie ever awarded an Oscar – REBECCA by VBW adheres closely to its legendary source, approved and warmly welcomed by no other than the du Maurier family themselves: hugely impressed by a performance of Michael Kunze's and Sylvester Levay's ELISABETH, Daphne du Maurier's son, Christian Browning, gladly granted the rights for a musical version to VBW.

Faithful to its psychologically riveting template, REBECCA traces the fascinating transition of the story's unnamed narrator from a shy, mousy and insecure newlywed to a strong and self-assured woman, overshadowed by the mysterious Rebecca, a menacing character only present in memories and imagination. A superb example of the new genre created by Michael Kunze – the drama musical – this new interpretation of a true classic combines a moving love story with the dark elements of a quintessential Hollywood thriller. The secret that hangs heavy over Manderley, the ancestral home of the de Winter family, and a tightly woven web of intrigues and plot twists keep the audience enthralled from curtain up to the final dénouement.

Sylvester Levay's powerful score repeatedly soars to new heights of passion, be it love, anger or fatal devotion to a deceased and long-gone person. Interspersed with these elements are moments of tenderness, true friendship and up-tempo numbers reminiscent of 1930s' musichall tunes.

Add to that some truly memorable characters, not least the scheming Mrs. Danvers, one of literature's most infamous female villains. And to top off an unforgettable night at the theater, the show boasts sets and visual effects that are simply stunning: the pounding of the waves as a backdrop, the grand staircase that swirls down to the stage and, as a breathtaking finale, the flaming inferno that consumes Manderley and Mrs. Danvers.



# Synopsis

"The sea calls her name."

# ACT 1

# A wallflower marries a mysterious widower

In the opening scene, the narrator "I" dreams of her former home, Manderley. In the ruins of the mansion, shadows of the past appear. "I" remembers being naïve and childlike, accompanying the wealthy American Mrs. Van Hopper to Monte Carlo in 1926 where they meet the aristocratic widower Maxim de Winter. Maxim's wife, Rebecca, universally admired for her grace and beauty and worshipped by Maxim, is said to have drowned in a boating accident. Maxim shows an interest in "I," engaging her in conversation. She falls in love with the handsome widower, who unexpectedly asks her to return to Manderley with him as his wife. She accepts. Seven weeks later, the new Mrs. de Winter is introduced to the servants at the imposing stately home of Manderley. The sinister housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, openly shows her disdain of the new lady of the house and also makes no secret of her continued devotion to the deceased Rebecca. "I" is clumsy and insecure, but Beatrice, Maxim's sister, unhesitatingly welcomes her into the family. Maxim is prone to outbursts of anger, but Beatrice tells "I" that he is only cruel when he is in great distress.

## A spiteful housekeeper

"I" is trying to make herself familiar with her new home and discovers an abandoned boathouse at Manderley Cove. She meets Ben there, a babbling simpleton. When Maxim surprises her there he is unaccountably furious. A few weeks later, the de Winters hold a ball at the request of "I." Mrs. Danvers advises "I" to wear a particular white dress. Clad in the evening gown, "I" for the first time feels like the lady of the house and proudly descends the stairs. But when the guests see her, they are appalled: the dress is a replica of the one Rebecca wore at her last ball, shortly before she died! Maxim angrily orders her to change, while Mrs. Danvers looks on with a malicious smile.

# ACT 2

# A startling confession

The morning after the ball "I" meets Mrs. Danvers, who warns her that she will never replace Rebecca. She advises "I," who is still deeply upset by the events of the previous evening, to commit suicide to release both herself and Maxim. "I" is on the point of falling under Mrs. Danver's hypnotic spell when loud explosions are heard: flares are being fired on the beach. A boat has been washed ashore at the cove. "I" learns that it is Rebecca's, and it contains a dead body. She goes there and sees Ben again, who hides when Maxim appears. Maxim looks terrible. To his wife's astonishment he tells her he never loved Rebecca. It turns out that in fact he hated her for her selfish and frivolous character and her shamelessly promiscuous behaviour. Then the final truth spills out of him: during a final heated argument with his wife he had hit her in a burst of temper, causing her to fall and suffer a fatal wound to her head. Panicking at the sight, he had seen no other choice but to cover up the incident and fake an accident by sinking Rebecca's dead body in her beloved sailboat.

#### Tricked into murder

The realization that she is Maxim's only love transforms "I." She is determined to save him from prosecution as a murderer. She takes control of the household, removing all reminders of Rebecca despite Mrs. Danver's protests. Maxim must appear in court where a jury will decide whether there is enough evidence to charge him. Back at Manderley after the hearing, Rebecca's cousin and confidant, Jack Favell, who assists Mrs. Danvers in keeping the memory of Rebecca alive, tries to blackmail Maxim with a letter from Rebecca. But Maxim calls the magistrate, Colonel Julyan, who questions Favell, Ben and Mrs. Danvers. It turns out that Rebecca had visited a gynecologist on the day before she died. Favell assumes that she was pregnant by him, which would provide a plausible motive for the jealous husband to kill her. Colonel Julyan, Favell and "I" go to London to consult the doctor, learning that Rebecca was not pregnant, but terminally ill and having only a few weeks to live. All now becomes clear to Maxim: Rebecca provoked her own murder to ruin him. Mrs. Danvers is shocked that not even she knew about Rebecca's illness, but remains determined not to have any other Mrs. de Winter at Manderley. There is now a glint of madness in her eyes. "I" returns from London. She and Maxim embrace, happy at the prospect of future bliss. But suddenly a bright glow appears on the horizon. Manderley is burning! The servants try in vain to put out the blaze, and when Maxim and "I" arrive they learn that the fire was started by Mrs. Danvers, who perishes in the flames. Maxim's grief is mixed with relief: he may have lost his home, but the demons of the past have also gone forever.







# AUTHOR / COMPOSER

Michael Kunze and Sylvester Levay: a top team for REBECCA

#### MICHAEL KUNZE

An internationally successful author and librettist and the foremost German-language lyricist of his era. With ELISABETH he pioneered a new European form of musical theater, the drama musical, following it with DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, MOZART!, REBECCA, MARIE ANTOINETTE and LADY BESS. He also wrote the German versions of international hit musicals such as EVITA, CATS, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, A CHORUS LINE, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, THE LION KING, MAMMA MIA!, DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE and MATTERHORN. He has not only written countless German pop hits, but also many international smashes and holds both a Grammy and an Echo.

#### SYLVESTER LEVAY

A pianist, arranger, composer and conductor, he created the musicals ELISABETH, MOZART!, REBECCA, MARIE ANTOINETTE, LADY BESS and THE CREST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY together with longtime partner Michael Kunze. The pair's first musical was the hugely successful HEXEN HEXEN in 1990. Before concentrating on musicals he wrote and produced hits for Elton John, Donna Summer, Herbie Mann and Sister Sledge. He won a Grammy for Silver Convention's US #1 Hit "Fly, Robin, Fly" and has worked on over 100 American TV shows and movies with such Hollywood greats as George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Sylvester Stallone and Whoopie Goldberg.

# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

# Breathtaking effects and lavish sets Over 1.8 million visitors in 12 countries

For three years, REBECCA ran to great acclaim at Vienna's Raimund Theater. In Vienna alone, more than 500,000 visitors were mesmerized by the gripping storyline and stunning visuals. In all, 98% of all available tickets were sold. REBECCA has become yet another winning export production by VBW along with DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, ELISABETH, MOZART!, RUDOLF and THE VISIT, with successful runs in Finland, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Korea, Sweden and Switzerland.

The original Vienna production, directed by the multi-award-winning American Francesca Zambello (three Olivier Awards, Palme d'Or, Golden Mask etc.), was acclaimed for its outstanding use of video projections, opulent sets and spectacular

visual effects. Sophisticated lighting, brilliantly evokes a mood of eerie menace in the house in Cornwall, which contrasts so vividly with the sunshine and gaiety of Monte Carlo, where Maxim de Winter first meets his second wife. The eloquent choreography and the authentic costumes capture the 1930s mood perfectly. But it is possibly the sets designed by Peter J. Davison (Olivier Award, Drama Desk Award) that steal the show and make REBECCA an unforgettable and truly thrilling night at the theater. Magnificent Hollywood flair, live on stage!

#### LANGUAGE VERSIONS

Czech, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Swedish

Missing the music? Check out: rebecca.vbw-international.at

Contact: international@vbw.at

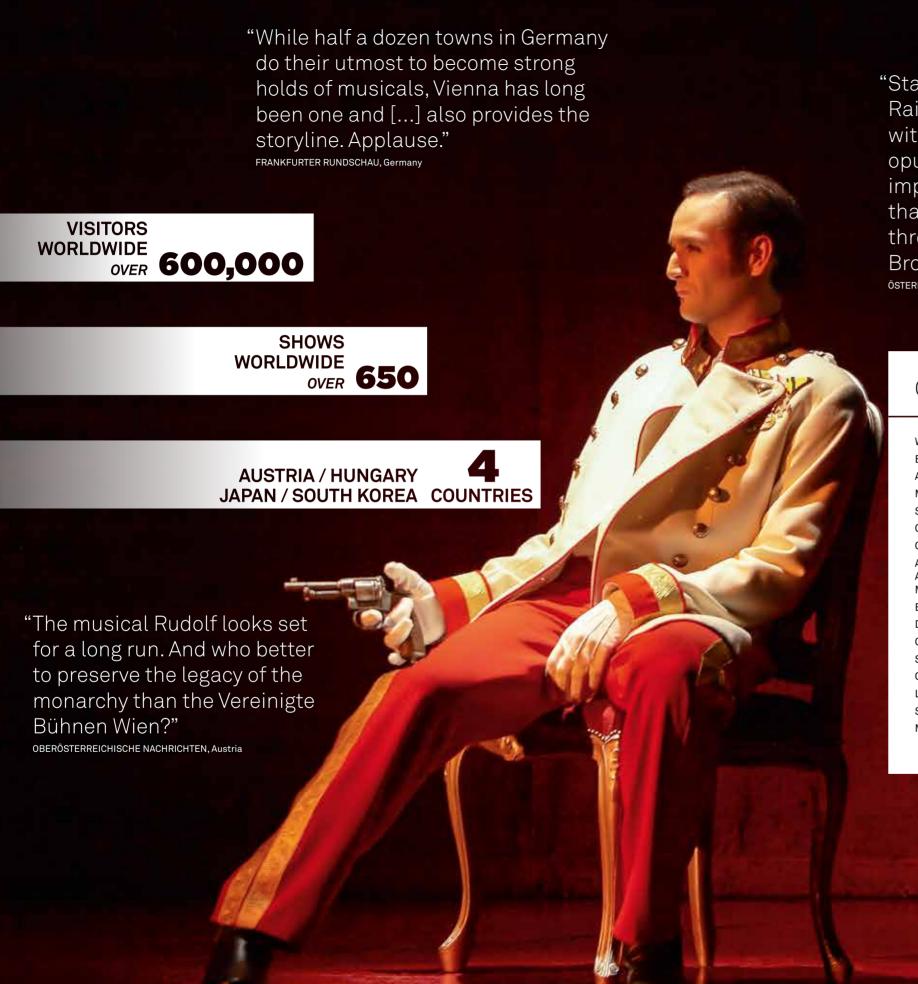




Based on the tragic fate of Rudolf, Crown Prince of Austria, son and heir apparent of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth, this musical production by VBW again turns to the Austrian Habsburg dynasty as an inspiration for yet another remarkable dramatic masterpiece.



BASED ON "A NERVOUS SPLENDOR" BY FREDERIC MORTON



"Standing ovations at the premiere at the Raimund Theater: the musical Rudolf scores with a tremendous story and great theatrical opulence. The production sets a spectacular imperial and royal stage carousel in motion that eventually throws off the heir to the throne. Viennese atmosphere with glittering Broadway flair."

ÖSTERREICH, Austria

# **CREDITS**

WORLD PREMIERE 2006 Hungary / Budapest (Budapest Operetta Theatre)

BOOK & LYRICS Jack Murphy
ADDITIONAL LYRICS Nan Knighton
MUSIC Frank Wildhorr

STORY BY Frank Wildhorn and Phoebe Hwang
CONCEPT BY Frank Wildhorn and Steve Cuden

ORCHESTRATIONS Kim Scharnberg

ARRANGEMENTS &

ADDITIONAL ORCHESTRATIONS &

MUSICAL SUPERVISOR Koen Schoots

BASED ON THE NOVEL A Nervous Splendor: Vienna 1888-1889 by Frederic Morton

DIRECTOR
David Leveaux
CHOREOGRAPHY
SET DESIGN
COSTUME DESIGN
LIGHTING DESIGN
LIGHTING DESIGN
SOUND DESIGN
MUSICAL DIRECTOR
David Leveaux
Mike Britton
Laura Hopkins
Patrick Woodroffe
Hendrik Maassen
MUSICAL DIRECTOR
Caspar Richter

"Women love Rudolf, but he only loves his Mary, who is not just beautiful but his soul mate: Mary and Rudolf have some touching, passionate scenes together, whether they are rollerblading across the stage with a cute snowman or embracing in the bedroom."

DIE PRESSE, Austria

# United in love until death

Passion, rebellion and inescapable destiny

High ideals, true love and betrayal

A tragic fate that rocked an empire



# Introduction

Based on the true life story of Rudolf, Crown Prince of Austria, RUDOLF recounts the life of a young and sensitive visionary reformer, destroyed by political intrigue and his own fateful passion.

Following the resounding success of ELISABETH, VBW again turned to the Austrian Habsburg dynasty as an inspiration for yet another remarkable dramatic musical masterpiece. Using modern music and choreography, RUDOLF – AFFAIRE MAYERLING is based on the tragic fate of Rudolf, Crown Prince of Austria, son and heir-apparent of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth (the legendary "Sisi"). Aged only 30, he died an early death by his own hand.

His death, along with that of his 17-year-old mistress, Baroness Mary Vetsera, at his Mayerling hunting lodge in 1889 made international headlines. Whether the sensitive and liberal-minded aristocrat's suicide was sparked by an unhappy love affair, his loveless marriage to his wife, Crown Princess Stephanie, the rejection by his austere father and his absent mother or even a political intrigue set up by his mighty adversary, Austrian Prime Minister Count Eduard Taaffe remains obscure to this day, making the incident one of the most fascinating and haunting myths and mysteries of Austrian and European history.

In a similar vein to its predecessor, ELISABETH, this enthralling musical drama combines elements of powerful universal appeal: an absolutist ruler, his sensitive and troubled son, an empire on the eve of its decline, the clash of an upcoming 20th century with its new liberal and social ideas against an expiring 19th century still steeped in strict feudal tradition – and the fateful conflict between personal happiness and public duty. Based on Frederic Morton's bestselling novel A Nervous Splendor, RUDOLF brings this dramatic, mysterious and darkly romantic episode in Austrian history to spectacular new life. Drawing from the book's historical backdrop, Frank Wildhorn, composer of the worldwide hit musical JEKYLL & HYDE, and renowned author Jack Murphy created a romantic chef d'oeuvre full of longing and passion.

RUDOLF paints a riveting portrait of the young prince as a liberal thinker and sensitive social reformer, carrying an entire empire's hopes for an open, modern and socially aware Europe. Yet at the same time he is destined to be crushed by a rigidly old-fashioned and stultifying social environment based on rigid conservative values, represented by his obstinate father Franz Joseph I. Still, Rudolf strives to pursue his own idealistic path until his final defeat, riddled by nagging doubts and accompanied by his teenage lover, Baroness Mary Vetsera, a loyal and beautiful kindred spirit who shares his vision. Leading an ill-fated double life, both politically and privately, Rudolf finds himself trapped by the ruthless and powerful Prime Minister Count Eduard Taaffe, who insidiously puts his knowledge of the Crown Prince's secret political activities to use to ruin his career – and as a consequence, his life.

RUDOLF does not attempt to explore in detail the backgrounds of this historical and personal tragedy. Instead, the ideological and romantic motives are represented by wonderfully sweeping melodies, passion-filled ballads and marvellously evocative stage sets and lighting design. The precise circumstances of the infamous "Mayerling Affair" and the deaths of Rudolf and Mary remain mysteriously shrouded in darkness – just as they will forever be in real life.



# Synopsis

"Inexorably turns the wheel of time.

# ACT 1

# A fateful dispute and a budding love affair

The grand opening of the Burgtheater in Vienna, attended by Crown Prince Rudolf, his unloved wife Stephanie, Emperor Franz Joseph and Prime Minister Count Eduard Taaffe. The Emperor switches on the electric lights, a new and revolutionary invention. While the illustrious guests marvel at the new technology, the common townsfolk are roaring with anger and despair. The show is interrupted when a female worker rushes onto the stage and shoots herself. Panic ensues. In vain, Rudolf and Mary Vetsera run to her aid from opposite directions. "But why?" Rudolf wonders and the teenage Baroness replies: "Better to die at once than to die a little every day." The following morning, the Emperor discusses the "liberal delusions" of an opposition journalist calling himself "Julius Felix" with Rudolf. Dodging the truth that he himself hides behind the writer's nom de plume, Rudolf instead tries to turn the conversation to the suicide that took place on the previous evening, but his father refuses to listen. The two quarrel violently about future political alliances. Franz Joseph wants to renew the alliance with Prussia and rejects his son's alternative suggestions out of hand. A week later, at a ball held in honour of Germany's young emperor Wilhelm II., Rudolf's conservative and narrow-minded cousin, the Crown Prince meets Mary Vetsera again and dances with her, marking the beginning of their ill-fated love affair.

## A vicious intrigue casts its shadow

Prime Minister Count Taaffe threatens the editor of the newspaper that publishes Julius Felix's articles and has the newspaper's office ransacked. When Rudolf meets his allies at the devastated premises, they urge him to sign their pact demanding a new political alliance without Prussia – an act that would be tantamount to high treason against his father. Rudolf hesitates, then refuses. Mary Vetsera, an avid reader of Julius Felix's articles, enters the offices under the pretext of placing an advertisement, in hopes of meeting the mysterious author. Rudolf admits that it is he who hides behind the pseudonym. Taaffe's spies follow the couple to an ice rink. Mary still cannot believe that her political hero and the Crown Prince are one and the same person. Rudolf bemoans his complicated and unhappy life and claims that only at Mayerling Castle are things simple: only there, at his hunting lodge in the Vienna Woods, where he habitually retreats to pursue his thoughts in solitude, the impossible becomes possible. Taaffe reveals to the Emperor that there is evidence that Rudolf is "Julius Felix." The Emperor angrily rejects the idea. A desperate Rudolf meets Mary at the Prater Park, and Mary encourages him to follow his heart.



# A nightmarish defeat

Rudolf, feeling the pressure on him increase, has a nightmare in which he sees Taaffe hanging all his opponents, including Mary. Awake again, he gives Mary a ring with an inscription reading "United In Love Until Death." Rudolf 's wife, Stephanie, enters his bedroom before Mary has a chance to leave. Finding themselves in a highly compromising situation, the two women choose to ignore each other. Stephanie insists that Rudolf should stay with her, but the Prince has already sent a request to the Pope, asking for the annulment of his marriage. Upon learning this, the Emperor is furious, especially when Rudolf adds that he plans to give up all his titles. He threatens to hurt Mary and her family should Rudolf dare to go ahead with his plan. Rudolf surrenders, and his father bans him from appearing in public until he comes to his senses.

## Betrayal and death

Count Taaffe's speech at the opening of the grand Industrial Exhibition in Vienna is interrupted by Rudolf, who passionately invokes peace, progress and change. The crowd cheers, but Marie Larisch, Mary's aunt and Rudolf's former confidante, sees Rudolf blinded by love and heading for his ruin. The net is now tightening around Mary, too. Taaffe summons her to his office and tries to persuade her to give up Rudolf by offering bribes and threatening her. She refuses. Rudolf hands Marie Larisch a letter for Mary urging her to leave Vienna for her own safety. He has only just left when Mary enters. She reads the letter and replies by enclosing the ring Rudolf gave her in the envelope. At the same time, Rudolf secretly signs and seals a new European pact, committing himself irrevocably to his confederates and their vision of a European constitution and placing himself in direct opposition to his father, the Emperor. Rudolf hands the signed pact to the lawyer Vogelsang, who is a double agent and passes the document right on to Taaffe. When the Emperor learns about the demand for a European constitution he is momentarily pensive. Facing his father, Rudolf has to realize that his cover has been blown. The Emperor disowns his son and Taaffe hands Rudolf Mary's envelope with a cynical remark. Mary arrives at the train station to leave the city and disappears in smoke and noise. Rudolfrushes up to hold her back – but too late! Unexpectedly, Mary emerges from the locomotive's steam and the two head straight to Mayerling, determined to set an end to their lives. In his bedroom, Rudolf puts the ring on Mary's finger and kisses her passionately. They put out the candles surrounding them - and in the ensuing darkness, two shots ring out.







# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

A spectacular retelling of a prince's last days The second Habsburg musical by VBW with a dramatic score and magnificent stage and lighting design

The first foreign premiere by VBW, RUDOLF – AFFAIRE MAYERLING opened as a licensed production in Budapest in May 2006. In spring 2008 the Japanese version opened at the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo. The German-language version ran at the Raimund Theatre in Vienna from 2009 to 2010.

The Viennese production, directed by British multi-Tony Award nominee David Leveaux (FIDDLER ON THE ROOF) underscores VBW's policy of focussing on original productions in a compelling way. One of this production's most remarkable features is an impressive revolving stage section, allowing set designer Mike Britton (Royal Shakespeare Company, numerous Shakespeare plays) to create scenes with tremendous vibrancy and movement, such as the opulent Ringstrasse and iceskating scenes.

The atmospheric lighting that heightens the tension as the web is drawn ever more tightly around the two hapless lovers is designed by one of world's true masterminds in the field: Patrick Woodroffe, whose credits read almost like a Who's Who of rock, classical and stage music: ABBA, Bob Dylan, The Police, Stevie Wonder, Elton John, Van Morrison, the Rolling Stones, Phil Collins, Depeche Mode, Tina Turner, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the English National Ballet, Son et Lumière in the Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas, Cirque du Soleil, the Millennium Dome in London and Michael Jackson's This is It tour and film.

Above all, the musical is characterized by dramatic ballads that powerfully convey a huge range of emotions, from anger, despair and gnawing uncertainty to tender love, joie de vivre and revolutionary fervor.

And thus, the magnificent yet fragile Habsburg Empire slowly crumbles in time to the beguiling notes of the Viennese waltz ...

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

German, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean

Missing the music? Check out: rudolf.vbw-international.at





# AUTHOR / COMPOSER

Jack Murphy and Frank Wildhorn: the architects of the Mayerling Mystery as a Live-Stage-Event

#### **JACK MURPHY**

A world-renowned lyricist, playwright and composer, Jack Murphy has already teamed up with Frank Wildhorn on several highly successful occasions, resulting in hit productions such as THE CIVIL WAR (Tony-nominated for Best Musical), ZELDA, CARMEN, THE COUNT OF MONTE CHRISTO and WONDERLAND. He has also worked as the lyricist for US singer and actress Linda Eder, who made her Broadway debut in Frank Wildhorn's JEKYLL & HYDE.

#### FRANK WILDHORN

Multi-Grammy, Tony, and Emmy Award nominated composer/ producer Frank Wildhorn's works span the worlds of popular, theatrical, and classical music. In 1999, Frank became the first American composer in 22 years to have three shows running simultaneously on Broadway: JEKYLL & HYDE, THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL and THE CIVIL WAR. Frank served as music director for the Goodwill Games in New York City (1998). He wrote the song "Gold", the opening number for the 2002 Winter Olympics. He received the prestigious Charles Dickens Award from USC. Among the artists who have recorded and performed Frank's works: Whitney Houston (#1 international hit "Where Do Broken Hearts Go?"), Natalie Cole, Liza Minnelli, Julie Andrews, The Moody Blues, Freddie Jackson, Trace Adkins, Patti LaBelle, to name a few. Awarded an honorary doctorate from Marymount Manhattan College in 2014, his work include among others the musicals THE COUNT OF MONTE CHRISTO, CARMEN, MITSUKO, NEVER SAY GOODBYE, CAMILLE CLAUDEL, DEATH NOTE, MATA HARI at the Moulin Rouge and Broadway productions DRACULA, VICTOR/VICTORIA, WONDER-LAND and BONNIE & CLYDE.

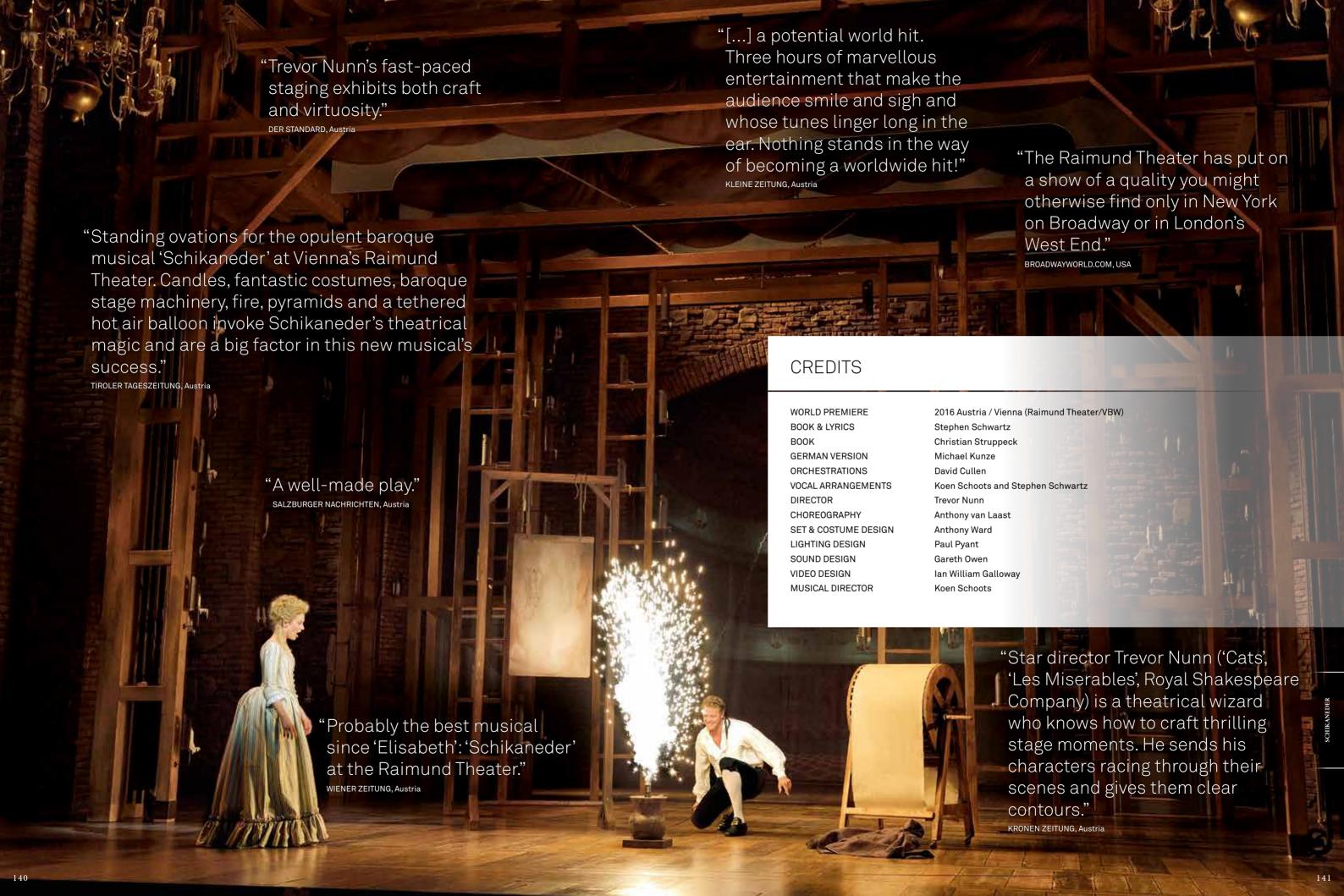






The stormy marriage of a historical theatrical couple and their pivotal role in the creation of one of the world's best-loved operas hit the stage in VBW's unique musical with operatic overtones and sumptuous period detail. The spirit of Schikaneder and Mozart lives on!









The most famous theatre impresario of his age. The most legendary opera of all time. The tumultuous lives of a historical theatrical couple – full of wit, charm and magical moments.

The unique career of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and above all the story of The Magic Flute, one of the most celebrated works in operatic history, might have been very different had he not had an equally charismatic genius of opera and theatre at his side: Emanuel Schikaneder.

Based on historic facts, charming and witty, SCHIKANEDER offers insights not only into the genesis of that seminal work but is also a unique backstage romance: the tempestuous relationship between Emanuel Schikaneder and his wife Eleonore. Once carefree young lovers, after a path of trial and tribulation the couple become successful creative and business partners. Unusually for the time, Eleonore had an equal say in their career decisions both on stage and off. This often led to violent disagreements which, however, inspired them to exceptional artistic heights: One of the most enchanting and extraordinary works of opera, The Magic Flute, might never have been written without them.

The musical is unique in the story it tells and its staging. The opulent set is inspired by a real Baroque theatre. More than 600 electric candles produce authentic period lighting effects. The lavish costumes are made partlyfrom valuable historic fabric, and the superb orchestration is inspired by the music of the late Baroque and Mozart's compositional genius. These elements frame likeable yet realistic characters, a finely drawn social setting, stirring songs full of passion and zest for life, and a script full of sharp witticisms that brings the violent clashes in life and love between the two main characters unforgettably to life.

Emanuel Schikaneder, born in 1751, found fame as an actor, singer, director and playwright but above all as Vienna's leading theatrical impresario throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries. At Vienna's Freihaustheater he landed his biggest hit with the revolutionary German-language opera The Magic Flute. Schikaneder not only wrote the libretto but also played the bird catcher Papageno at the premiere, which was conducted by Mozart himself. The opera earned Schikaneder so much that he was able to build a new theatre: the Theater an der Wien, still one of Vienna's best-known and most successful theatres and the oldest and most historically significant of the VBW's venues.

This close historical connection to Schikaneder prompted Christian Struppeck (Artistic Director of VBW and author of SCHIKANEDER's book) to turn his story into a musical. With composer and lyricist Stephen Schwartz, a triple Oscar, Grammy and Golden Globe winner, and triple Tony Award-winning director Sir Trevor Nunn, Struppeck has successfully distilled Schikaneder's life into a captivating love story that spirits the audience back to the magical world of 18th century Viennese theatre. How did it feel to take your seat in a candlelit theatre and experience close up the curtain rising on an enchanting world of magic and illusion, behind which lurked a rainbow of profoundly human fates? If any musical can open the gates of time to one of the most groundbreaking moments in the history of theatre and music, that musical is SCHIKANEDER!





"Think of something wildly impractical and then dream big."

## ACT 1

#### A stormy encounter

Vienna, 1789, the Theater auf der Wieden: on the death of her lover, Johann Friedel, Eleonore Schikaneder inherits the management of the theatre, but as a woman she is not permitted to run it on her own. After rejecting a buy-out by her rival, Karl Marinelli, she has only one option remaining – to join forces with her notyet ex-husband Emanuel Schikaneder, whom she left years before. Eleonore rejects the idea out of hand, to the despair of her ensemble. Eleonore starts to explain how everything began and why she never wants to see Emanuel again.

Her story begins 14 years earlier: as a young woman, Eleonore joins Franz Moser's famous troupe of actors. The charismatic lead actor and playwright, Joseph Johann Schikaneder, is instantly smitten by the intelligent young woman and sets his cap at her. The attraction is mutual, but Schikaneder is so obviously a Casanova that Eleonore initially rejects him. During a ballet class, the ensemble gossips about Schikaneder and Eleonore. It is obvious that they are head over heels in love. When Franz Moser retires, following the death of his beloved wife, Schikaneder takes over the troupe with Eleonore's support.

She agrees to marry him. In honour of his bride, Schikaneder decides to adopt a new first name, one that matches hers perfectly – Emanuel. They make a perfect couple, not only in their private life but on stage. The illustrious stars of the troupe, they whirl from town to town and from one success to the next.

#### A fateful fling

Eleonore's friend, Barbara Gerl, tells her that her husband is having an affair. It is evidently not his first, but this time Barbara considers it "serious". Eleonore refuses to listen. Over the years, she has learned to turn a blind eye. Johann Friedel, a shy young author and actor, who has fallen hopelessly in love with Eleonore, both comforts and woos her, but she rejects his advances. Emanuel wins Eleonore over with his grand plans for both a permanent theatre and an opera in German, a complete novelty for the time. However, when her husband's naive young lover, Maria Anna Miller, confronts her with the fact that she is expecting his child, Eleonore is deeply hurt.

She turns to Johann for comfort and persuades the sickly young man to run away with her and open their own permanent theatre in Vienna.

Maria Anna informs Emanuel of his wife's departure, but when she realises

that Emanuel will never marry her, she also leaves him. Emanuel is deeply shaken by Eleonore's abandonment, but is unable to admit it to himself. Eleonore and Johann, Emanuel and Maria Anna all look forward to a new beginning, while Emanuel's ensemble despairs over the break-up of the troupe.

ACT 2

#### A dramatic reunion

Without Eleonore, Emanuel and his troupe are plagued by failure. His opera about a hot-air balloon flight is a flop and he throws money about. Eleonore and Johann suffer similar difficulties in Vienna. They take over the Theater auf der Wieden, but Johann lacks Emanuel's willingness to take risks, which the troupe badly needs.

In Regensburg, Emanuel begins an affair with the wife of the Prince and narrowly escapes arrest by fleeing the city overnight. In Vienna, Johann, already in ill health, has worn out his strength and dies in Eleonore's arms after making her promise not to give up the theatre.

Back in the Vienna of 1789, the ensemble is deeply moved by Eleonore's story and everyone understands why she has no desire to take her husband back. However, there is one small problem – Barbara has already sent for Emanuel. The wounds of the past immediately lead to a violent quarrel.

In the end, though, Emanuel and Eleonore admit to themselves that in the current situation they need each other. They agree to keep their relationship purely a business one, but continue to fight like cat and dog, and the troupe's financial difficulties get worse. Outside the manager's office, Barbara, Emanuel's friend Benedikt Schack, and Josepha Hofer, the diva of the troupe, discuss who can best calm the pair down.

When Karl Marinelli renews his offer for the theatre because he needs a second venue for a new opera, Emanuel takes it as a personal challenge and claims that he is also working on a major new opera. Marinelli departs, uttering threats.

#### A new beginning

Eleonore's outrage at Emanuel's empty boast is short-lived. The pair are soon bursting with ideas for a completely new kind of opera that will revolutionise theatre. They manage to convince Josef von Bauernfeld – to whom they already owe a great deal of money – to finance the show.

At the first rehearsals, the ensemble has nothing good to say about the new opera. Some of them even threaten to leave – until they hear an orchestra play part of the score for the first time, and are entranced.

The dress rehearsal is rudely interrupted by two officials – Karl Marinelli has informed the authorities that Emanuel is employing more than the permitted number of candles. Since Emanuel cannot afford to pay the fine, the officials order that the theatre be closed. The ensemble leaves the building. Even Eleonore leaves without a word. Marinelli is triumphant, Emanuel is devastated. He believes he has now lost his wife forever.

But Eleonore returns and uses her favourite memento of Johann – a valuable necklace – to pay the fine. Just as she admits to herself that Emanuel will always be more to her than a "business relationship", she catches sight of him embracing his former lover, Maria Anna Miller.

Horrified, Eleonore decides to leave at once, determined that from now on she will live her own dreams without anyone else. But Maria Anna dissuades her. She explains she has come back because she is too poor to feed her son. She wants to leave him in the care of Emanuel and Eleonore. Eleonore allows Maria Anna to stay along with her son.

Emanuel and Eleonore are reconciled. On the opening night, they revel together in the huge success of their new opera – "The Magic Flute".

1.40











# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

A world-famous leading team from Broadway and the West End An innovative approach inspired by classical music The timeless and captivating love story of a historical celebrity couple

Christian Struppeck, Artistic Director of VBW, and star composer Stephen Schwartz (WICKED, Disney's THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, POCAHONTAS, GODSPELL etc.) had long planned to write a musical together. They found a fascinating historical subject in the life of Emanuel Schikaneder, one of the greatest and most prolific theatre-producers of his time, and Eleonore, his wife and business partner. Their turbulent love story enabled author and composer to bring a piece of authentic Viennese theatre history to life, including the genesis of one of the world's most famous operas.

For its latest hit production, VBW assembled a superb international leading team. Triple Tony Award-winner Sir Trevor Nunn (CATS, LES MISÉRABLES, STARLIGHT EXPRESS, CHESS etc.) directed the world premiere on 30 September 2016 at Vienna's Raimund Theater, choreographer is Anthony van

Laast (MAMMA MIA!, SISTER ACT etc.), set and costumes are by Tony and Olivier Award-winner Anthony Ward (OKLA-HOMA, MY FAIR LADY, SWEENEY TODD, etc.).

SCHIKANEDER's impact comes partly from its stirring love story, played out on a historically accurate set inspired by Mozart's era, and partly from Schwartz's unusual musical approach with its obvious affinity to opera: although also possible with smaller orchestrations, he recreated the spirit of 18th century music with a 33-piece orchestra in Vienna that matched the original Magic Flute ensemble.

Thus, the show builds a magical bridge between then and now and strikes a wholly new note in the musical genre: a romantic comedy centring on a Mozart opera. The ups and downs of an influential historical theatre couple still resonate today, 200 years on, allowing ironic sideswipes at contemporary celebrity marriages. Nothing is more timeless than love and art, whether in real life or on stage in a musical!

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LANGUAGE VERSIONS

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# AUTHOR / COMPOSER

Christian Struppeck and Stephen Schwartz: Creative time-travellers to the world of 18th century theatre

#### CHRISTIAN STRUPPECK

Christian Struppeck took on the position of Artistic Director of Musicals at the VBW in 2012. He has worked in musicals for over 30 years, first as an actor and singer, then as a creative developer of shows, director, playwright, producer and artistic advisor. As Artistic Director and Head of the Creative Department of Stage Entertainment Germany, he helped to develop 23 major productions, including THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, WICKED, TITANIC, 42ND STREET, DIRTY DANCING and CATS. He is co-author and director of the Udo Jürgens hit musical ICH WAR NOCH NIEMALS IN NEW YORK ("I Have Never Been to New York"), and together with Andreas Gergen he developed the concept for the musical DER SCHUH DES MANITU ("Manitou's Shoe"). He and Gergen founded the Creative Agency Berlin, and during this period directed over 40 musicals and operettas. As well as numerous adaptations of operettas, Christian Struppeck has also co-written the successful major Swiss musical DÄLLEBACH KARI, as well as writing and developing the VBW musicals THE VISIT, DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE, SCHIKANEDER and I AM FROM AUSTRIA.

#### STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

After studying piano and composition at Juilliard School of Music, and graduating in Drama from Carnegie Mellon University, Stephen Schwartz had his first major success as a song writer with the title song of the play BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE, which also featured in the film version. In 1971, he wrote the music and lyrics for the multiple award-winning musical GODSPELL, which won two Grammys among other awards, and he subsequently wrote the English lyrics and additional text to Leonard Bernstein's musical MASS. Further hit musicals from his pen include PIPPIN, THE MAGIC SHOW, THE BAKER'S WIFE and CHILDREN OF EDEN. Schwartz has been outstandingly successful as a film composer, writing music for the Disney films THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME and POCAHONTAS (which won him two Oscars) and for Dreamworks' THE PRINCE OF EGYPT, gaining a further Oscar for the song WHEN YOU BELIEVE. In 2003, Schwartz returned to Broadway, where he produced the musical WICKED, based on the Gregory Maguire novel, which won him a Grammy for his work as composer and lyricist and as producer of the resulting album. In 2008, Schwartz was honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.



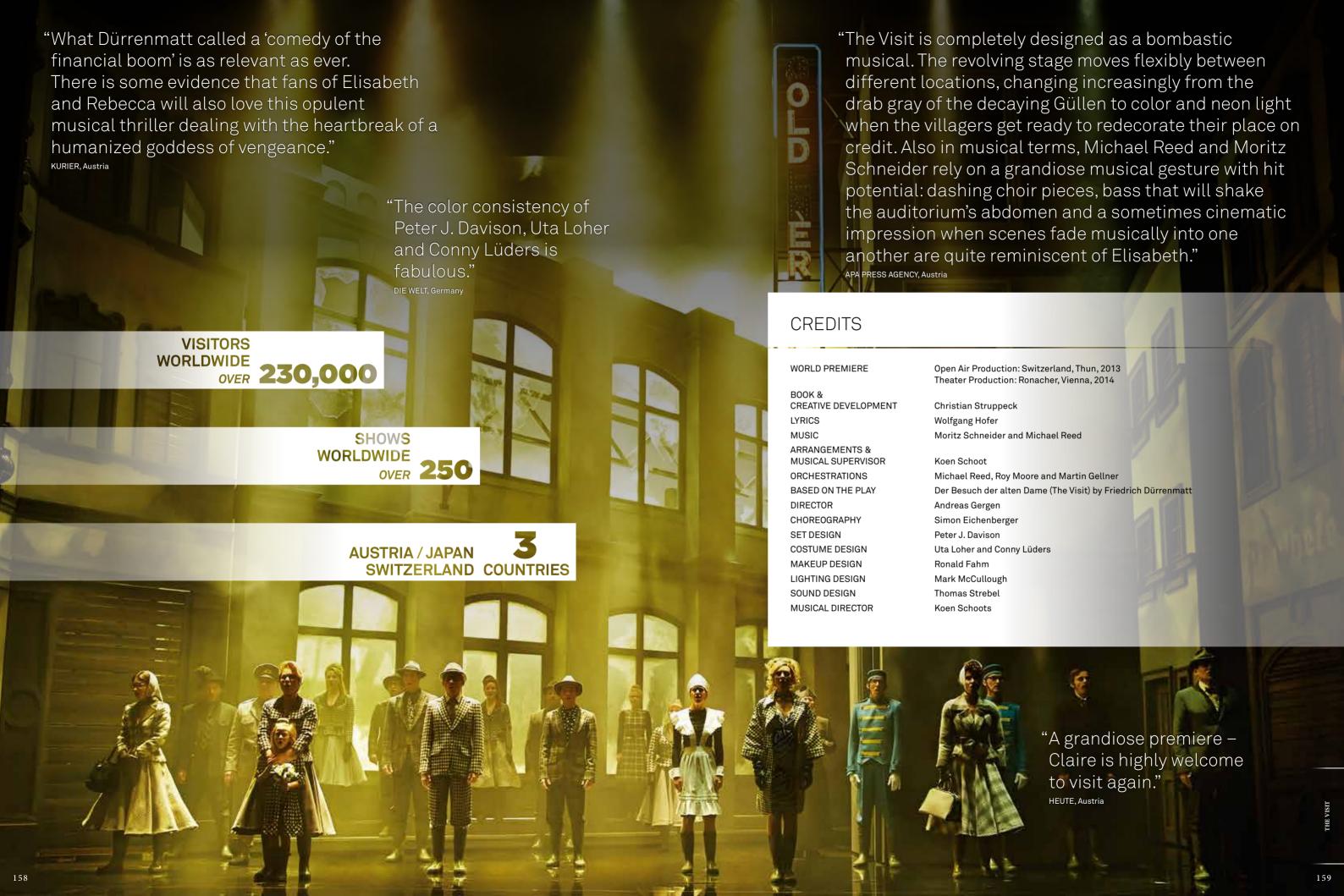


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IE VISIT

With THE VISIT, the adaptation of a legendary theater classic by world renowned Swiss author Friedrich Dürrenmatt, VBW brings a piece of world literature as an opulent and captivating musical thriller to the stage.





# Drama with vengeance

A wealthy woman seeking revenge

An impoverished town hoping to profit from her fortune

A deadly bargain driven by unrequited love





# Introduction

Transforming a haunting tale of human greed and fickleness into a romantic and enthralling musical thriller, VBW's outstanding adaptation of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's timeless literary classic THE VISIT will guarantee one of the most exciting and unique musical experiences ever to be enjoyed.

The bankrupt Swiss town of Güllen is looking forward to an extraordinary event: Claire Zachanassian, a tremendously wealthy multibillionaire and the richest woman in the world, will soon be paying a visit to the ailing city where she used to live as a young girl many years ago. Preparing to welcome the city's most renowned citizen, the residents are counting on imminent relief from their financial straits, having heard a great deal about Claire Zachanassian's generous charitable activities. Everyone's hopes are placed on Alfred Ill, a local shopkeeper intent on using his former relationship to Claire Zachanassian to the town's benefit, counting on the fact that once, in his youth, he used to be a friend and lover of the fabled billionaire. Yet events take an unexpected turn upon Claire Zachanassian's arrival: driven by old feelings of revenge towards Alfred, she holds out the prospect of a donation of two billion euros only under the condition that he be brought to justice – and that he die for the crimes he once committed.

With THE VIST, VBW brings a piece of world literature as an opulent musical thriller to the stage. Producing, of all plays, this particular tragicomedy as a musical has proved to be an exciting task for the entire creative team, especially since Friedrich Dürrenmatt's acrid satire on human greed and fickleness as well as the dark and contradictory aspects of love has lost none of its relevance. On the contrary, it has gained even more actuality since its stage debut in 1956. Building upon the original play's acrid moral core message and drawing striking parallels to present-day sociopolitical issues such as the recent global financial crisis and spectacular current banking scandals, VBW's writing team Christian Struppeck (book), Wolfgang Hofer (lyrics), Moritz Schneider (music) and Michael Reed (music) have transformed Friedrich Dürrenmatt's surprisingly timeless tale of love's twisted ways into a poignant yet romantic and sensuous modern musical thriller that has rightfully earned enthusiastic critical and public acclaim right from the onset.

Focussing not only on Dürrenmatt's disillusioned view of humanity but most of all on the underlying romantic context between the two main protagonists and their dark and twisted love story, THE VISIT raises a wealth of uncomfortable underlying issues. With its tagline "two billion euros – how far would you go?" THE VISIT poses a powerful question: can money buy justice? Are moral codes just fragile values, all too easily prone to be corrupted by power and wealth? And can vigilante justice ever be justified?

Merging an ever-relevant story about love, betrayal and revenge with a sumptuous score full of symphonic drama and power, offering vivid, fast-paced staging and witty, poignant dialog, featuring spectacular stage design and magnificent costumes, this high-profile musical version of a timeless literary classic will guarantee one of the most exciting and unique musical experiences ever to be enjoyed – a thrilling, cinematic masterpiece for the live stage!



### ACT 1

#### The arrival

The citizens of the little town of Güllen gather at the railway station in preparation for the arrival of a former resident, the billionairess Claire Zachanassian. They have high hopes that her visit will persuade her to rescue her old home town from its dire financial straits. She makes a suitably grand entrance, arriving too early and by helicopter, accompanied by three bodyguards and a black panther. Alfred Ill, a shopkeeper who runs a general store, has the task of persuading Claire to make Güllen a generous donation by reminding her of the love they shared many years earlier. Shortly afterwards, Alfred runs into Claire at the edge of the woods and they revive the memories of their past. Claire promises him to support Güllen. At a reception for Claire the citizens gossip excitedly as they wait for her to appear. Claire offers them two billion, in return for Alfred's death. In a burst of moral outrage, her offer is categorically rejected. Alfred's wife, Mathilde, stands by her husband and promises that she will always be there for him. The mayor consults the town councillors. They agree that, although the money would be a huge blessing, the price is too high and the subject should be dropped. However, the citizens of Güllen begin to run up enormous debts, splurging on material goods.

#### A shadow of the past

Meanwhile, in her hotel suite, Claire is engaged in international business affairs, when Alfred bursts in. They talk about the terrible accident that killed their unborn child and left Alfred believing Claire was dead. Alfred apologizes, but Claire demands justice for the suffering she endured. Claire's offer begins to have an impact and Alfred feels increasingly under threat. He turns to the policeman, Gerhard Lang, for help and protection, asking him to arrest Claire because, given his fellow citizens' mounting debts, his death will soon be the only way to pay them. The policeman denies that Claire's offer was ever intended seriously and reminisces about old times and his lifelong friendship with Alfred. Suddenly a report reaches them that Claire's black panther has escaped. A hunt is organized but Alfred suspects that he is the actual prey. In desperation, he turns to the mayor, Matthias Richter, but finds no help there, either. On the contrary, he discovers that the mayor is planning to build a new town hall. Alfred, in terror, flees to the priest, Johannes Reitenberg, for refuge and support. The priest advises him to pray and to concentrate on his spiritual salvation, but we learn that he, too, has been unable to resist the temptations of consumerism. Finally, the panther is tracked down and shot. The people mourn the noble animal's death in a song, which Alfred takes for a funeral dirge sung for him. He seizes a gun and goes in search of Claire. He finds her in the woods and is resolved to kill her. Claire, who wears a prosthetic leg due to the former accident, loses her balance and falls over. As she lies helpless on the ground, she screams at Alfred to shoot her. They struggle with each other, but the fight turns into a passionate kiss. Claire recalls how they first met and the overwhelming love they felt for each other. Even so, she cannot escape the shadows of the past.



#### A futile escape attempt

Alfred Ill is unable to bear the pressure and decides to leave Güllen. The whole town is waiting for him at the station, ostensibly to wish him a safe journey. No one actively prevents him from leaving, but he is convinced he will be held back or shoved to the ground the moment he tries to board the train. The train - the last one this week - eventually leaves without him. Claire's three bodyguards, Roby, Toby and Loby, are bored to tears by smalltown life and reminisce about the good times they have had. To avoid having to accept Claire's immoral offer, the mayor and the teacher make her a proposal. They suggest she buy and reopen the town's defunct factories. Claire rejects the proposal with the shocking disclosure that the factories already belong to her. All their pleas for humanity fall on deaf ears. Customers in Ill's shop report that journalists are in town asking questions. The teacher has a breakdown and prophesizes in a drunken state that evil will triumph. The little girl Lena says she still believes in goodness; the important thing is not to give up. The town, anxious to preserve its reputation and the illusion of virtue, is determined not to let the press find out about Claire's promised billions and the condition attached. The reporters' questions are met by a united front praising Güllen as a temple of morality. Alfred, in particular, is ordered to hold his tongue and demonstrate his loyalty to the town. Alfred capitulates and accepts his guilt.

#### A fatal verdict

The mayor informs Alfred that the town is holding a special assembly to determine his guilt, since under the statute of limitations his crime was committed too long ago to be tried in court. If he is found guilty, he will have to pay for his actions. The town is unanimous that this is purely a question of justice and has nothing whatever to do with the promised billions they will receive if he dies. Alfred agrees to appear before the assembly and to accept the verdict whichever way it falls. The policeman suggests suicide as a convenient alternative but Alfred refuses to take the burden of decision from the citizens' shoulders. He has overcome his fear and feels free at last. Alfred's family has run up debts, too. His daughter is having tennis lessons and his son has bought a sports car. And both children think he is exaggerating. All they want is a bit of fun. After years of marriage, Alfred finally confesses to his wife that he never loved her and only married her for her money. Mathilde's world falls apart. Her grief turns to fury and she expresses the hope that Alfred will get the punishment he deserves. Alfred and Claire meet once again at the edge of the woods and talk of their shared past, which neither has been able to escape. Alfred admits to Claire that she is the only one he has ever loved. He repents of his actions and admits that he was a coward. Together they evoke their past feelings, because love cannot die. But the tender mood cannot last. Claire has been too deeply hurt to simply forgive him. The town assembly sits in judgment on Alfred Ill, emphasizing that they are concerned purely with justice. Their task is to determine Alfred's guilt and thereby to uphold morality in Güllen. The verdict is unanimous: guilty as charged. Claire bursts in to find Alfred lying lifeless on the floor. Having issued, as promised, a check over two billion euros to the city, she kneels beside him in a wave of grief while the citizens of Güllen rejoice that their town has been saved.









# **AUTHORS / COMPOSERS**

Christian Struppeck, Wolfgang Hofer, Moritz Schneider and Michael Reed: the creative team behind THE VISIT

#### CHRISTIAN STRUPPECK

Christian Struppeck took on the position of Artistic Director of Musicals at the VBW in 2012. He has worked in musicals for over 30 years, first as an actor and singer, then as a creative developer of shows, director, playwright, producer and artistic advisor. As Artistic Director and Head of the Creative Department of Stage Entertainment Germany, he helped to develop 23 major productions, including THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, WICKED, TITANIC, 42ND STREET, DIRTY DANCING and CATS. He is co-author and director of the Udo Jürgens hit musical ICH WAR NOCH NIEMALS IN NEW YORK ("I Have Never Been to New York"), and together with Andreas Gergen he developed the concept for the musical DER SCHUH DES MANITU ("Manitou's Shoe"). He and Gergen founded the Creative Agency Berlin, and during this period directed over 40 musicals and operettas. As well as numerous adaptations of operettas, Christian Struppeck has also co-written the successful major Swiss musical DÄLLEBACH KARI, as well as writing and developing the VBW musicals THE VISIT, DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE, SCHIKANEDER and I AM FROM AUSTRIA.

#### **WOLFGANG HOFER**

Born in Linz and today living near Düsseldorf. Wolfgang Hofer has topped the charts in Austria as well as in Germany with his #1 Austropop hit "Abraham" ("Das Lied vom Trödler"). Subsequently, he wrote material for artists such as Salvatore Adamo, Gilbert Becaud, Howard Carpendale, Dieter Hallervorden, Harald Juhnke, Daliah Lavi, Mireille Mathieu, Nana Mouskouri, Wencke Myhre, Bud Spencer, Margot Werner, Udo Jürgens and many more. Numerous classics by Udo Jürgens and Wolfgang Hofer are also represented in the successful musical ICH WAR NOCH NIEMALS IN NEW YORK. Wolfgang Hofer has supervised several hundred TV shows as an author or consultant and, among other things, has collaborated with Thomas Gottschalk, Harald Schmidt, Günther Jauch and Michael Schanze. After DIRTY DANCING (Hamburg) and DÄLLE-BACH KARI - THE MUSICAL (Thun Festival) THE VISIT is his third musical work.

#### MORITZ SCHNEIDER

Having composed numerous film scores, Moritz Schneider has received the Swiss Film Prize for the score for BREAKOUT together with Swiss rap artist Stress and Bernese bass player Mich Gerber. For three years he wrote pop songs for various artists at Universal Music Publishing in Berlin. Together with Robin Hoffmann, with whom he also realized the award winning production DALLEBACH KARI - THE MUSICAL (awarded amongst others the "Prix Walo" and the "Golden Spotlight"), he has created various film scores for national and international productions. After the projects Lovebugs & Sinfonieorchester Basel, he founded the company Arts Festival together with Robert Emery in 2011, which spawned the project Seven & 21st Century Orchestra. In 2017 Moritz Schneider and Robert Emery produced, arranged and orchestrated the musical "Anna Göldi – the last Witch", Joanna Forest's Album "Stars are rising" and Olga Thomas Single "Royal Platinum Love Song" for the celebration of 70 years of marriage of Queen Elisabeth II (both UK Classical Charts Number 1).

#### MICHAEL REED

Having worked as a musical director with over 20 West End musicals (including THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA), Michael Reed has also internationally supervised numerous musicals by Andrew Lloyd Webber. As a conductor, he has worked with leading British orchestras and, for example, recorded the original version of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA and the successful single "Time to Say Goodbye" with Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman. In addition, Michael Reed has worked as a composer and arranger for movie and stage productions. In 1999 he won the Vivian Ellis Award for Best Composer of the Year and the Warner-Chappel Award for his musical LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS. He also served as musical supervisor and orchestrator for THE THREE MUSKETEERS, ICH WAR NOCH NIEMALS IN NEW YORK, DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, MOSES and BAT OUT OF HELL - THE MUSICAL. After DÄLLEBACH KARI - THE MUSICAL and GOTTHELF - THE MUSICAL he was again working in Thun and Vienna for THE VISIT and I AM FROM AUSTRIA.

# SUCCESS STORY / PRODUCTION NOTES

Friedrich Dürrenmatt's pessimistic social satire converted into a dark and twisted love story

VBW's writing team created a powerful version of this timeless classic as a romantic and enthralling musical thriller

Today considered one of the keystones of 20th-century German-language literature, Friedrich Dürrenmatt's THE VISIT has inspired numerous adaptations for the stage as well as for the TV and movie screen. Led by VBW's artistic director Christian Struppeck, an internationally renowned team set out to create a groundbreaking and powerfully updated version of this timeless classic as a romantic and enthralling musical thriller. It had its world premiere to much critical acclaim in 2013 at the Thun Festival in Switzerland.

The team of authors Christian Struppeck, Wolfgang Hofer, Moritz Schneider and Michael Reed, who have already scored great success with the major Swiss musical production DÄLLEBACH KARI – THE MUSICAL (productions in Thun, Zurich and Bern; awards, among others, Best New Theater

Production, Golden Spotlight, Best New Swiss Musical and Best World Premiere at the Glory Awards), attended to Friedrich Dürrenmatt's masterpiece with uncompromising dedication, transforming the grim and dire play into a gripping, modern musical production, which is captivating due to its emotional melodies and electrifying, trenchant lyrics.

With Andreas Gergen (DON CAMILLO & PEPPONE, I AM FROM AUSTRIA and REBECCA at the Open Air Theater in Tecklenburg, Germany) in charge of the production and with choreography created by Simon Eichenberger, THE VISIT presents musical stars Pia Douwes and Uwe Kröger in the leading roles-in their first joint appearance in a major Vienna musical production since the legendary success of ELISABETH by VRW

LANGUAGE VERSIONS

German, Japanese

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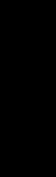


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FRANCE





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