

“The Magic Flute” at Berlin’s “Bundestag” Underground Station

Unusual sounds could be heard at “Bundestag” underground station in April and May 2008. On the platform of the as-yet unopened station, an old story was told anew: “The Magic Flute” by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Following previous sensational opera productions, including in a former electric power station and a museum, conductor and producer Christoph Hagel returned, again in a remarkable way, to this popular and brilliantly imaginative opera.

The location fits with the philosophy of his projects – the reinterpretation of urban and social spaces with operatic and classical music productions. In Hagel’s “Magic Flute”, the universe of the underground and the world beneath the streets of the city become the venue for Mozart’s most famous opera. The realm of local public transport suddenly seems greater than just its everyday existence. Hagel takes as his point of departure the supposedly unknown behind the network of tunnels and tracks as an intricate world of the fantastic and here produces his “Kingdom of the Night” and his “Kingdom of Light”. The audience sets out together with Prince Tamino and Papageno on the search for Pamina and on the way encounters wondrous figures. The station is the stage and secret star of Hagel’s production. The monumental architecture by the well-known Berlin architects Schulte, often compared to a cathedral, supplies the perfect projection surface for Mozart’s contest between good and evil, which Hagel skilfully sets in the present day and enriches with persons and elements from the underground. At the very latest when Mozart’s famous three boys proclaim that “to your goal leads this road”, BVG day passes take on a completely new significance.

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