

## Press Text: Terrace Talk *Così fan tutte*



Director Christof Loy and conductor Joana Mallwitz. Photos: SF/Anne Zeuner

(SF, 21 July 2020) For two days and two nights, director Christof Loy and conductor Joana Mallwitz sat poring over their scores, connected by phone, making one cut after another – a painful process, the conductor says. The result is a version of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* which would not have happened in other years, a special version for times of coronavirus, Joana Mallwitz adds. She was consoled by the fact that Mozart would presumably have been the first to create such a version for 2020, for he himself was known to cut without hesitation and add compositions as the occasion demanded. The final version clocks in at two hours and ten minutes containing “as much of Mozart’s spirit as possible”, the conductor says. There are many small gaps, both in the recitatives and the arias, while cutting as few entire numbers as possible.

The fact that there will be a production of *Così fan tutte* at all at the Salzburg Festival this year is thanks to Christof Loy, says Artistic Director Markus Hinterhäuser, who also describes the special atmosphere during the rehearsals. The joy and confidence visible in the artists’ eyes is remarkable: “We must find mechanisms to live with the virus in the culture sector as well, and thereby eventually to confront the whole situation with less panic,” he says. Hinterhäuser considers it an important signal to the entire cultural scene that the Salzburg Festival will take place this year.

Christof Loy has spent his entire life studying this Mozart opera; he last staged it twelve years ago at the Frankfurt Opera. He also found the process of cutting painful. “On the other hand, last time I had the experience that it was sometimes a bit of a stretch to keep the action flowing,” he says. That is why this version is neither a torso nor a fragment – instead, it is reminiscent of the great productions of the 1950s.

He describes *Così fan tutte* as an opera which creates an almost unbearable tension between joy and pain. Act I is marked by intense frivolity, but Act II suffers from a bad reputation and is occasionally even described as boring. He sees his work in bundling both the carefree and the tragic in such a way that the fall into the abyss is felt very clearly, says Christof Loy. To him, melancholy clouds the entire piece. It is only funny when there are misunderstandings. “I am not staging the opera to achieve a comic effect,” he explains. “During my work in Frankfurt, I was rather surprised that the audience laughed so much.” To him, it is a timeless piece, because everyone is immediately able to identify with the figures. He employs a very minimalist aesthetic, and that has nothing to do with corona, it is simply his view of the piece.



The paper clips in Christof Loy's score show the cuts necessitated by the coronavirus.

He does not consider the figure of Don Alfonso, for example, a cynic and misogynist, as it is often portrayed. "I want to show him mainly as a friend to humankind," he says. "In my view, he undertakes this experiment with the two young couples as a quick way to point out the complexity of life, and to save them from disappointment." Don Alfonso stands for enlightenment, in his view. Loy and Mallwitz, who are working together for the first time here, quickly agreed on one thing: they do not want to differentiate the vows of love between true and mere pretence. The piece is about honest feelings, and this is reflected in the music as well, the conductor points out.



Conductor Joana Mallwitz.

At the moment, she is spending a lot of time with the ensemble at the piano, trying to find the greatest possible expressivity. "The singer's sound should hit us straight in the heart," says he conductor who is making her Salzburg Festival debut in *Così fan tutte*; at the same time she is the first woman ever to conduct an opera at the Salzburg Festival. When conducting Mozart, she always considers herself a counterweight, not an accompanist. She finds the Vienna Philharmonic wonderful and points out that her main intent during rehearsals is to be authentic, but also open to the impulses she encounters. She has a clear idea of this opera and would like to hear a true cantabile, she adds.

The fact that Christof Loy is staging the production at the Großes Festspielhaus is not a contradiction to him, even if the opera is conceived as a chamber work. “I often feel more comfortable, even in smaller pieces, when I have a lot of room for the production,” the director says. “I often work choreographically, and that requires space.” He has also moved the action far to the front of the stage. “Therefore, the figures appear as close as I have never seen it done.”

Press Office of the Salzburg Festival/Anne Zeuner



Joana Mallwitz and Christof Loy.

Photographs are available at:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/presse/fotoservice>

You can find the podcast at:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/presse>

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)

## ***Così fan tutte***

ossia LA SCUOLA DEGLI AMANTI

Dramma giocoso in zwei Akten KV 588 (1790)

Libretto von Lorenzo Da Ponte

Neuinszenierung

**Premiere: 02. August 2020**

**Weitere Vorstellungen: 05., 09., 12., 15., 18. August 2020**

Großes Festspielhaus

**Joana Mallwitz** Musikalische Leitung

**Christof Loy** Regie

**Johannes Leiacker** Bühne

**Barbara Drosihn** Kostüme

**Olaf Winter** Licht

**Niels Nuijten** Dramaturgie

**Elsa Dreisig** Fiordiligi

**Marianne Crebassa** Dorabella

**Andrè Schuen** Guglielmo

**Bogdan Volkov** Ferrando

**Lea Desandre** Despina

**Johannes Martin Kränzle** Don Alfonso

**Konzertvereinigung Wiener Staatsopernchor**

**Huw Rhys James** Choreinstudierung

**Wiener Philharmoniker**

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