

Press Text: Terrace Talk *Intolleranza 1960*



Ingo Metzmacher and Jan Lauwers. Photo: SF/Anne Zeuner

(SF, 12 August 2021) A harsh drumbeat is answered by a tender note from the flute – *Intolleranza 1960* is a rollercoaster of emotions for the audience, says director Jan Lauwers during the Terrace Talk on his new production. Why is Luigi Nono’s *azione scenica* a masterwork? “*Intolleranza* is timeless and eternally valid. The title may say 1960, but it is as relevant in 2021 as it was then,” he says, adding that some things may feel like a fist blow to the face, but the music holds just as many tender, sensitive elements. Of course the 20-minute torture scene is shocking, he says, but its form and the combination with the music make the scene acceptable.

Conductor Ingo Metzmacher describes the music as archaic, but highly organized and written with a plan. “He poured his heart and soul into it,” says the conductor. “It is impossible to escape. Nono’s music is overwhelmingly powerful.” He explains that after yesterday’s run-through, he was emotionally exhausted.

One week before the premiere, at a point where corrections to elements like lighting are commonly made, conductor and director agree that everything is just right. “I can tell the protagonists: now it is up to you,” says Jan Lauwers, who is also responsible for sets and video. During the run-through, an American performer spontaneously called out “I can’t breathe” during the torture scene. This is not written anywhere, but Lauwers describes it as the performer’s decision and a strong message. “I have the feeling we can develop hierarchies horizontally here,” the director says. He adds that his work is based on freedom. Of course

many positions are fixed and agreed, but some are indeed improvised. There are almost 200 people on stage: dancers, singers, chorus, percussionists. “That is a political statement, all these people working together on this 48-metre stage, after the coronavirus pause,” says Jan Lauwers. To him, it is all about migration, motion, people on the road.

The director explains that he had no idea how emotional the journey with this opera would be. His approach was a highly multi-cultural one, placing artists from Sri Lanka, South Africa and many other countries on stage. Especially after movements such as #blacklivesmatter and #metoo, he says it was important for him as a white director to incorporate these elements within his work.

Conductor Ingo Metzmacher is highly enthusiastic about his ensemble of singers: Sean Panikkar (Un emigrante) has the most difficult part in musical terms, with several high Cs, and even in rehearsal, he invariably sang them with bravura. Sarah Maria Sun, however, in the role of La sua compagna, has the most beautiful music of all. “Very high sopranos have a tradition in Nono’s music,” he explains. “I also love the colour of the chorus. It is extremely difficult to sing this part by heart.” It is often hard to tell the difference between chorus members and dancers, Jan Lauwers adds: choristers are not necessarily accustomed to dancing. His choreographer Paul Blackman, however, had an excellent idea: warming up to disco music. “That opens up the body and eliminated the fear the choristers had of their own bodies,” he says.



Not only dancers, singers and choristers, but also musicians will be visible on stage. The Felsenreitschule is a special place and wonderful to work with, says Ingo Metzmacher. He has distributed his orchestra throughout the stage area; for example, the orchestra pit is elevated to a relatively high position. “In this opera, everything belongs together.” The winds are seated on the left, the strings on the right, the timpani play from the gallery, and 12 drummers are located in the left corner of the stage. “That’s a crazy sound. I am very happy,” says Ingo



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Metzmacher. The opera begins with an introductory chorus, the sound of which reaches the listener from behind, frontally and from left and right, partially via pre-recorded material. Only then does the orchestra begin playing.

Jan Lauwers has added one protagonist to the second part of the production: a blind poet. “I hope that we can find hope in this figure,” he says. “I have introduced this figure because we are living amidst a lot of vulgarity in the era of social media. We have lost the poetry of life.”

What do they wish for in these performances? “That the audience comes to the performance with open ears,” says Ingo Metzmacher. “I hope the audience is willing to engage,” says Jan Lauwers. Both musically and visually, there is a lot of information in this hour and a half – all the more important to enjoy what is offered at each moment.

The **exhibition** *Nono & Vedova in Salzburg* – featuring score sketches, photographs and documents by Luigi Nono as well as large-scale works, sketches and projections by Emilio Vedova – is open through 31 August to Festival visitors, one hour before every performance and during the intervals at the Haus für Mozart and Felsenreitschule.

Press Office of the Salzburg Festival/Anne Zeuner

Photographs are available at:

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

The podcast can be found here:

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



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Luigi Nono (1924 - 1990)

Intolleranza 1960

Azione scenica in two parts (1961)

based on an idea of Angelo Maria Ripellino

Libretto by Luigi Nono using texts by Henri Alleg, Bertolt Brecht, Paul Éluard, Julius Fučík, Vladimir Mayakowski, Angelo Maria Ripellino and Jean-Paul Sartre

New production

Ingo Metzmacher Conductor

Jan Lauwers Director, Sets and Video

Jan Lauwers, Paul Blackman Choreography

Lot Lemm Costumes

Ken Hioco Lighting

Paul Jeukendrup Sound Design

Elke Janssens, Kasia Tórz Dramaturgy

Sean Panikkar Un emigrante

Sarah Maria Sun La sua compagna

Anna Maria Chiuri Una donna

Antonio Yang Un algerino

Musa Ngqungwana Un torturato

Sung-Im Her, Misha Downey, Victor Lauwers, Yonier Camilo Mejia (Needcompany)

Acting and solo dance

In cooperation with Needcompany

Dancers of BODHI PROJECT

and SEAD – Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance

Concert Association of the Vienna State Opera Chorus

Huw Rhys James Chorusmaster

Vienna Philharmonic

Generously supported by Freunde der Salzburger Festspiele e.V. Bad Reichenhall

Premiere: 15 August, 8:30 pm, Felsenreitschule

Additional Performances: 20, 26 and 29 August



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Kind regards,

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