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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Flourishing Triad of Choreographic Debuts

Volksopera, 21.06.2025 [ENA]

"Kreationen" marks a significant artistic milestone: the final premiere overseen by Artistic Director Martin Schlöpfer at the helm of the Viennese State Ballet, showcased on the stage of the Wiener Volksoper from June 14 to 30, 2025. The evening presents a program of three world premieres by rising choreographic talents—Alessandra Corti, Louis Stiens, and Martin Chaix—each offering distinct visions.

Schlöpfer's departure is bittersweet, yet this farewell program signals his commitment to nurturing the next generation. The boldness of these premieres is testament to that legacy. The Volksoper stage, with its rich acoustic and intimate atmosphere—seating 1,337 audience members provides an ideal platform for these explorations, blending classical resonance with contemporary daring. Corti, in her Viennese debut, delves into the fluidity of identity and collective consciousness. Her work, titled *Aerea*—an endless palindrome—suggests cycles of self-reflection and rebirth.

Drawing inspiration from Michael Gordon's "Rewriting Beethoven's Seventh Symphony," Corti's choreography unfolds like a prismatic dance, echoing tensions within shared human experience. Gordon's reimagining juxtaposes humor and unsettling distortion, creating a sonic space where grace and dissonance coexist. Corti responds with a movement vocabulary that flits between airy limb extensions and grounded, collective ensemble phrases—a dance echoing memory and metamorphosis. The corps de ballet moves with soft undulation, evoking clouds reflecting shifting light, while solos emerge as moments of introspection.

Lucia Vonrhein's transparent costumes and minimalist scenic elements—coupled with Tanja Rühl's light design—create an ethereal environment where forms appear and dissolve. The effect is hypnotic: you see identity morphing, dissolving, reassembling. *Aerea* excels as a poetic opening, its choreography and music inviting the audience into a transcendent state before the evening's emotional intensities deepen. Stiens introduces a more visceral contrast: *High* is born from the dissonance between a night's excess and the dawn's clarity. He crafts a movement narrative that channels both inebriated euphoria and sober reflection, capturing time's slippery passage

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Performed to Lisa Streich's contemporary composition, the score tones shift with mood rather than tempo—swelling clusters that echo sunrise, sudden silences reminiscent of dawn's fragile hush. Stiens builds choreographic waves in response, alternating between energized group sequences and solitary retreats. Stiens' ensemble sections pulse with syncopated footwork, rhythmic torso articulations, and angular gestures, reflecting collective awakening. Then a soloist breaks away—often on pointe—drawing us into a moment of solitude amid the crowd. The visual motif: a lone dancer receding from or returning to the group, embodying shifting self-awareness.

Under Bettina Katja Lange's set design—simple vertical structures—and Rühl's lighting, we move from cool nocturnal blues to warm amber dawn hues. Costumes by Stiens weave a subtle retro-modern mix—long skirts for women, loose shirts for men—evoking summer nostalgia. High immerses the audience in an almost cinematic arc—from communal high spirits to reflective solitude—underscoring our individual impulses amid collective rhythms.

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The choreography is structured in three intertwined movements:

Origin: dancers emerge in grounded unity, echoing shared roots.

Presence: solos and duets propel the narrative of self-definition.

Destination: ensemble formations partially dissolve, hinting at collective dispersion.

Chaix balances classical motifs—pointe work, well-defined lines—with contemporary leaps, extended off-balance moments, and partnering transitions that feel in-motion even when static.

Florian Etti's minimalist set—a flat circular stage area with rotational capability—marks destinations within the immediacy of now. Aleksandar Noshpal's subtle costume palette (deep blues, warm browns) connects dancers to both earth and sky, mirroring the concerto's grand sweep. Bruch's richly melodic concerto, performed live, underscores the evening's climax. Chaix's dancers respond with sweeping reach, dramatic extensions, and moments of still introspection—the choreography ceases when the concerto's

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cadenza echoes, nearly silent yet profoundly resonant.

All three works are executed by the Wiener Volksoper ballet ensemble, supported by astute dramaturgy (Anne do Paço, Nastasja Fischer), seamless technical work (Martin Lukesch's imaginative soundscapes. Standout performers—many drawn from the Staatsoper/Vobsoper soloist pool, including First Soloists like Ioanna Avraam and Elena Bottaro—imbued sincerity and technical rigor. Their solo appearances in High and M to M particularly resonated, blending striking virtuosity with interpretive depth. Debut performances on June 14, 2025, drew enthusiastic applause and visible emotional response—supporting the artistic risk-taking.

The premiere of Kreationen is a testament to Schlöpfer's final act as an enabler of fresh creative voices in Viennese ballet. In the broader context, Kreationen connects to a rich Viennese heritage—blending operetta lyricism, classical ballet form, and contemporary dramaturgy. It signals a vibrant future for the Volksoper's dance program as it enters a new era under Lotte de Beer's directorship. The evening offers unparalleled technical artistry, original dramaturgical integrity, and profound emotional resonance. Kreationen is more than a showcase—it is evidence that ballet in Vienna remains alive, evolving, and essential. For lovers of contemporary ballet and Viennese stagecraft alike, Kreationen is a must-see: an inspiring testament.

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