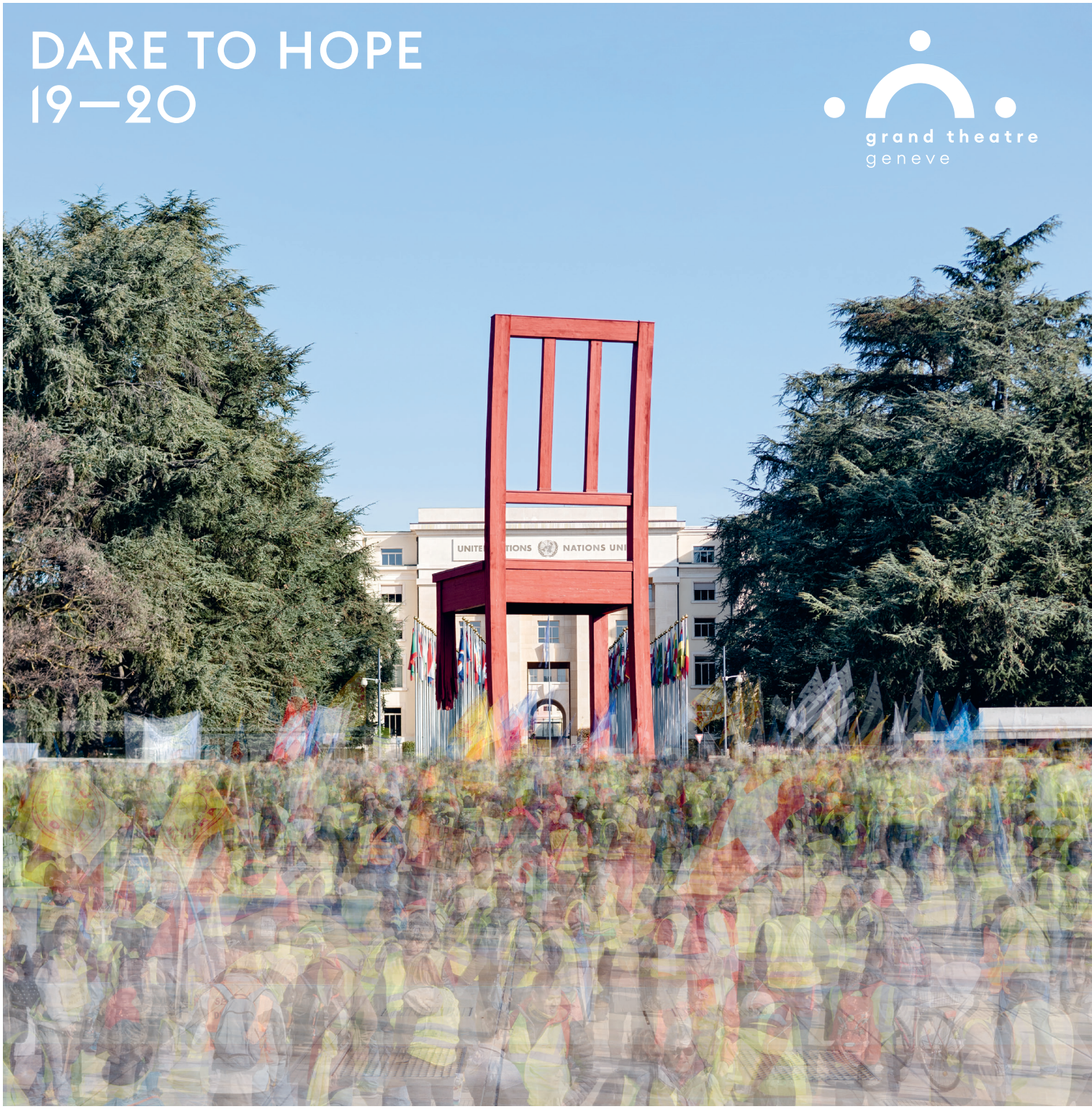


DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL

Singspiel by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

PRESSKIT

BROADCAST: ARTE CONCERT (LIVE) : 26 JANUARY 2020

RECORDED FOR RTS AND MEZZO

Sommaire

DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL

Singspiel by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie
New version by Luk Perceval in collaboration with Aslı Erdoğan First performed in Vienna in 1782
Last time at the Grand Théâtre de Genève 2011-2012

In coproduction with Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg and the Nationaltheater Mannheim

Conductor Fabio Biondi
Stage Director Luk Perceval
Scenographer Philipp Bussmann
Costumes Designer Ilse Vandenbussche
Lighting Designer Mark Van Denesse
Dramaturgy Luc Joosten
Choreographer Ted Stoffer
Choir director Alan Woodbridge

Konstanze Olga Pudova · Rebecca Nelsen
Blonde Claire de Sévigné
Belmonte Julien Behr
Pedrillo Denzil Delaere
Osmin Nahuel Di Pierro
Konstanze âgée Françoise Vercruyssen
Blonde âgée Iris Tenge
Belmonte âgé Joris Bultynck
Osmin âgé Patrice Luc Doumeyrou

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande
Grand Théâtre de Genève Chorus

22 · 24 · 28 · 30 january — 20h
26 january — 15h
1 · 2 february — 20h

grand theatre
geneve

The Abduction from the Seraglio: a new take on a classic work

A comic work, but one based on macho, racist clichés, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* has been revamped by Luk Perceval and Aslı Erdoğan, who will be presenting a revised and updated version at the Grand Théâtre from 21 January to 2 February 2020. A spectacular production.

THE OPERA REVAMPED

Some works are timeless, while others age badly and reflect outmoded attitudes: from discrimination based on racial origin or sexual orientation to gender stereotypes, there are all too many examples in opera. By inviting Aslı Erdoğan and Luk Perceval to revisit *The Abduction from the Seraglio* by Mozart, the Grand Théâtre aims to put opera at the centre of contemporary issues.

The writer and opponent of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's regime has combined her texts from the Miraculous Mandarin with the libretto of Mozart's Singspiel. A leading figure on the Belgian stage and the world of theatre, Luk Perceval's production consciously reflects political and personal issues. " f you don't transpose for the times, you might as well be in a museum. And the theatre is not a museum. It's a living art," he explains.

THE UNIVERSAL DESIRE BEHIND THE COMEDY

The story in brief: Belmonte is in love with Konstanze, who is being held prisoner by Pasha Selim, and wants to free her from her guard, Osmin. All of their various traits are heightened and exaggerated to emphasise the comic aspects of the plot, against a background of clichés about the east and exotic cultures. The version at the Grand Théâtre is bittersweet and a far cry from schoolboy humour, with a real reflection on the place of human beings, their solitude in a crowd, like the artist in front of their audience, or the theatregoer alongside their peers, who experiences a personal emotional reaction. Luk Perceval and Aslı Erdoğan emphasise the real message of the piece: " he desire to be unite ", through love, spirituality and universality.
For this co-production with the Nationaltheater Mannheim and the Grand Théâtre du Luxembourg, the music will be performed by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande at the Grand Théâtre de Genève, conducted by Fabio Biondi. A passionate specialist in baroque and classical scores, he will undoubtedly bring out the brilliance of Mozart's bittersweet music.

LIVE BROADCAST

The production will be broadcasted live on ARTE CONCERT on January 26th and later on RTS (Swiss natinoal television) and MEZZO.

ABDUCTION ON THE BEACH

La Plage will be continuing its programme with a great debate, " an politics save the world?" (21 January at 20.00), followed two days later by the Apéropéra (from 18.30). Other events include In the Wings, after the performance on 26 January, for a VIP backstage tour, and a Voilà Voilà 'after opera' event on 1 February.

A decade is something to celebrate: ANTIGEL will be ripping up the foyer for its 10th anniversary party at the GTG for Late Night #2. Line-up, DJ and strombo will be filling the halls on 15 February The first was *fully booked.* Shall we see what happens with the second?

Presentation

THE WORK

The Ottomans attempted to conquer Vienna and bring down the capital of the Holy Roman Empire twice, in 1529 and 1638. Twice, without success. But the appeal was still there. *Die Entfürhung aus dem Serail* does the same, by placing Konstanze in the clutches of Pasha Osmin, until she is freed by Belmonte. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Singspiel celebrates the fascination with Eastern, and especially Turkish, arts and culture that was all the rage in the 18th century, from tea houses (such as the one in Potsdam) to the Turkish boudoir in Versailles, Chinese porcelain (people would spend years trying to understand the secret of kaolin) and Japanese lacquerware. The opera was created based on a libretto by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie, and first performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna, in 1782. It was last performed in Geneva in 2011-2012.

THE MUSIC

Singspiel. Literally, spoken-sung or rather sung-played. A complete mixture of sung and spoken words. Created in 1782 in Vienna, the work would soon travel to France (1798) and to Covent Garden in London (1827) and much later, to Italy (1935!). Giorgio Strehler's production in Salzburg (1965) was a memorable occasion. By using the Singspiel method, Mozart uses German to majestic effect but in a different way from spoken drama. The music does the rest from the very beginning, with its emotional intensity combined with Turkish styling to create a mystical Eastern atmosphere. The plot in brief: Konstanze is a prisoner in the seraglio of Pasha Bassa, where she is guarded by Osmin. Belmonte tries and eventually succeeds in releasing her, after many failed attempts.
In Geneva, Konstanze will be sung alternately by Olga Pudova and Rebecca Nelsen, and Blonde by Claire de Sévigné (from the Jeune ensemble). The two male roles at the centre of the plot, Belmonte and Osmin, will be played by Julien Behr and Nahuel Di Pierro respectively. Director Luk Perceval wanted each of them to have an older alter ego, in this instance Françoise Vercruyssen for Konstanze, Joris Bultynck for Belmonte and finally, Patrice Luc Doumeyrou for Osmin. We should also mention the final couple, Blonde, sung by Iris Tenge and Pedrillo, performed by Denzil Delaere. The Orchestre de la Suisse romande and the Chœur du Grand Théâtre will be conducted by Fabio Biondi. The violinist and conductor excels in this repertoire, having worked alongside Philippe Herreweghe, Jordi Savall and Marc Minkowski. He formed his group Europa Galante in 1990, specialising in Italian baroque music. His opera credits include Philemon und Baucis by Haydn and Silla by Handel.

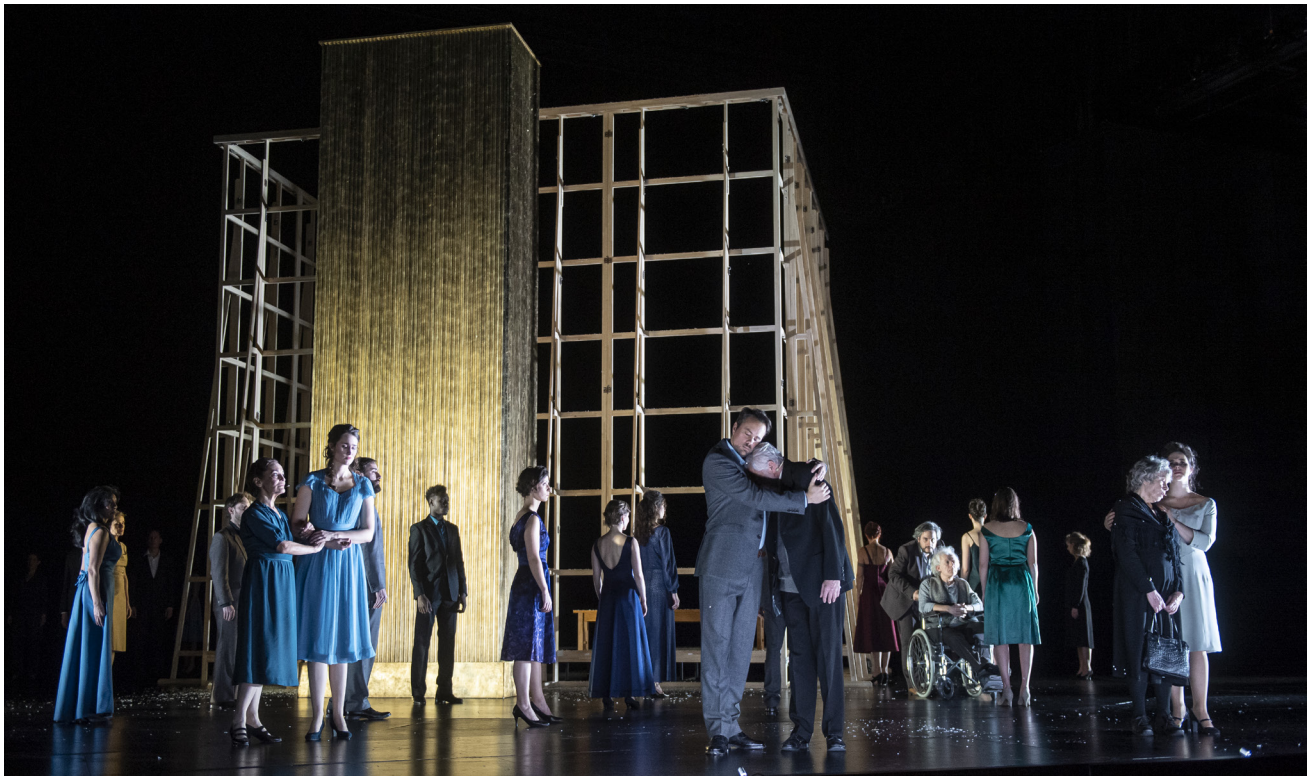
THE PRODUCTION

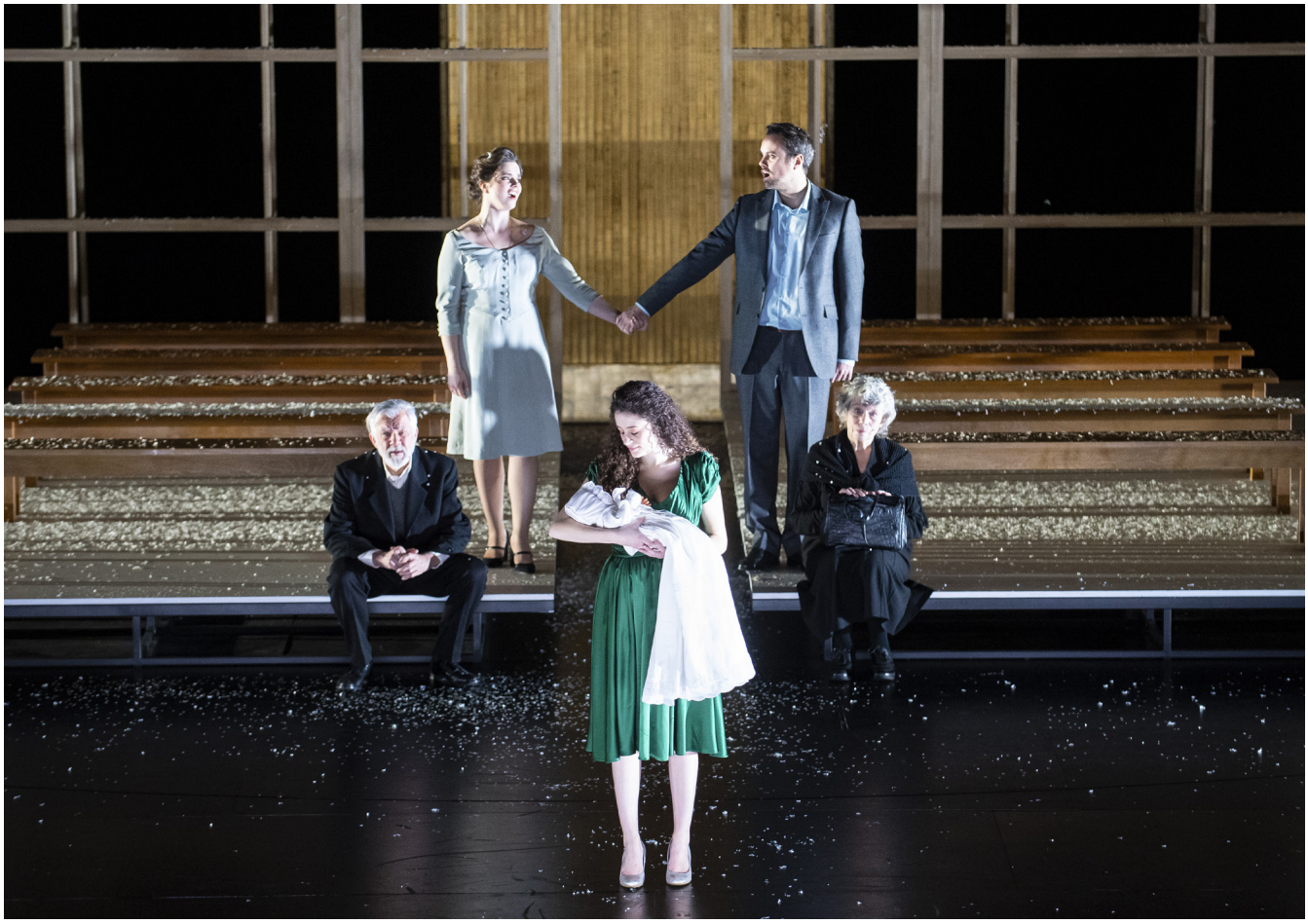
Luk Perceval's production is neither orientalist nor exotic and there is certainly no schoolboy humour. On the contrary, it is bittersweet and existentialist. Its message: "he desire to be unite", with another person (love), with a higher power (spirituality) or with humanity (universality). As he explains in an interview for La Comédie de Genève "ewriting and adapting are part […] of the theatrical tradition, which fundamentally always deals with the same themes: love, death and life. We have simply been asking the same questions in different ways for the last 2,000 years, and we still haven't found the answers."

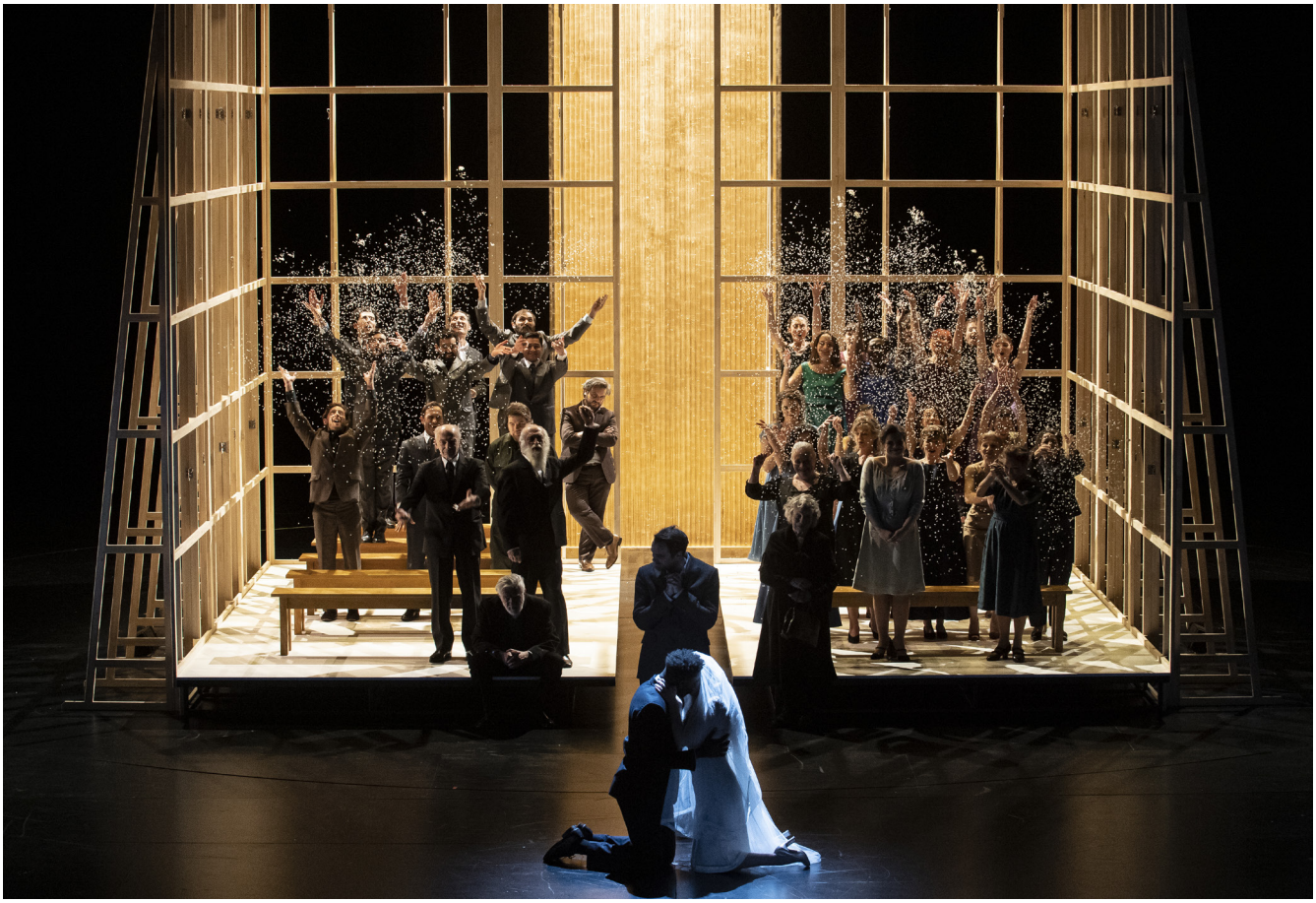
It is all about not only reading the work again but also rewriting it, a process Luk Perceval is entirely familiar with. For *The Abduction from the Seraglio,* he has worked with the exiled Turkish writer Aslı Erdoğan, and they have borrowed extracts from her book The Miraculous Mandarin. Some of the recitatives have been inspired by dialogues in the book, which is published by Actes Sud. This allows the production to focus in on the challenges inherent in the human experience when people are faced with solitude, like the singer alone on the stage or the deeply personal reaction of each member of the audience. What better place than an opera house to question the duality of collective hysteria versus individual contemplation? Far from its light and entertaining appearance, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* will focus on the essence of the piece, with a kind of Viscontian neo-realism.

This joint production with the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg and the Nationaltheater Mannheim brings together Philipp Bussmann's set design, realistic costumes by Ilse Vandenbussche and lighting by Mark Van Denesse. The choreography is by Ted Stoffer and the overall dramaturgy by Luc Joosten.

PICTURES OF THE PRODUCTION
GTG / CAROLE PARODI







REHEARSALS ON THE MAIN STAGE

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Direction générale Aviel Cahn

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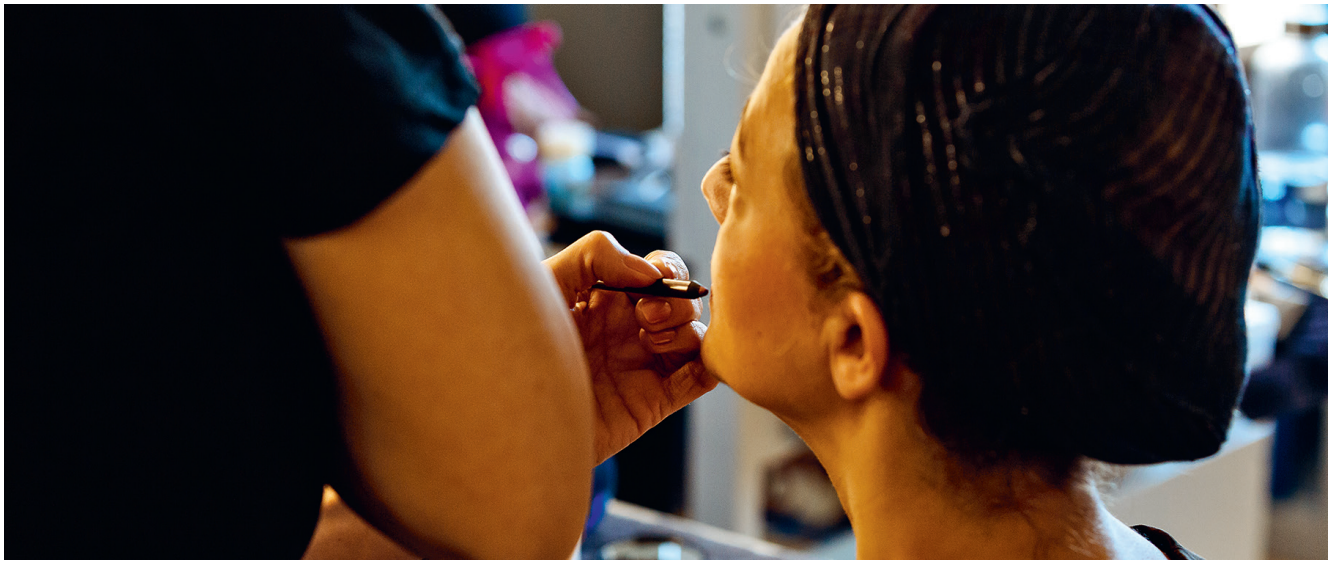

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