

Sebastian Ritschel

stage director

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Born in Düsseldorf, Sebastian Ritschel studied musicology and drama at the University of Leipzig. After several years as a freelance assistant director (Salzburg Festival, Teatro Real in Madrid, Dresden Semper Opera) he staged amongst others the first act of Richard Wagner's DIE WALKÜRE, Zimmermann's WEISSE ROSE, the world premiere of Moritz Eggert's LINKERHAND, CARMEN, ORFEO ED EURIDICE, LA TRAVIATA, DER VOGELHÄNDLER as well as ARABELLA and EUGEN ONEGIN, followed by the upcoming FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, LE NOZZE DI FIGARO and a new production of ORFEO ED EURIDICE in the season 2012/2013. Since the winter term of 2011/2012 Sebastian Ritschel has been teaching the Masterclass of the opera course at the musik academy CARL MARIA VON WEBER in Dresden.

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WEISSE ROSE

Scenes for two vocalists and 15 instrumentalists
Udo Zimmermann | Wolfgang Willaschek

Staging & Lighting Design
Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director
Jan Altmann

Set Design & Costume Design
Tamara Oswatitsch

Dramaturgy
Ronny Scholz

Premiere
21 September 2008
Theater Görlitz

Long live freedom!

Hans and Sophie Scholl

Zimmermann's opera is not an opera in the original sense. It has no plot, no casual connections. The piece focuses on snapshots dealing with the memories and the experiences of Hans and Sophie Scholl. Wolfgang Willaschek created an intensive net of emotional processes and confessions using letters, bible quotations, journal entries and testimonies of contemporary witnesses: a document of two young souls fighting for their liberal-democratic beliefs.

This staging portrays the people behind the myth of the „Geschwister Scholl“ – their fears, their doubts, their faith. The experience of the last hour before your own execution is inconceivable. Testimonies and documents draw a picture of two young courageous people, who went to extremes for their faith and their convictions. They have fought by peaceful means against the national socialist authority and inhumanity.

Do not hide your cowardice behind a cloak of expediency.

From the third leaflet of the Weiße Rose

Ritschel's staging shows the human behind the myth „Scholl“.

Hartmut Bohmhoff – Jüdische Zeitung



*Freedom is caged and banged up in this coherent staging
by Sebastian Ritschel.*

Michael Dumler – Allgäuer Zeitung



A powerful evening!
Ritschel's visual approach: clarity and conciseness.

Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten







LINKERHAND

Opera in 33 scenes inspired by the novel FRANZISKA LINKERHAND

Moritz Eggert | Andrea Heuser

World Premiere

Staging & Lighting Design

Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director

Eckehard Stier

Set Design & Costume Design

Karen Hilde Fries

Dramaturgy

Ronny Scholz

Choreography

Dan Pelleg, Marko E. Weigert

World Premiere

10 May 2009

Lausitzhalle Hoyerswerda

I would rather choose thirty wild years than seventy of duty and sedateness!

The young architect Franziska Linkerhand wants to build habitations, which encourage people to serene and noble thoughts and where residents get the feeling of dignity and freedom. Endowed with such inspiring visions, ideals and the talent of being happy, Franziska decides to go to Neustadt (Hoyerswerda) in the early 60s. She encounters a city, which consists of prefabricated buildings in a forlorn environment and a bureaucratic administration, which nips every individual note in the bud. Then, she meets Ben: a devious, complicated man with a dubious past, her great love...

The opera Linkerhand is not an attempt to reproduce the complex plot of the novel, but rather refers to the life of Brigitte Reimann herself. It may be the first opera about a „modern“ woman, who tries to live, love and work in a self-determined, free and independent way, but in the end comes to grief.

If my girl Franziska ever ends up in this town, I will write this sad novel of lost illusions. Brigitte Reimann

Photos by Karen Stuke

*Anything but province: Both in composition and in staging,
Linkerhand is a prime example of modern musical theatre.*

Thomas Rothschild – Financial Times Deutschland



Thrilling emotions between concrete blocks.

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung

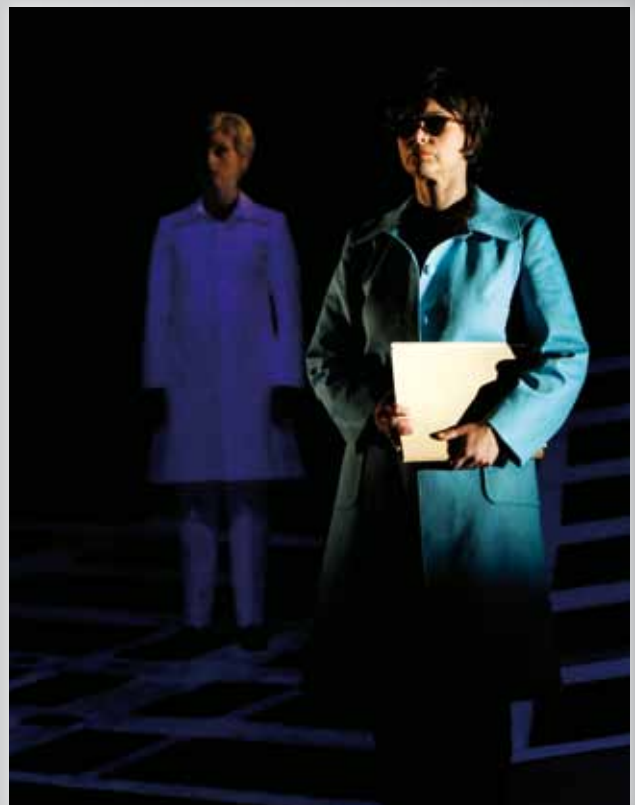


Ritschel's staging repeatedly highlights the striking struggle between the individual and the mass.

Michael Laages – Deutschlandradio



An authentic tribute.
Boris Michael Gruhl – nmz online



The strength of this staging lies in its simplicity.

Boris Michael Gruhl – MDR Figaro







CARMEN

Opera in four acts
Georges Bizet | Henri Meilhac & Ludovic Halévy

Staging & Lighting Design
Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director
Lancelot Fuhry

Set Design & Costume Design
Martin Rupprecht

Dramaturgy
Ronny Scholz

Choreography
Dan Pelleg, Marko E. Weigert

Premiere
27 March 2010
Theater Görlitz

For never, never has any woman before you, no, no, woman before you so deeply disturbed my being.

In the course of the opera Carmen becomes more and more of an obsession to Don José. At first he is not very impressed by her – but later his vicious perception increases to a dangerous mania: he must take possession of her. The labile Don José is in the true sense of the word affected by her.

Who knows of what demon I was about to become the prey!

The first actual contact between Don José and his demon takes place in the Habanera. This aria exposes the force with which Carmen approaches Don José and monopolizes him. She becomes a life-determining superior idea.

You'd best beware!

Carmen warns Don José explicitly about getting involved with her without thinking twice. Does she perhaps suspect that her dominant femininity poses a threat to him?

O my Carmen; remember the past; we loved each other not long ago.

While Don José speaks of passionate love, those „happy times“ remain a secret to the audience. Again and again we see a man, who is desperate for burning love – but never gets it. To murder Carmen is the only chance to assume power over her.

Photos by Nikolai Schmidt

This CARMEN was the best staging not only in the past season but one of the best ever offered over the last years. A brilliant performance, alone on the top.

Jost Schmidtchen – Sächsische Zeitung



Sebastian Ritschel has staged to Georges Bizet's music a dance of death as macabre as funny and masterly added clichés and mask-like figures.

Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten

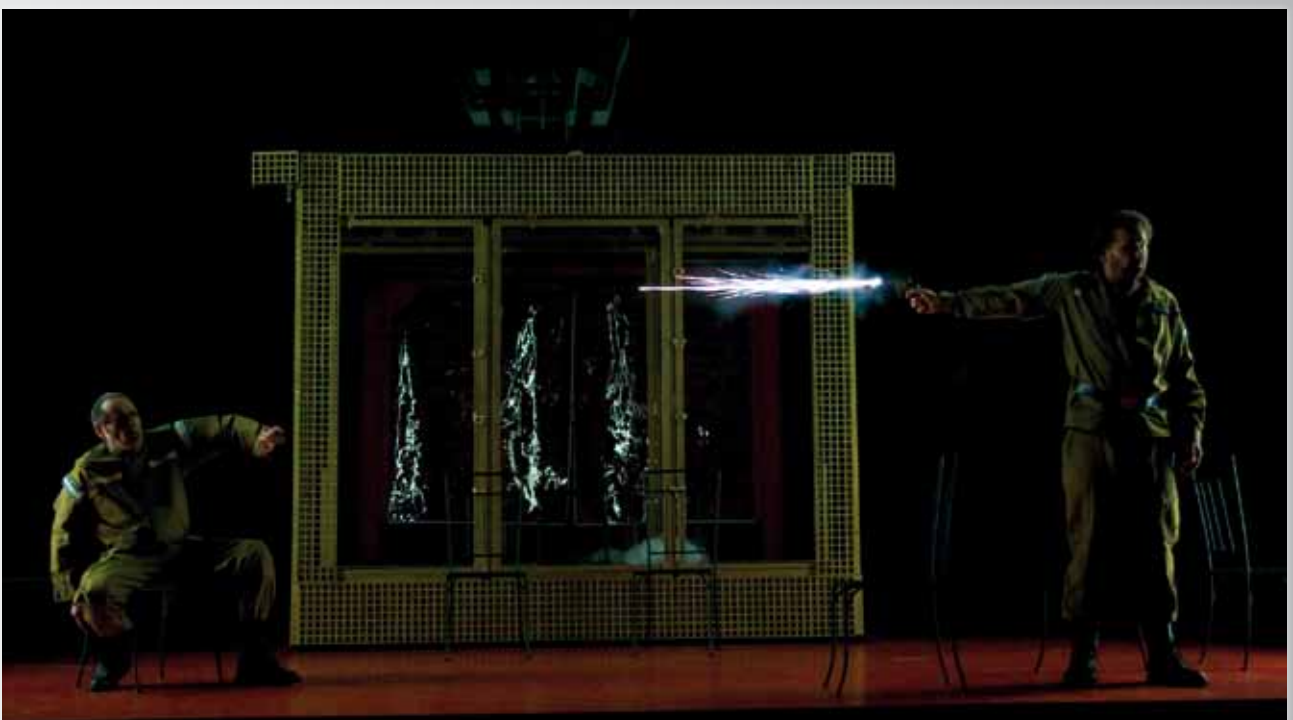


*A version of our time – of convincing clarity.
Felicitous images overrate magnificent scenes.*

Christa Vogel – Sächsische Zeitung



Brilliant top-class performance!
The staging went far beyond the scope of conventional stagecraft.
Jost Schmidtchen – Sächsische Zeitung



A cage full of dreams – Bizet's Carmen convinces as a comedy of cruelty.

Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten







ORFEO ED EURIDICE

Opera in three acts

Christoph Willibald Gluck | Raniero de' Calzabigi

Staging & Lighting Design

Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director

Mark Rohde

Set Design & Costume Design

Karen Hilde Fries

Dramaturgy

Ronny Scholz

Choreography

Dan Pelleg, Marko E. Weigert

Premiere

18 September 2010

Theater Görlitz

Each of us when separated, having one side only, like a flatfish, is but the indenture of a man, and he is always looking for his other half. Plato, SYMPOSITION

Orfeo and Euridice and Amore

Amore confirms Orfeos avid desire to see Euridice again. He promises him success but on condition that he neither looks at Euridice nor explains her the reason for his behaviour. With Amore on his side Orfeo rushes towards the limbo.

The Furies, Cerberus and the dwellers of hell try to put him in a cold sweat at the entrance to the Underworld, but with help from Amore he placates the guardians of hell. They finally let him enter the netherworld. Orfeo is overwhelmed by the dignity of the place. He meets the dwellers of Elysium – the Androgynous. On Amores side Euridice appears: the Androgynous encourage Orfeo to abide the agonies of the pending trial in favour of love. But he violates the ban by looking Euridice squarely in the eyes. In Amore's arms Euridice dies again. Orfeo decides to follow his wife into death but Amore keeps him back. He is so deeply touched by Orfeos love for his wife that he brings Euridice back to life again. Orfeo and Euridice praise the blessings of the god of love, Amore.

Photos by Marlies Kross

*Longing for completeness.
Gluck's ORFEO ED EURIDICE as parable.*

Jens Daniel Schubert – Das Orchester



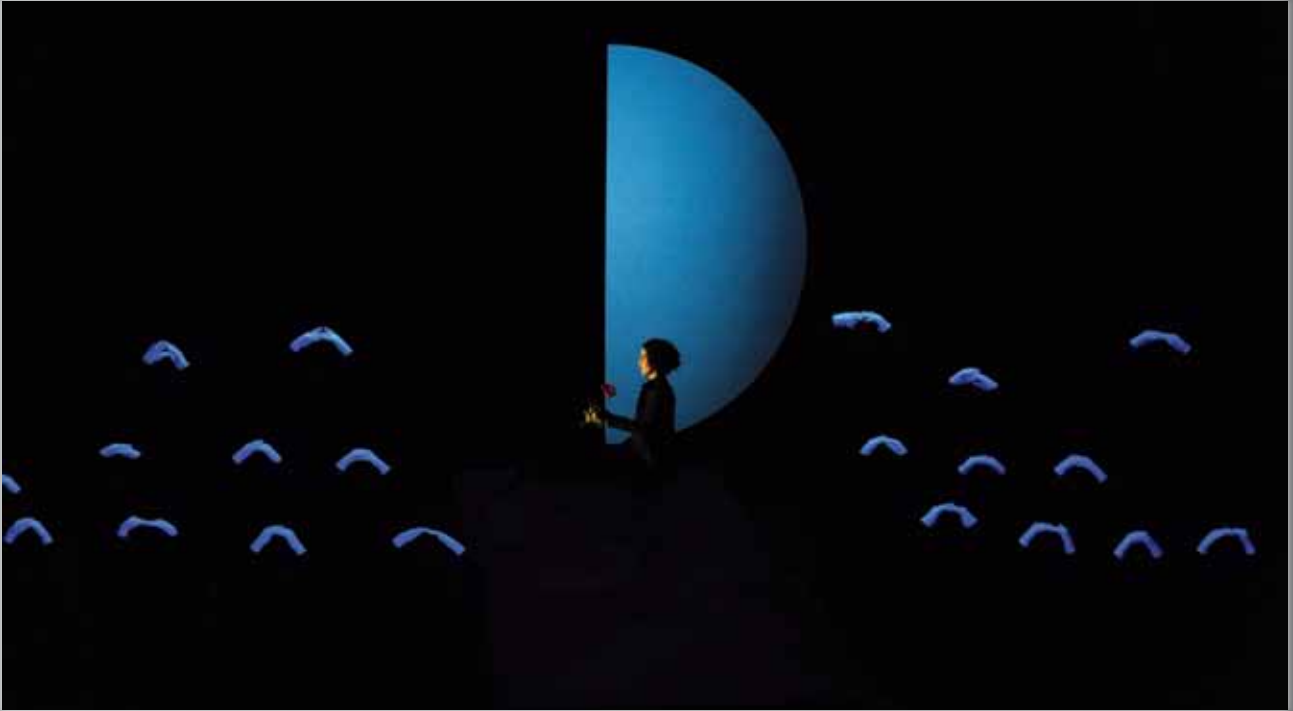
Ritschel stages a passionate playing of suppression, repression and refuge in the convention of his illicitly upstanding hero.

Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten



*Ritschel leads the characters consequently in this powerful scenery.
Inner processes and emotional encounters are shown humanely living.*

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung



Gluck's spherical theatre.
Sebastian Ritschel has staged an almost comical artist-drama.
Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten



*A successful enhancement of the role of Amore!
Strictly stylized stage direction.*

Axel Göritz – www.opernnetz.de







LA TRAVIATA

Opera in three acts
Giuseppe Verdi | Francesco Maria Piave

Staging & Lighting Design
Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director
Mark Rohde

Set Design & Costume Design
Heike Mirbach

Dramaturgy
Ronny Scholz

Choreography
Dan Pelleg, Marko E. Weigert

Premiere
14 May 2011
Theater Görlitz

Ecstasy – Violetta knows she will die. Just this one last time she wants to give herself to ecstasy. Violetta is paralyzed by Alfredo's confession of love. Nearly hysterically she decides to lose control of herself. However, Alfredo wins Violetta around.

Concealment – Alfredo and Violetta have withdrawn and seemingly live a satisfied life together. Violetta left her past behind. Giorgio Germont calls upon his son to return to the moral bosom of the family. When Alfredo hears that Violetta went back he plots revenge. Blinded by rage he destroys the illusion of their love. Germont has achieved his aim.

Despair – Violetta and Alfredo meet up to clarify the past incidents. Hoping that Alfredo finally leaves her, Violetta claims to be in love with Barone Douphol. Alfredo humiliates Violetta for all the world to see and pays her for their shared time. The guests turn away from Violetta with disgust. A desperate Alfredo realizes his mistake.
Knowing about her love to Alfredo, Violetta is left behind.

Acceptance – Violetta's death is near. Inspired by Alfredo's expressions of his deep love Violetta is under the illusion of joy again. But the illusion disperses. Violetta dies in the knowledge of being loved.

Photos by Marlies Kross

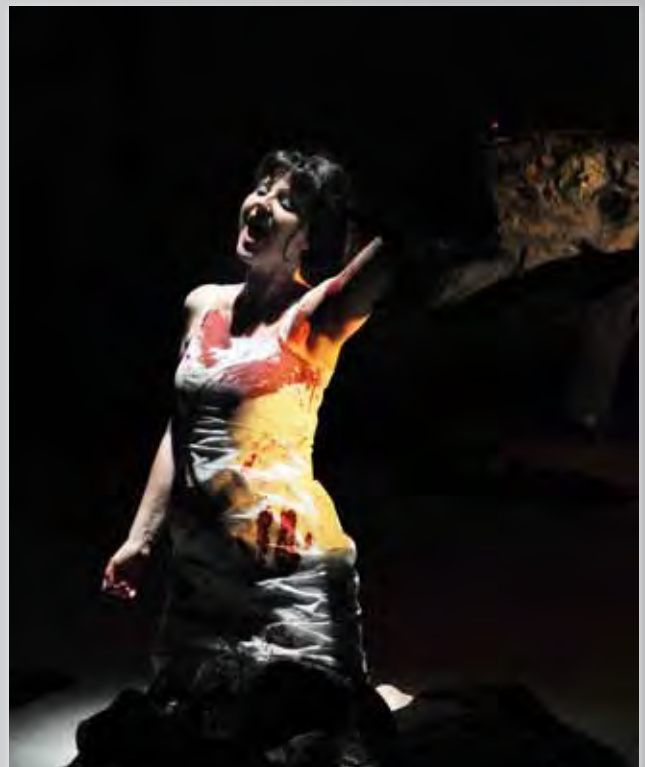
*Ritschel's work proves that his particular interest
lies in the aesthetics of images.*

Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten



*Highly internalized occurrences on stage,
alternating between intimacy and the insincere mob.*

Gabriele Gorgas – Sächsische Zeitung



*Powerful and perfect! Everything fits perfectly together in this evening,
the marvellous choir, the surreal choreography...*

Peter Stosiek – Sächsische Zeitung



*Powerful sign language from impressive
dynamic group images to tunnel and light phenomena.*

Peter Stosiek – Sächsische Zeitung



*This sparse room with its vanishing point and these curtains,
covering existential needs and later torn down, tell the story of love and death,
humiliation and forgiveness.*

Gabriele Gorgas – Sächsische Zeitung







DER VOGELHÄNDLER

Operetta in three acts

Carl Zeller | Hans-Gerald Otto | Sebastian Ritschel

Staging & Lighting Design

Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director

Manuel Pujol

Set Design & Costume Design

Heike Mirbach

Dramaturgy

Ronny Scholz

Choreography

Dan Pelleg, Marko E. Weigert

Premiere

8 October 2011

Theater Görlitz

Of men and animals

Do I look, now and again,

At animals and us as men,

I easily find, here and there,

Those analogies, everywhere.

Just for instance, look at me,

You will find plenty, and agree.

I was like many of those men,

Acting like a cock, awful to his hen.

As much as the piece seemed to be completely rounded in its days it is only natural that the ravages of time have made some radical and to our today's feelings quite noticeable changes on the initial effects of the wording in the first place.

There is a discrepancy between the uninterrupted ease and the natural charisma of the music on the one hand and the libretto, matching the style of the music only partly, on the other hand.

It is hardly deniable that dialect on our stages sails close to the wind of embarrassment. The Tyrolean dialect (or what the authors considered to be Tyrolean dialect) of the original libretto has been eliminated.

New libretto of DER VOGELHAENDLER by Hans-Gerald Otto

Photos by Marlies Kross

Sebastian Ritschel staged a tremendous pleasure.

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung



Astonishing choir staging!

Heiko Schon – www.kultura-extra.de



Accurately and strictly choreographed staging concept.

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung



*The animalistic Panopticon proved to be
a concept as entertaining as promising.*

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung



*Thundering applause for an entertaining adaption
of Carl Zeller's DER VOGELHÄNDLER.*

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung







ARABELLA

Lyric comedy opera
Richard Strauss | Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Staging & Lighting Design
Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director
Basil H. E. Coleman

Set Design & Costume Design
Heike Mirbach

Dramaturgy
Swantje Schmidt-Bundschuh
Ronny Scholz

Premiere
14 April 2012
Landestheater Niederbayern

Great love? Arabella and Mandryka do not know each other!
The two meet in the select society on the Fiakerball: A place of deceptive freedom and exuberance. The public is omnipresent in this opera. Both hotel and ball offer no space for privacy and intimacy. The protagonists are under permanent surveillance, possibilities to retreat are hard to find!

Despite the persistent disturbances Arabella agrees to Mandryka being her „master“. After a furious scene of jealousy and insults against Arabella, Mandryka comes to his sense. He tried to pursue entire happiness and now is not worth all these apologies.

The engagement seems to be broken off! But Arabella's appearance with the traditional glass of water gives cause of hope. The stage opens and suggests a new, strange world. Vision? Utopian dream? Arabella decides to give herself over to the „right one“. The glass of water remains.

Room of Souls: The abstract, implacable unit room is not just a reflection of Arabella. It is hermetic and suggests captivity and hopelessness through its rigid construction. The desperation for escape and eruption seems to be impossible in spite of the light and bright areas. A change can only be done from outside as through nature – idealized by the character of Mandryka and his forests.

Photos by Marlies Kross & Peter Litvai

*Ritschel's staging: Timeless but yet in the here and now.
People are degraded to bizarre marionettes
in this increasingly cold and hermetic world without emotion and intimacy.
Against this backdrop Arabella becomes highly topical.*

Michaela Schabel – Mittelbayrische Zeitung



*Thrilling in every minute
because Sebastian Ritschel takes the minor characters equally seriously.*

Edith Rabenstein – Passauer Neue Presse



*Bravo for the staging of Sebastian Ritschel.
Comedy and tragedy have been worked precisely.*

Gerhart Stoiber – Wochenblatt



As the result turns out: an almost literary, very intelligent intimate play!

Edith Rabenstein – Passauer Neue Presse



*The staging balances in dramatic tension
between great emotions and comical playing,
modern sobriety and romantic nostalgia.*

Michaela Schabel – Mittelbayrische Zeitung







EUGEN ONEGIN

Lyric scenes in three acts
Peter Tschaikowsky | Konstantin Schilowsky

Staging & Lighting Design
Sebastian Ritschel

Musical Director
Eckehard Stier

Set Design & Costume Design
Britta Bremer

Dramaturgy
Ronny Scholz

Premiere
2 June 2012
Theater Görlitz

Life is not a novel!

Tatiana and Lensky sail constantly close to wind between dream and reality, wish and fact. In the course of the scenes it becomes painfully clear to them that their reality does not exist. Poetry and literature are the centre of their lives: They are surrounded by it, they define themselves by it. Tatiana devours literature, suffers with the main characters and loses contact with her environment. Tatiana becomes part of the literary world.

Lensky believes that he is a great poet. But in fact, he is just an unsuccessful poet somewhere in the province. He is only part of a fragile make-believe world.

Onegin turns the ideal world upside down. He does not destroy but rather reinforce. With his appearance, yearnings and desires, threats and fears reveal and become clear: Tatiana projects all her yearnings onto Onegin, whereas Lensky considers his masculinity to be in danger. In contrast to Tatiana and Lensky, Onegin has no romantic or dreamy nature. Through the meeting of the characters misunderstandings and offences occur, which results in a deep rift. This rift gets deeper and deeper in the course of the play and finally brings ruin upon the three protagonists.

Photos by Marlies Kross

*Thrilling, exciting and figured interpretation.
The highlight of the season!*

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung



*Sebastian Ritschel has staged this drama
with strict accuracy and choreographic expertise.*

Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten



Effective lighting ... impressive visual effects ... magnificent music theatre!

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung







Ritschel's interpretation is consistent and compelling.

Jens Daniel Schubert – Sächsische Zeitung



Images of great urgency.

Boris Michael Gruhl – Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten







Dates

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

Theater Görlitz

06 October 2012 – 19:30
13 October 2012 – 19:30
19 October 2012 – 19:30
21 October 2012 – 15:00
28 October 2012 – 19:00
10 November 2012 – 19:30
25 December 2012 – 17:00
24 February 2013 – 19:00
21 June 2013 – 19:30

Theater Bautzen

22 March 2013 – 19:30
29 March 2013 – 19:30
11 April 2013 – 19:30
28 April 2013 – 19:30
05 May 2013 – 15:00
11 May 2013 – 19:30

Theater Zittau

01 June 2013 – 19:30
23 June 2013 – 15:00
28 June 2013 – 19:30
29 June 2013 – 19:30

EUGEN ONEGIN

Theater Görlitz

12 October 2012 – 19:30
11 November 2012 – 19:00
26 December 2012 – 17:00

LA TRAVIATA

Theater Bautzen

11 January 2013 – 19:30
13 January 2013 – 19:30
18 January 2013 – 19:30
20 January 2013 – 15:00
24 January 2013 – 19:30
26 January 2013 – 19:30

Theater Görlitz

23 February 2013 – 19:30
16 March 2013 – 19:30
31 March 2013 – 19:00

Theater Zittau

27 April 2013 – 19:30
24 May 2013 – 19:30
26 May 2013 – 15:00

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

Theater Görlitz

25 May 2013 – 19:30
02 June 2013 – 19:00
14 June 2013 – 19:30
22 June 2013 – 19:30
30 June 2013 – 19:00
07 June 2013 – 15:00

