

Gatsby singt!

Am Freitag, den 11.12.15 reiste der Englisch LK der QP2 unter der Leitung von Herrn Russé nach Dresden. Im Fokus stand anlässlich des Rahmenthemas "The Roaring Twenties and the American Dream" der Besuch der Oper "The Great Gatsby" nach dem Roman von F. Scott Fitzgerald, komponiert vom US-Amerikaner John Harbison. Trotz verspäteter Züge war der Aufenthalt, die Oper selbst sowie auch die Dresdner Innenstadt samt Sehenswürdigkeiten ein einmaliges Erlebnis.

Visiting Dresden, Old Sport

"The Great Gatsby", written by F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1925, is one of the most popular novels in the history of American-English literature. It has already been made into a film five times. Now John Harbison's composition of "Gatsby" as an opera had its European première at the Semper Opera in Dresden, which our English Course attended last Friday.

The US-American composer, John Harbison, stayed close to the original text and used many of Fitzgerald's words in his libretto. After the opera (being the last large-scale operatic work of the last century) had its world premiere at New York's Metropolitan Opera in 1999, the composer's slightly minimized version for concert performances was used for the Dresden première.

In the foreground of the stage, Nick Carraway, is observing and writing at a desk when he is not involved in the plot himself. Harbison gave Nick's character more weight than it had in Fitzgerald's novel, not only in playing but also by singing. John Chest was lending his charismatic and unforgettable voice to this character.

The expensive set on stage perfectly represented the wealth of New York's upper class during the time of the 'Roaring Twenties' f.e. by oversized and chic props on the one hand side and on the other a run down garage in the 'valley of ashes' overlooked by a broken billboard with the watchful eyes of T. J. Eckleburg's.

The plot was presented in scenes, and within the amazing scenery the problems and relationships between Gatsby, Daisy, her husband Tom, Tom's lover Myrtle and her husband George became clear. Brilliant singers made their roles amiable in a potpourri/mixture of Jazz, dance music like Charleston and Tango as well as operatic arias which were not always very easy to follow. Particularly the Swedish soprano Maria Bengton with her cold yet soft voice was able to present a very foolish and love-seeking Daisy.

The orchestra, the props and the beautiful building of the Semper Opera more than fulfilled our expectations, we were truly impressed.

Our visit to Dresden met our expectations to the fullest. So if you are interested in seeing "The Great Gatsby" in yet another rendition, namely as an opera, you can see it in Dresden in performances on the 18th and 21st December 2015, and maybe there is another run of it next season.

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