



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

A Profound and Poetic Triumph: The Grief of Red?Granny

Wiener FestWochen, 21.06.2025 [ENA]

The Gorges Ocloo's masterpiece called The Grief of Red Granny, was premiered at Vienna's Odeon Theatre during the Wiener Festwochen, marks a stunning moment in contemporary music-theatre. This AfrOpera reimagines Pergolesi's Stabat Mater through the prism of African ritual, resulting in a deeply moving, transcultural exploration of grief that resonates far beyond the stage.

Fronted by the magnetic presence of soprano Tine Joustra, the performance journeys into memory, loss, and generational sorrow. Joustra's voice—at once luminous and vulnerable—anchors the evening, guiding audiences through emotional terrain shaped by personal and collective absence. She embodies the dual inspirations of Ocloo's ancestral grandmother and the mythic figure of Queen Elisabeth, delivering a performance rich in nuance and emotional clarity. Ocloo's visionary integration of Stabat Mater with African mourning traditions—drawing on Voodoo funerary music—yields a sonic theatre that pulses with primal intensity.

The reverberation of prayer, lamentation, and communal catharsis lifts both performer and audience into a shared space of remembrance. What may have felt tightly structured in classical form here becomes fluid, ritualistic, and alive.

Instrumentally, the ensemble—featuring guitar, cello, and percussion—compliments Joustra's soprano with delicate restraint and rhythmic vitality. The dramaturgy ensures that each movement unfolds like a sacred rite, moving audiences through waves of lamentation and release. This is performance as healing: an earnest reclamation of grief where time is suspended, emotions are laid bare, and space is created for what is often unspoken.

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