

Interview with Myriam Hoyer for LOS newsletter October 2021

*How much Hoyer is in the livestream of Brecht/Weill's "Mahagonny" in Barrie Kosky's production?*

In the livestream you see 100% Kosky through Hoyer's eyes. "Through Hoyer's eyes" means that I gave thought to how I want to put across Barrie Kosky's staging. Without my story-telling and my understanding of the story on the stage the stream would lose its inner context. It was welcoming and therefore relatively easy to film the wonderful singers in "Mahagonny" because they simply act and perform so extremely well. On the other hand, scenes in which the action on stage is very static, such as in the long final scene, were more difficult: then it took me longer to spot powerful images. I found some that perhaps even Barrie Kosky would not have expected.

*To what extent can the film version, i.e. the stream, change a stage project?*

A cinematic portrayal can change a lot, both positively and negatively. Those who only watch the stream are restricted to this one perspective – this applies in particular to dance films. In the case of opera and concert streams, on the other hand, the picture cannot spoil that much, to put it bluntly, since the audience can, in a pinch, close its eyes and still has the music. There is frequently a risk that the action on stage loses its mystique through the camera – that can easily happen in clumsy close-ups or long wide shots. Or that the film editing for scenes with many roles is more confusing than providing orientation. Good camera work ensures that the performance is revealed on the screen and the viewer can easily follow the action on stage. Since the advent of so much streaming, however, quite a bit has also changed on opera and concert stages. For one thing, streaming elevates the level on the stage and the professionalism of the performance increases. Secondly, I believe there is a perceptible trend of artists opting more for security and being less willing to take risks. That is a shame, though it is perfectly understandable.

*Is it possible to implement film projects well if one is not entirely convinced of their artistic qualities?*

My job is not to give a thumbs up or thumbs down. I cannot disassociate myself from what I see on the stage. I have to understand and interpret it, but not pass judgment. To a certain extent I become part of the stage director's team and seek a common perspective with the others. Sometimes there are tough nuts to crack, like directors' languages that seemed completely incomprehensible to me at first and which I did not understand until afterwards. That was the case, for example, in "The Magic Flute" directed by Romeo Castellucci at the Brussels opera house.

*Can a stream replace a visit to the opera, is it perhaps even the better option?*

By no means! For me the stage performance always remains the original, the essence. However, at some point a series of performances is over and then all that is left of the stage production is the stream. The stream is what remains of the grand joint production as an audiovisual experience after the final show and – in contrast to the live performance – it can even overcome space and time to reach its audience.