Viktoria Vizin: “...and Echo”

Faculty Artist Series

Sasha and Eugene Jarvis Opera Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago
Wednesday, May 11, 2022 • 7:30 PM
Jarvis Opera Hall

ZOMBOLA - VIZIN - GERGYE:
“... AND ECHO”

Faculty Artist Series

PROGRAM, CAST, & CREW

Péter Zombola, Viktoria Vizin, & Krisztián Gergye
“...and Echo” (2019)

Krisztián Gergye & Viktoria Vizin, libretto
Viktoria Vizin, mezzo-soprano
Krisztián Gergye, dancer, director, choreographer
Péter Zombola, composer, piano
Krisztián Gergye, costume design, with assistance of Ildiko Debreczeni,
sponsored by JelmezArt Ltd.
Károly Hoffer, puppet design

Natalie Koh, violin
Hannah Hsu, violin
Mauro Ortega, viola
McKayla Fetters, cello

Adel, puppet

“...and Echo” is making its United States debut in the Sasha and Eugene
Jarvis Opera Hall on May 11, 2022 and continues touring in Daytona
Beach, FL and New York City, NY.

Masks must be worn at all times. As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell
phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted. Thank you.
Viktoria Vizin is one of the most passionate and talented mezzo-soprano singers of our time, who is constantly transcending the traditional role of prima donna. She has been recognized as Carmen by top houses such as the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera Covent Garden, to name a few of multiple major Houses, and is a frequent guest at many world-class theaters and concert venues. In the last few years, she has achieved unprecedented success with her exciting dramatic mezzo-soprano repertoire, singing and recording the lead role of Eötvös: Senza Sangue with major symphony orchestras such as the Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich, the Belgian Philharmonic and the Porto Symphony. Her Judith in Bluebeard’s Castle received international acclaim since 2009 and she is certainly one of the most performed Carmen all over the world. She is an enthusiastic performer of contemporary opera and related art forms.

Director-choreographer Krisztián Gergye explores the possible manifestations of contemporary dance in the context of newer and newer artistic genres, in an interdisciplinary artistic activity. The broad genre approach of his recent works and the qualitative progress he has made in integrating related disciplines are undeniable.

Péter Zombola’s works have been presented at the most prestigious Hungarian (e.g. Music of Our Time, Budapest Spring and Autumn Festival, Mini Festival) and international festivals. He is a regular participant in contemporary music and contemporary art courses, he composes film scores for Hungarian and foreign films, as well as Theatre Music, advertisement jingle and other Applied Music, and is an active member of professional organizations. In both his creative and pedagogical work, he attaches particular importance to encouraging the younger generation to become interested in and involved, not only intellectually, but emotionally, in the treasures of music literature, and to building bridges between music and the other arts by organizing interdisciplinary university lectures. The focus of his creative work is on choral works, orchestral works and oratorio/stage works.
...and Echo is a contemporary opera performance that portrays the main character, a woman’s inner stories with a unique bond of two other essential art forms, puppetry and contemporary dance performance. The creative team (Zombola - Vizin - Gergye) uses symbolism through the form of poetry. As the frame of their libretto they built two important poets’ works into the story (Hungarian Sándor Weöres and Roman Ovidius) that developed a particularly unique and rich poetic language throughout the whole opera.

In a classical case of writing a new operatic piece, the libretto is written first, sometimes together with the composer, followed by the music composition, and later, the final orchestration. In the past this could take a long time, with certain operatic works also centuries. With the opera “...and Echo” the creative trio continued to work closely together as their usual ritual from previous collaborations, that resulted an excellent dramaturgy.

The performance is based on the story of Narcissus and Echo from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Sándor Weöres’ *Narcissus and Psyche*. The title “...and Echo” reflects the fact that it is about the relationship between the Singer and her ideal self, her puppet, Adel, her subconscious self. Narcissism and self-sacrifice are the main themes of the performance: what are we willing to sacrifice of ourselves for talent, for love? Or would we give up love for a career? It is no coincidence that all these questions are closely aligned with the big questions of the life of the main character, Viktoria Vizin; what does it mean to be on stage? How narcissistic, or either narcissistic or self-torturous is it to be on these stages, to be physically, but even more so spiritually discarded? What does it mean to be alone on stage? Abandoned by everything, but the spotlight.

In the performance, we see the spiritual reflections of stage existence brought to life by three characters: the Singer, the narcissistic Dancer (Narcissus), who shadows the inner self of the Singer and at times he complicates the happening by reflecting the past, certain tough “me too” momentum, love triangles, loveless relationships, devil, a kind of Bluebeard or corruptor and who gives life to the doll, Adel, our story’s third character. The form of puppetry complements the storyline in this opera as Adel stares at us lifelessly until it becomes one with the living characters, moved by Narcissus (Dancer) himself.
The Singer, who has a narcissistic love for her idealized image of herself, and in order to possess her past abilities, burnt out, again in the present, sells her soul to the devil, sacrifices the figure. But this comes at a price, because as a result she becomes an ethereal voice, an Echo, so to speak, transforming the stories into sound, but she can no longer live them, she remains a doll, she herself disappears in the doll.

“...and Echo” is a mirror play: the story of an opera singer’s personal drama, which carries the weight and inevitability of Greek tragedies. The contrast between the reality of life and that of stage existence tends towards surreality. Lies and truths blend together. Just as in life, one cannot see clearly, but the performance takes place as life does. The magic of Puppet Theatre reveals a private mythology in which the reflection not only looks back, but also responds. It is also a kind of reverse Bluebeard story, in which there is only Judith, without a man, trapped in the castle.

Krisztián Gergye, dance-choreographer-director, Viktória Vizin, opera singer, and Péter Zombola, composer, worked on the idea for the production for several years. The final production combines contemporary dance, contemporary opera and contemporary puppet theatre to create a truly all-round artistic performance.
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Ronald Caltabiano, DMA, Dean

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Allen Recital Hall
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Faculty Artist Series

May 15 • 3:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
Jason Moy, harpsichord

May 28 • 3:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
Ian Ding, percussion

School of Music

May 12 • 7:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
Composer’s Forum

May 17 • 7:00 P.M.
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String Chamber Showcase I

May 13 • 7:00 P.M.
Driehaus Museum
Honors Chamber Music Showcase

May 18 • 7:00 P.M.
Allen Recital Hall
Wind/Mixed Chamber Showcase II

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String Chamber Showcase II

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