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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione

ImpulsTanz Festival, 19.07.2026 [ENA]

Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione is a lucid, urgent and strangely beautiful attempt to listen to Vivaldi's Four Seasons from within the climate crisis, rather than over it. Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, together with co-choreographer Radouan Mriziga, takes Antonio Vivaldi's much-used concertos and treats them not as decorative soundtrack, but as a score whose relationship to weather, cycles and time.

This relationship must be re-examined in light of planetary warming and melting ice. The result, danced by four outstanding performers and played live by Amandine Beyer and Gli Incogniti, is a performance in which harmony and invention are constantly tested against the realities of our disturbed seasons. De Keersmaeker's long-standing fascination with musical structure is immediately evident. Lines, circles and spirals emerge from Vivaldi's rhythmic and harmonic architecture: the dancers inscribe the score into space with the kind of rigor and clarity that has long defined Rosas' work.

Yet here, the patterns do not only express musical form; they also suggest cycles of weather, growth, decay and disruption. Repeated phrases begin as recognisable seasonal motifs—bursting runs for spring, heavier, dragging steps for winter—but gradually skew, as if the choreography itself were registering the way climate destabilises familiar rhythms. Mriziga's presence as co-choreographer adds a distinct layer of spatial and conceptual thinking. His interest in geometry and architecture finds resonance in the way bodies and musicians share the stage.

The seven-member ensemble Gli Incogniti, with Beyer's incisive violin at its centre, are not relegated to a pit; they occupy the same world as the dancers, sometimes anchored, sometimes moving, making visible the dialogue between sound and motion as a shared, live construction. Vivaldi's "deconstructed seasons" become both object and collaborator: the musicians and dancers appear to negotiate with the score, question it, bend it, rather than merely serve it.

The inclusion of text—among other elements, a poem by Somali artist Asmaa Jama—sharpens the contemporary frame. Lines such as "It is in the middle of winter and the sun does not set / it scorches the ground" cut through the beauty of Vivaldi's writing with a stark image of altered climates. When spoken or evoked alongside the music and movement, they turn the concertos' evocations of seasonal change into something unsettling: the sun in winter as burn, the waiting for night as a wish for relief that does not arrive. The dancers' responses—stilled bodies under relentless light, jittering footwork on imagined

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scorched earth—give these words physical density.

Throughout, the four performers travel “through Vivaldi’s deconstructed seasons” not as characters in a narrative, but as bodies registering shifting environmental conditions. Their trajectories change as if responding to micro-climates: a fragile balance in “spring” may suddenly be interrupted by a violent, storm-like phrase; an apparently peaceful “autumn” unravels into disjointed movement, suggesting dislocated harvests and unsettled ground. De Keersmaeker and Mriziga never lapse into didactic illustration; instead, they keep the choreography focused on the fundamental question of how rhythm, repetition and variation feel when regularity itself can no longer be trusted.

Beyer and Gli Incogniti play with an alert, historically informed sound that nonetheless leaves room for risk. Tempi breathe, dynamics tilt towards extremes, and certain passages feel almost stripped down, as if the music itself were being exposed to new weather. This responsiveness ensures that the dialogue between stage and score remains alive, with small musical shifts triggering noticeable changes in the dancers’ phrasing and vice versa. The Burgtheater setting intensifies the sense of a “classic hit” being remade: a house of tradition hosting a re-reading that insists on listening to the present.

What makes *Il Cimento dell’Armonia e dell’Invenzione* so compelling is the refusal to separate aesthetic pleasure from political and ecological urgency. Vivaldi’s music is allowed to be as ravishing as we know it to be; Gli Incogniti and Beyer give it full colour and bite. Yet De Keersmaeker, Mriziga and the dancers insist that ravishment must not blind us to the fact that the very seasons this music celebrates are now in crisis. Harmony and invention, in their hands, become not only musical ideals, but questions: How can we invent forms of living, moving and listening that respond to a world where winter’s sun scorches and ice disappears?

The piece offers no simple answers, but it does create a space in which the classical canon and contemporary climate realities can meet without cancelling each other out. In doing so, it confirms De Keersmaeker’s ability—alongside Mriziga, Beyer and Gli Incogniti—to make “ImPulsTanz Classic” feel anything but complacent: instead, a vital, searching form that asks us to hear and see differently, precisely because the world outside the theatre is changing.

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