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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Beat it Da Da Da

Wachau Kultur Melk, 16.07.2026 [ENA]

Beat it >Da Da Da< at Wachauarena Melk is a gloriously exuberant 80s music revue that treats a much-mythologised decade not as kitsch nostalgia, but as a living, pulsating archive of sound, style and contradiction. Framed by the backdrop of the Sommerspiele Melk and the baroque silhouette of the nearby Stift, the show becomes a summer night's deep dive into the tensions and energies that defined the 1980s yuppies.

It is also about eco-activists, glamour and anxiety, cult icons and everyday rebels. Under the direction of Wolfgang Berthold, Beat it builds its concept around the sheer heterogeneity of the decade's "Sound of Music": electro-rock, R&B and hip hop, soft rock and glam metal, shred guitar and teen pop, indie pop and synth sound, house, Neue Deutsche Welle and Austropop. Rather than arranging these genres as a simple greatest-hits playlist, Berthold and his team weave them into an "tollldreiste, absurde Agentenstory" that treats the revue as narrative rather than mere concert. The plot is intentionally outrageous, a tongue-in-cheek spy caper that serves as a playful framework for exploring how the sounds of the 80s were entangled with fantasie

This dramaturgical choice pays off in the way songs are allowed to reveal character, situation and mood. A synth-heavy track may underscore a scene of cold-war paranoia, while an Austropop anthem suddenly becomes the sound of small-town resistance. House beats carry the sense of urban acceleration; Neue Deutsche Welle twists language and rhythm into ironic commentary. The revue thus becomes an essay in genre as storytelling, with the absurd agent narrative functioning as a kaleidoscope through which familiar tunes are heard anew.

The performing ensemble—Vincent Bueno, Terry Chladt, Hannah Darabos, Ramin Dustdar, Tanja Petrsek, Teresa Renner, Ines Vogt and Lukas Weinberger—embraces this multipolarity with evident relish. Each performer shifts between roles and musical styles, proving equally at home in slick choreographed numbers and more intimate, vocally driven moments. Vincent Bueno's charisma and vocal agility anchor several show-stopping sequences, while Hannah Darabos and Teresa Renner bring sharp comic timing and expressive range to the revue's more theatrical episodes. Ramin Dustdar and Lukas Weinberger handle the transitions between macho rock posturing and self-aware parody with a lightness that keeps the evening buoyant rather than heavy-handed.

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Terry Chladt, Tanja Petrasek and Ines Vogt contribute important textures of presence—whether as glamorous agents, conspirators or commentators within the story’s shifting logic. Together, the eight performers create an ensemble chemistry that feels genuinely collaborative: duets and trios are alive with responsive timing, and larger group numbers have the sense of a shared, collective “Band der einsamen Herzen” rather than a set of isolated solos. That band, explicitly credited as such, functions both as literal musical backbone and as metaphor for the show’s emotional core: the 80s as a time when many felt lonely hearts beating behind the neon.

Musically, the band navigates the broad stylistic range with impressive versatility. Guitar riffs and synth lines are delivered with the necessary punch, while rhythm sections move deftly from tight funk to big-beat rock and four-on-the-floor house. Arrangements often play wittily with expectations—stretching a pop song into an almost hymn-like collective singalong, or compressing a sprawling rock anthem into a sharply focused theatrical moment. Throughout, Berthold’s direction keeps the sonic palette coherent, ensuring that the revue’s rapid genre shifts feel like facets of a single, multifaceted 80s experience rather than a scattershot jukebox.

Visually, the production capitalises on the Wachauarena’s open-air atmosphere, allowing lighting and costume choices to riff on iconic 80s imagery—shoulder pads, bold colours, sharp silhouettes—without slipping into hollow pastiche. Neon accents and period-inflected styling frame the performers within a recognisable aesthetic, yet there is always a wink, a slight exaggeration that acknowledges the distance between then and now. This self-aware playfulness helps the show speak simultaneously to audience members who lived through the decade and those who know it only as retro myth.

Crucially, Beat it >Da Da Da< does not simply romanticise the 80s as carefree fun. The framing text describes the decade as “ein Jahrzehnt der Spannungen und des Aufbruchs,” and the revue honours this by letting political and emotional undercurrents surface beneath the glitter. Songs associated with protest or social critique retain their bite, even when wrapped in exuberant performance. Moments of nostalgia are gently complicated by the agents’ absurd mission, hinting that the desire to escape or reinvent oneself—so strongly marketed in 80s pop culture—always carried a shadow.

“Nothing’s Gonna Stop Us Now,” quoted in the programme, becomes more than just a motivational slogan; it is the revue’s structural ethos. The evening moves forward with relentless energy, rarely allowing momentum to sag, as if embodying the decade’s insistence on forward motion, consumption, reinvention. At the same time, the absurdity of the agent story suggests that neither history nor identity can ever be fully controlled—that behind every confident beat there is uncertainty.

As part of the Sommerspiele Melk, Beat it >Da Da Da< thus offers more than summer entertainment. It is a

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high-spirited, musically rich and cleverly conceived homage to a formative decade, crafted by Wolfgang Berthold and brought to life by Vincent Bueno, Terry Chladt, Hannah Darabos, Ramin Dustdar, Tanja Petrasek, Teresa Renner, Ines Vogt, Lukas Weinberger and the Band der einsamen Herzen. For audiences in the Wachauarena, it becomes a chance to dance through the contradictions of the 80s—between tension and breakthrough, irony and sincerity—under the open sky, with the reassuring sense that, at least for one night, nothing is going to stop the music.

Bericht online lesen: https://romeoritter.en-a.de/kunst_kultur_und_musik/beat_it_da_da_da-94015/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Nadejda Komendantova

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