Operatic affairs

The Tales of Hoffmann, by Jacques Offenbach, at the Opera Company of Boston, conductor Neville Duke; Nov. 30, Dec. 5, 9, 12, 8 p.m. at the Opera House; student rush tickets $10.

The Opera Company of Boston falls short of the mark in their production of The Tales of Hoffmann. The key problem was pace: the opera lacked life and seemed to progress far too slowly. Particularly unfortunate was the poverty of performance to progress far too slowly. Particularly unfortunate was the poverty of performance, conductor redid them. “Why do the nations so furiously rage together?” was performed so badly that some sonority and grandeur. The hall has warm, over-reverbrant acoustics, which made the evening drag.

Perhaps the problem did not lie in Alexander alone: Bliss Hobert’s staging was generally static and lacking in flair; choral scenes were particularly disappointing, and not improved by a lack of coordination of voice as well as action. Ruth Welting proved to be a glowing exception to the general mediocrity of the evening. Spalletini, who announces himself as a performer, in fact turns out to be a cut above with about 170 singers and 35 instrumentalists, put on a spirited performance of Handel’s perennial Christmas favorite, Messiah.

The MIT Choral Society, replete with about 170 singers and 35 instrumentalists, was nicely done, sensuous strings filling the air with an inch of sweet anticipation.

There was some roughness during the early parts of the first act, which returned occasionally later in the performance; deficiencies in making transitions between piano and forte led to fortissimo onomastics, the breath force of which was more than a little crude. But the dark undervestures set in motion for the entry of Dr. Miracle were highly effective and the opening of Act III was mostly done, sensuous strings filling the air with an inch of sweet anticipation.

The Act II serenade a laboratory of gidgets fits for the maddest of scientists — was the most interesting; other scenes were unsatisfactory too. The production, in short, did have its high spots, but a lack of drive at other times made the evening drag.

John Alexander and Ruth Welting in Tales of Hoffmann

Local bands Breed

Let’s Breed, a compilation of local bands, a Throbbing Lobster release. The Throbbing Lobster saga continues with Chuck Wazzer’s latest compilation, Let’s Breed. As its predecessor Nobody Gets on our latest addition to the tape library of your local college radio station, this song became one of the past summer’s most requested items for airplay. Released just in time for the holidays, Dumptruck performs “Thanksgiving” on this second Throbbing Lobster compilation. Although their album D is for Dumptruck has been largely ignored, Dumptruck is one of Boston’s best guitar bands. If you’re into great guitar work with psychedelic inflections, this cut is just what the doctor ordered.

I was slightly disappointed with the re-recorded version of “That’s Why I Always Dress in Black” by the Blackjacks. This is a great live tune, but something was lost in the translation to vinyl. The Underachievers, Fles, Edige, and Prime Movers also appear on Let’s Breed in the grand tradition of Throbbing Lobster alternative rock and roll.

Is the Throbbing Lobster compilation saga now complete? I hope not, but this LP should serve to tide us over for at least a few months while Chuck Warner catches his breath after his first two commendable efforts. Let’s Breed puts forth a collection of music from Boston’s garage and alternative rock and roll culture not to be missed. Get some today.

Stephan A. Brobst

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Tech photo by Stephen A. Brobst

John Alexander and Ruth Welting in Tales of Hoffmann

Complex performance

Mosiah, performed by the MIT Choral Society; conductor John Oliver with soloists Martha Elliot (soprano), Giada Raymond (mezzo-soprano), Mark Falter (tenor) and John Krielf (bass-baritone); Nov. 30, Sacred Heart Church, East Cambridge.

The ensemble lacked life and seemed to progress far too slowly. Particularly unfortunate was the poverty of performance, conductor redid them. “Why do the nations so furiously rage together?” was performed so badly that some sonority and grandeur. The hall has warm, over-reverbrant acoustics, which made the evening drag.

The ensemble was louder and more in control than the nuclei. The chorus sections, but make the sibilance of the soloists pepper out some sonority and grandeur. The hall has warm, over-reverbrant acoustics, which made the evening drag.

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Poh Sear Hui

Although the performance was taped, the recording is available only to the performer. But I will recommend those who missed the performance to listen to Teder’s newly released recording of the work featuring the Atlanta Symphony and Chamber Orchestra, with soloists Karen Erickson, Sylvia McNair, Alfreida Huddleston, John Humphrey and Richard Stilwell and a chorus of 60. Both musically and vocally, it has few peers.

MIT Choral Society performs Mosiah

Tech photo by Poh Sear Hui