Boston Concert Opera’s “Tosca” is devilishly wonderful

TOSCA

Opera by Puccini, Produced by Boston Concert Opera. David Stockton, Conductor. Thadeaux Mojetta, Stage Director. Symphony Hall, April 11.

ATHALIA


By JONATHAN RICHMOND

TOO IN SEARCH OF A DEFINITION of the Devil, Puccini has the answer: he is Scarpia, the nastiest character in all of opera, the very embodiment of pure evil. Scarpia has no problems with torturing and killing to get his way. Tosca resists his lust and gives him the embrace of death, but his malevolent power lives on as Tosca’s lover Cavaradossi dies before a firing squad and Tosca resists his torture and killing to get her to confess. Scarpia's sadistic self-assurance was sung with an innocent reflectiveness diametrically opposed to Rivers' sadistic self-assurance. She wove two performance of “Tosca” worthwhile. Rivers commanded the stage with a venomous intensity reflecting her hysteria back at her.

English National Opera's Malcolm Rivers, as Cavaradossi. While Rivers' Scarpia has Cavaradossi tortured in an adjoining room, he whips Tosca into submission with his tongue, his unforgiving brutality intensifying and reflecting her hysteria back at her.

Tosca into submission with his tongue, his unforgiving brutality intensifying and reflecting her hysteria back at her.

There were also strong points to Ruth Falcon's performance of Tosca. Her Vissi d'arte was sung with an innocent reflectiveness diametrically opposed to Scarpia's sadistic self-assurance. She was powerful, also, in some of her exchanges with Scarpia, an electricity developing between them suggesting a tighter bond than between Tosca and Cavaradossi.

Colleen Freeman's Cavaradossi was weak. His singing was bland and unconvincing. Furthermore, the quality of Fal- con's performance of Tosca. Her Vissi d'arte was sung with an innocent reflectiveness diametrically opposed to Scarpia's sadistic self-assurance. She was powerful, also, in some of her exchanges with Scarpia, an electricity developing between them suggesting a tighter bond than between Tosca and Cavaradossi.

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Ruth Falcon, soprano, performs the title role in Puccini's "Tosca."

Demanding “Midsummer Night’s Dream” is skillfully performed

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM

Opera by Benjamin Britten, Libretto adapted from Shakespeare. Presented by the Opera Theater of the Boston and New England Conservatories. John Moriarty, Director and Conductor. At the Boston Conservatory Theater, April 9-12.

By JULIAN WEST

PUT A DEMANDING OPERA with a score of principal singing roles in the hands of students, and what do you get? Surprised! A memorable performance of a Midsummer Night’s Dream.

I cannot think of another opera with as many major roles. The Boston and New England Conservatories found an entire cast of strong singers not once, but twice, each cast singing two performances; we saw the Friday night cast. The chorus of Fairies was provided by the Treble Chorus of New England, a children’s chorus. I stand by my claim that all sang well, but perhaps the most notable voice belonged to Ophelia (Mark Lee). His voice was iron-firm and crystal-clear. His voice was iron-firm and crystal-clear.

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The Lutheran/Episcopal

Ministry at MIT

Holy Week Services

Holy Eucharist: Wednesday, April 15, 5:10 pm in the chapel

Eucharist: Foot washing, Thursday, April 16, 5:10 pm in the basement, of 312 Memorial Drive

Good Friday Service: Friday, April 17, at Noon in the chapel