



08 Aug 2014

Santa Fe Opera Presents *The Impresario* and *Le Rossignol*

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Penny Black translated Gottlieb Stephanie's original text and Ranjit Bolt added the English words sung to the vocal music listed above. Thanks to the imaginative lighting of Christopher Akerlind and the effective projections of Andrzej Goulding, James Macnamara's practical set with piano and desk could be used for both operas. Fabio Toblini's costumes emphasized the caricatures created in the libretto. Director Michael Gieleta had his managers plan covert actions and his artists plant their feet and sing while ballerina Xiaoxiao Wang and five limber male dancers performed Seán Curran's engaging choreography around them.

As impresario Yuri Yssupovich and manager Otto van der Puff, Anthony Michaels-Moore and Kevin Burdette sang with aplomb as they tried to envision a financially viable opera company. They needed money from Eiler, the unscrupulous banker sung by David Govertson, to get the show on stage. In his aria set to the music of *Ein deutsches Kriegslied*, Govertson's patter was perfectly synchronized with the orchestra and he did not miss a single syllable. Meredith Arwady was a thoroughly amusing Chlotichilda Krone but her low notes did not carry as well as the rest of her range. Brenda Rae and Bruce Sledge were Gieleta's version of an opera "love couple." They sang wonderfully as individual artists, but in the long run they could not help competing with each other.

The star of the evening in both *The Impresario* and *Le Rossignol* was coloratura soprano Erin Morley. She made us laugh as Adellina Vocedoro-Gambalunghi and brought tears to our eyes as the once banished nightingale that returned to sing because the emperor longed for her presence. In both operas, her singing was pure silver as her voice rose to rarely heard heights. With magical projections and lighting effects, the *Impresario*'s piano turned into a boat from which the *Rossignol* fisherman, Bruce Sledge, sang with warm tones as he plied his trade.

Brenda Rae was an attentive Cook and Kevin Burdette an officious Chamberlain. Until the end of the story, Anthony Michaels-Moore was an uncomprehending Emperor but his tears finally brought the bird back to sing above the fantastic decor of his early twentieth century palace. Kenneth Montgomery led the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra in exquisite renditions of both of these disparate pieces. His *Impresario* was elegant and precise while his *Rossignol* was sensitive and impressionistic. He brought out the essence of each piece and his translucent approach let the audience hear the sonorous beauty of each orchestration. The entire evening was thoroughly delightful.

Cast and production information:

Conductor, Kenneth Montgomery; Director, Michael Gieleta; Scenic Design, James Macnamara; Costume Design, Fabio Toblini; Lighting Design, Christopher Akerlund; Projection Design, Andrzej Goulding; Choreographer, Seán Curran; Chorus Master Susanne Sheston; Yuri Yussupovich/Emperor, Anthony Michaels-Moore; Otto van der Puff/Chamberlain, Kevin Burdette; Heinrich Eiler/Bonze, David Govertsen; Chlotichilda Krone/Death, Meredith Arwady; Vlada Vladimirescu/Cook, Brenda Rae; Adellina Vocedoro-Gambalunghi/Nightingale, Erin Morley; Vladimir Vladimirescu/Fisherman, Bruce Sledge; Dancers: Anthony Bocconi, Jesse Campbell, Reed Luplau, Shane Rutkowski, Ziaoxiao Wang, Jonathan Royse Windham.

Opera Today

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