La Traviata Review from Classical Cleveland 11/12/10 by Robert Rollin

Immediately from the opening prelude and its beautiful eightfold division of the violins, conductor/music director Susan Davenny Wyner (above) attained a fine sensitivity and rapport with the orchestra, imparting the music’s expression with her graceful gestures. She never allowed the pace to drag, making sparklingly expeditious transitions from one moment to the next. It is, after all, Verdi’s remarkable music that drives the opera to perfection. Beyond pacing, the orchestra never once overbalanced the singers—a rare thing in live opera performance. Though the reduced orchestral size due to financial constraints also contributed to good balance, it is clear that the instrumentalists, singers, and conductor forged an unusual musical bond.

Traviata’s plethora of choruses have been stumbling blocks to many a production, but on this night, the music soared with strong and true harmony. Choral directors Hae-Jong Lee and Sue Ellen Harris-Davis clearly prepared their troops well. Staging and blocking was well-handled by the cast throughout, evidencing careful preparation by director David Vosburgh. In particular the Third Act scene with the gypsies and matadors was beautifully sung, danced and acted. The entire production really flowed well throughout.

Violetta’s and Alfredo’s extended Act I duet and its juxtaposition of themes was lovely, as was Violetta’s glorious coloratura at the end of the act. Act II’s scene between Violetta and Giorgio was equally effective. Act III flowed with remarkable precision, pacing and with excellent ensemble—no mean feat with the complexity of chorus parts, dance, and the beautiful ensemble finale. When a production shows as much cohesiveness, continuity, and artistic skill as this one, it must be labeled as truly exceptional.
We would like to congratulate the Young Artists on their performances in the Mainstage production of *La Traviata* and in leading roles in the Mini Main-Stage production. The Mini Main-Stage performance brought in over 500 students! We are very proud of you!

OWR would also like to welcome **Hyun Soo Park**, accompanist and **April Martin**, Soprano from The Cleveland Institute of Music and **Kathryn Copeland**, Soprano from Westminster Choir College.

The Opera Western Reserve Young Artists have recently been accepted into the Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio. YANEO is dedicated to providing arts education throughout the Northeast Ohio area. “In 2009-2010, through more than 7,000 programs, Young Audiences artists reached over 200,000 students in urban, rural and suburban school districts in Northeast Ohio. Young Audiences has a legacy of achievement — locally, nationally and internationally. With over five decades of experience, local educators consistently rely upon the quality, depth, and diversity of our exceptional integrated arts curriculum programming and professional development offerings.” -www.yaneo.org

**REVIEW: LA TRAVIATA AT OPERA WESTERN RESERVE 11/12/10  BY KELLY FERJUTZ**

Just because an opera is more than 150 years old, and considered one of the “warhorses” of the repertoire, doesn’t mean it has to be stodgy and dull. A bright, functional (authentic-looking) set, colorful and appropriate costumes, brisk staging and glorious voices — when combined with musical excellence from the orchestra and music director — can all work together to make such an “antique” as fresh and satisfying as this morning’s pastry.

Just ask those in attendance Friday evening at Youngstown’s Stambaugh Auditorium when Opera Western Reserve presented Giuseppe Verdi’s grand romantic tragedy *La Traviata* before a very full house of appreciative opera-lovers.

David Vosburgh, as usual, did triple duty. He’s executive director of the company, but also does the set design and stage direction. Actually, he did quadruple-duty, as he also provided the translations for the supertitles. Lighting was by J. Anthony Ferrello, and costumes by Barbara Luce. The excellent orchestra (which seems to sound better each year) was conducted by its marvelous musical director Susan Davenny Wyner. Matty Sayre was the very capable production stage manager, keeping everything moving smoothly and as it all should. The chorus, which might have benefited from having a few more voices, was well-prepared by its director, Dr. Hae-Jong Lee.

But of course, it’s the singers who determine the success or failure of the venture. And this was a resounding success! Two of the three principals were local: tenor Timothy M. R. Culver as Alfredo, and baritone Brian Keith Johnson as his father Giorgio Germont. These two performers always enhance any stage on which they find themselves. They also had a great Violetta to work with in soprano Jessica Stecklein.

Supporting roles were admirably filled by Shafica Kaleel (Anina), Kathryn Copeland (fortune teller), Rachael Pavloski (Flora), Enrique Bernardo (Gastone), Max J. Pivik (Baron Duphoul) and Trevor Coleman (Dr. Grenvil).

Next year, Opera Western Reserve will present Puccini’s *Tosca* on Fri 11/11/11, at 7:30PM. For more information, call 330-480-0693 or visit the website: http://www.OperaWesternReserve.org.

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**Canton Comic Opera Company Announces its 2011 Summer Season:**

The season begins with a concert production of George M. Cohan’s 1904 musical comedy *Little Johnny Jones* on Thursday, June 9, Friday, June 10 and Saturday, June 11 at 7:30 pm. The performances will be at the Cable Recital Hall of the Canton Cultural Center for the Arts, 1001 Market Ave. N., Canton, Ohio 44702. Tickets are $15 general admission.

The season continues with a fully staged production of the 1927 Civil War operetta *My Maryland* with music by Sigmund Romberg, book and lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly on Friday, July 15, Saturday, July 16 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, July 17 at 2:00 p.m. The performances will be at GlenOak High School Theatre, 1801 Schneider St. NE, Canton, OH 44721. Tickets are $20 for general admission, $10 for students. *My Maryland* will feature a cast of 40 and a 35-piece orchestra directed by Joseph N. Rubin.

To purchase tickets for *Little Johnny Jones* and *My Maryland* visit www. cantoncomicoperaco.com or call the box office at 330-470-0835.

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**The Results are In!**

For those of you who voted in our 2010 survey...

Tied at First:  
*Faust*  
*L'elisir d'Amore*  
*Tosca*

Tied at Second:  
*Don Giovanni*  
*Die Fledermaus*  
*La Boheme*

Third:  
*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*  
*The Tales of Hoffman*

Fourth:  
*The Tales of Hoffman*  
*La Boheme*  
*Die Fledermaus*

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**Youngstown Opera Guild Luncheon**

March 5th, 2011 at the  
Jewish Community Center  
505 Gypsy Lane  
Youngstown, OH 44504  
$20 per person  
For reservations, call: 330.261.3611
Save the Date...

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<td>Mar 3, 7:30PM</td>
<td>Michael Flatley's <em>Lord of the Dance</em></td>
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<td>Mar 18, 8PM</td>
<td>The Buckingham</td>
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<td>Mar 19, 1PM</td>
<td><em>Lucia di Lammermoor</em> Live Telecast</td>
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<td><em>Renaissance</em></td>
<td>DeYor Performing Arts Center</td>
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<td>Mar 26-Apr 3</td>
<td><em>Turandot</em></td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>412.281.0912</td>
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<td>Mar 27, 3PM</td>
<td><em>Spring Fever!</em></td>
<td>Christ Episcopal Church</td>
<td>330.399.3606</td>
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<td>Apr 4, 7:30PM</td>
<td>Imani Winds</td>
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<td>Apr 9, 1PM</td>
<td><em>Le Comte Ory</em> Live Telecast</td>
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<td>Apr 9, 8PM</td>
<td>Cirque de la Symphonie</td>
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<td>Apr 10, 4PM</td>
<td>Giving a Voice to Peace</td>
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<td><em>Capriccio</em> Live Telecast</td>
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<td>Apr 30, 1PM</td>
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<td>May 3, 7:30PM</td>
<td>St. Lawrence String Quartet</td>
<td>Tuesday Musical Association</td>
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<td>May 14, 1PM</td>
<td><em>Die Walkure</em> Live Telecast</td>
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<td>May 22</td>
<td>Stambaugh Chorus Concert</td>
<td>Stambaugh Auditorium</td>
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Tune into WYSU 88.5FM Mondays at 8PM for NPR World of Opera

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**La Perichole**  
Youngstown State University Department of Theater and Dance  
April 14-16 at 7:30PM, April 17 at 3:00PM  
For Reservations: (330)941-3105

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**OWR’s Wish List**

Do you have:

- [ ] Costumes/Period Clothing
- [ ] Stage Props
- [ ] Hand/Power Shop Tools
- [ ] Art Items for our Summer Festival Silent Auction
- [ ] Antique-look furniture
- [ ] Time to volunteer

that you would like to donate to OPERA Western Reserve?

Call us at 330.480.0693 or mail this coupon. We'll arrange to pick it up.

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**We Invite You to Join Our Community Support Campaign:**

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Signature: __________________________________
Master Card           Visa           Exp. Date: ________

For donations of $100 or more, please make check out to the Youngstown Foundation with Opera Western Reserve on the memo line. Please mail this form to:

Opera Western Reserve, 1000 Fifth Avenue, Youngstown, OH 44504

THAnK YoU!
We'd like to thank...
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The Youngstown Opera Guild

...for their support!

La Traviata Review from Cool Cleveland
"...high artistic quality of productions."

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1000 Fifth Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44504-1673

Friday November 11th, 2011
Please note new time: 7:30PM
Stambaugh Auditorium

Susan Davenny Wyner, Music Director
David Vosburgh, Production Director

Giacomo Puccini's
TOSCA

In Italian with English Subtitles

Photo: O'Malia

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Youngstown, OH 44504
330.480.0693
http://www.operawesternreserve.org