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La Traviata - San Jose Opera

by Sarah Morris

April 17, 2018



On April 14 San Jose Opera's production of Giuseppe Verdi's 'La Traviata' opened on a lively scene: a party in a French salon held by Violetta, a stunning courtesan. Immediately drawing you in, Amanda Kingston returned to San Jose Opera with a bang. 'The Drinking Song' delighted the audience young and old alike, making the audience immediately comfortable.

This hugely popular opera, first performed in 1853, has but one female lead and it's a heavy one. To portray the seemingly carefree attitude of the French party lifestyle and immediately have to turn and depict with the anguish of a dying woman is no easy task. Kingston, after embodying such a brash character in Act I, does reel you in and put you in her corner as she opens up in Act II. When she reveals to Giorgio (sung by Malcolm MacKenzie), Alfredo's father, that she is dying, we are emotionally devastated by the immense forlornness she is feeling. Finding 'true love' in Alfredo, she abandons her former life as a courtesan to be with him. She begs Giorgio for permission to keep seeing Alfredo, but Giorgio holds fast to his request for her to end the relationship and she leaves to return to Paris.

Enraged, Alfredo heads to Paris to go collect her and bring her back. Alfredo is sung by Pene Pati making his company debut and boy does he steal the show. His earnest lust and passion for Violetta is palpable from early on in the opera and he physically and emotionally grasps for her throughout the performance. His voice never waivers and doesn't feel forced at all. Pati truly personifies his character's feelings, as he states at the top of Act II 'Away from her I have no joy'.

The scrim, a gauze cloth used to mute the shapes and colors onstage, used at the

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opening of Act III was the ideal way to convey the feeble, sickly nature of the main character and she lays dying from Tuberculosis. Again, Pati makes the scene as excellent as any larger opera company could.

Go!

I certainly hope that Pati is welcomed back with open arms by San Jose opera for their upcoming season just announced online at www.operasj.org

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