

Donizetti — LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

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“Teatro Lirico D’Europa made its annual return to the Garde Arts Center Thursday night to stage Donizetti’s vocal showpiece “Lucia di Lammermoor” with a cast well worth showing off. The heart of the opera — the tale of poor Lucia, forced into marriage and forced to abandon her true love, Edgardo — is the third act mad scene, one of the touchstones of the operatic repertoire and perhaps the greatest coloratura showpiece in the repertoire. And in the mad scene, Yudina was superb. In the mad scene, Lucia appears in her bloodstained nightgown before the guests who have attended her forced marriage, having used a few dagger thrusts in the wedding chamber to lose both her new husband and her marbles. In a long spellbinding sequence, Yudina traversed the spectrum of bel canto technique, from pinpoint staccato coloratura to long, liquid lines in her gorgeous mid-voice. At her most dramatic, gasping “il fantasma” again and again in horror, she was riveting, and at her most winsome, recapping the tenderness of the earlier love duet “Ah! Verranno a te sull’amore,” she brought the emotional cycle full circle. In every featured moment, the attractive soprano never once cut corners, never cheating the audience out of a thrilling finish. Yudina pushed to the top of her range in the finale to every aria, duet and set piece and was as solid at the top as she was flexible in her mid-range. The other key principals were nearly as fine as Yudina. American baritone Theodore Lambrinos was vocally winning and Ukrainian tenor Igor Borko was strong and effortless as Edgardo. Russian basso Mikhail Kolelishvili of Marinnsky Theatre dominated the stage and rattled the foundations as Raimondo.”

THE DAY — Milton Moore — October 2006

Gifted Russian Singers lift Teatro's LUCIA

"There were two gifted singers from the Kirov Opera as the star-crossed lovers, soprano Larissa Yudina and tenor Evgeni Akimov. Yudina's voice boasts an unusual coloration, ample and accurate flexibility, a neat trill, and flaming top notes. In the Mad Scene she was both spectacular and touching. Akimov is a real find, the best. He's got a strong, attractive lyric voice and sings and acts with persuasive passion. Bass, Viacheslav Pochapsky made a sonorous and sympathetic priest. As the villain Enrico, American baritone James Bobick strode with malevolent swagger and sang forcefully. The cheering audience was clearly happy."

BOSTON GLOBE — Richard Dyer — February 2006

VOICES TRIUMPH! LUCIA sends opera lovers to Scotland, 1835

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa delivered handsomely last night where it really counts; in the voice department. They sure did sing. The lovely, supple voice of Soprano Larissa Yudina suited the role so well delivering Lucia's pearl-like notes with confidence ease, beauty and real style. Tenor Evgeny Akimov as her true love, sang handsomely and with a forceful passion. Baritone James Bobick, as Lucia's greedy brother Enrico, made a strong, positive impression, and Viacheslav Pochapsky filled the role of Raimondo vividly with his black-as night bass. Conductor Topolov led the music with real spirit and a strong understanding of the singers needs."

BOSTON HERALD — T. J. Medrek — February 2006

TOWERING PERFORMANCES ELEVATE LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR SCORING ANOTHER BIG SUCCESS FOR TEATRO LIRICO

"Singing the role of Lucia was Larissa Yudina, a lovely coloratura soprano with a set of pipes and manner of punctuated delivery that was perfection in every way. Her Lucia displayed, both vocally and through her gestures, an emotional attachment to the role that, when joined with the manner of her fluid, flawless delivery, cast a spell over the audience that remained unbroken to the very end. Cast in the lead of her lover, Edgardo, was Russian tenor, Evgeni Akimov. This grand singer; this grand voice is what going to opera is all about. When he sings the walls shake and the ceiling lifts, and the audience is simply swept away in the power and grandeur of perfect tone and technique that is virtuosic in its sheer luminescence. I saw this fine singer perform in Teatro's earlier production of "La Boheme" and noted that his performance went "thermonuclear". Nothing has changed. Akimov acts. He moves. He gestures. He emotes feeling. He is the character — and that is what cements a performance and elevates a production, particularly when it is shared by every other performer on stage. Also, doing a superb job last night was Russian basso Viacheslav Pochapsky. Mr. Pochapsky has a solid stage presence and last night delivered a powerful vocal performance with a deep, resonant and remarkably melodic bass that was nothing short of commanding. Cast in the role of Lucia's scheming brother, Enrico, was baritone James Bobick, who displayed fine singing form and a strong, solid voice. The score was rendered well and the orchestra performed just fine under the apt direction of Krassimir Topolov. This production was marked by fine sets and even, moody lighting that played off the backgrounds nicely and gave this production warmth. This is a production worth seeing because of the remarkable singing and a score that is, at times, hypnotic. Towering performances elevate this "Lucia," scoring another big success for Teatro Lirico D'Europa!"

OPERAONLINE.US — Paul Walkowski — February 2006

"After the Boston Lyric Opera's arty production of Donizetti's French revision of his most famous opera, Lucia di Lammermoor, it was refreshing to have the familiar Italian version back. With a strong cast, Lucia is as foolproof as La Boheme. Young coloratura Larissa Yudina has an extremely pretty, expressive voice that rises into the stratosphere, with real trills. Her "Mad Scene," was a vocal and dramatic triumph. Tenor Evgenyi Akimov's voice combines power and color with good dramatic instincts. Baritone Vladimir Samsonov, hilarious as Rossini's barber last season, was equally effective as a snarling villain. Bolshoi bass Viacheslav Pochopsky, Teatro Lirico's unforgettable Boris Godunov, sang magnificently as Lucia's confessor. And Bulgarian mezzo, Viara Zhelezova, so winning as Rossini's Rosina, made something real and touching of the tiny role of Lucia's maid. They all sang their hearts out. What fun!"

BOSTON PHOENIX – Lloyd Schwartz – February 2006

LUCIA DI LAMMERMORE AT THE NAPLES PHIL

"As the tormented Lucia, Larissa Yudina handled the famous coloratura runs during the wedding reception scene when Lucia, bloodstained and totally bonkers, matches notes with a nightingale in a deluded wedding song. It's an aria so difficult some productions whack it if they can't find a soprano up to its rigors. Teatro Lirico created its best touring stage yet for the production and put the strongest principals they have in it. Evgeni Akimov is foremost among them as the lovesick Edgardo with a strong dramatic presence to match a powerful, fluid tenor voice. As Lucia's shameless brother Enrico, Vladimir Samsonov's strong baritone is a good fit for this role. So is Viacheslav Pochapsky's Raimondo. Lucia has all eyes however, for her thrilling solos."

NAPLES DAILY NEWS – Harriet Howard Heithaus – March 2006

Lucia di Lammermoor-Teatro Lirico D'Europa at The Touhill Center

"First produced in Naples in 1835, Lucia di Lammermoor is one of Donizetti's most famous and tragic operas. Based on Walter Scott's novel The Bride of Lammermoor, the opera takes place in Scotland during the late 17th century. Lucia and Edgardo, the opera's two young lovers, come from families in the midst of a bitter feud. After promising herself to Edgardo, Lucia finds herself forced to marry another, Arturo, chosen by her brother Enrico. By forging a letter from Edgardo to Lucia, Enrico convinces Lucia to marry Arturo. Just as the two are married and the wedding papers are signed, Edgardo arrives to witness the signing. Edgardo curses Lucia and staggers away emotionally, with Lucia overcome by sadness. The wedding celebration comes to a sudden halt when it is learned that Lucia, in a fit of rage and grief, has killed her husband. She enters the stage in her blood soaked gown, muttering incomprehensively and madly. She ultimately falls to her death from madness. Edgardo, upon learning of Lucia's death, determines that his only relief to be to

join Lucia in heaven, and plunges a knife into his chest. Much of the success of a production of Lucia di Lammermoor is dependent upon the climactic Act 3, in which Lucia breaks down completely into madness. Soprano Larissa Yudina's doomed heroine was tragic and chilling. Yudina's Lucia staggered across the stage in agony after killing her husband, portraying the young woman's madness with passion and honesty. Yudina did an excellent job of portraying Lucia's full range of emotions, from love-struck to furious to coming completely undone. Yudina truly stole Saturday's show. Tenor Igor Borko's Edgardo is strong and competent; his vocal range was impressive and his tone melodic and clear. Baritone James Bobick easily dominated his scenes as Enrico, providing a rich and robust voice to the character. Lucia di Lammermoor's set design is simplistic but serves the tragic production well. The lighting design was excellent, and the costumes beautiful."

THE CURRENT — St. Louis — Kelly Levins-Moore — January 2007

"The opera (LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR) was very good. Singers had excellent voices. Thanks for all your good work. The orchestra was very good. Only positive reports on the troop!"

***Susan Garner, Artistic Programming Coordinator
Yavapai College Community Events
Prescott, AZ — November 2010***

"LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR was absolutely marvelous! I have had more comments on this one that at any other time. Both nights the soprano part, (Olga Orlovskaya and Magda Nieves) was stunning. One lady came out of the audience on the last performance literally in tears and said she had never been so moved by a performance. Please thank everyone involved. It truly was a remarkable and memorable experience. Thank you very much. Take care, have a great holiday and thanks again for a great opera."

Gail Bunker, Celebrity Concert Series St. George, UT — November 2010

"I was captivated by the voices (Lucia di Lammermoor)! Lucia (Olga Orlovskaya) was unbelievable! The orchestra: Perfection (they were stretched out from ear to ear in our narrow space between the end of the stage and the first row of seats...and yet they stayed together in a 'grand coup de precision.' The costumes were gorgeous...A Huge Success!"

***Risa Kell, Marketing Director, Wilmington Concert Series
Performance at Keenan Auditorium on January 19, 2011***

“The Wilmington Concert Ass. deserves a hand for all it does to bring great performances of classical music and dance to our community. This production of “Lucia” belongs to Teatro Lirico d’Europa, the touring opera company brought to town by the WCA that travels with a full orchestra, chorus, sets and costumes — everything that would also accompany a touring Broadway show except that the singing is of primary importance and that’s what shows up on stage. The singing was the most enjoyable part of the performance. Olga Orlovskaya sang the demanding title with courage and admirable musicianship. Her interpretation of Lucia as an emotionally fragile person came through in coloratura — passages of fast notes covering a wide vocal range — possessed of a slippery dream-like quality. Orlovskaya’s best singing came in duets, first with tenor Igor Borko (Edgardo) in act one’s love scene, with baritone Plamen Dimitrov (Enrico) in the act-two letter scene. Borko finessed Edgardo’s music, giving a well-paced performance with plenty of power — vocal, musical and dramatic — that had a sense of wholeness from his act-one entrance to the final scene before Edgardo kills himself at his family’s tomb on hearing that Lucia has died. Dimitrov’s baritone was solid enough to give Enrico’s music plenty of bite, but the greatest example of dramatic singing I’ve heard in some time came from bass William Powers, singing Raimondo, Lucia’s tutor, a priest and the voice of reason. Powers singing was like taking master class, so perfect were his use of breath, tone, diction and expression as heard in the act-two admonition and plea for calm after Edgardo crashes Lucia’s wedding and challenges Enrico to a duel. Hats off to the Teatro Lirico chorus, a group of men and women sang with heart and spot-on musicianship that strengthened its role throughout the opera. The most famous ensemble in “Lucia” is the act-two sextet in which the thoughts and emotions of all the principals pour out through Donizetti’s inspired writing. Here the cast and chorus rose to the music’s demands aided by the superb pacing of conductor Krassimir Topolov.”

THE STAR NEWS — Wilmington, NC — January 2011

“The opera (LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR) was wonderful and the patrons loved it!”

***Nancy Goldberg, GM
Gordon Center for Performing Arts, Owings Mills, MD***

“Everybody raved about Lucia last night, not just the wonderful OLGA ORLOVKSAYA, but the whole production! I introduced the evening with a paragraph about how wonderful LIVE opera is, and the audience proved it—warm bursts of applause throughout the evening. Thank you so much!”

June Davison, GM — Wilmington Concert Series Performance — January 19, 2011

“Many, many, many thanks for yesterday’s miracle! It (LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR) I do not have words... !!!! Our senior citizens were very happy. Lots of thanks on behalf of them. I'm going to advertise the "La Traviata" every Sunday on our radio show. Again, many thanks and good wishes.”

Albert Plaks – A STAR OF DAVID RADIO PUBLICATION – Baltimore, MD

“Our sponsor of Lucia Di Lammermoor went to the MET this weekend and called to tell me your Lucia was by far better. She would like to tell Giorgio in person!”

***Jeanne Sigel
Development & Marketing Director
Garde Arts Center, New London, CT***

Berkshire Fine Arts – LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR at Emerson’s Cutler Majestic

“The singing, the sine qua non of bel canto opera, was terrific — full-blooded and deeply committed. The international cast of soloists sang their hearts out. There were more than a few moments of thrilling vocalism. It was just another night for Teatro Lirico d’Europa, the longest running road show in international opera. Created in 1988 by a Frenchman and a Bulgarian and based on singers who had been excellently trained in Bulgarian conservatories, the company hit the road as the Soviet Union and its satellites fell apart. They put on 250 performances a year in European theaters, and then, under the direction of the indefatigable Giorgio Lalov, they moved on to the United States, where they’ve performed in 108 venues all over the country during the past 11 seasons. (I heard them a couple of times in St. Louis, where in the winter season they were the only opera in town.) Boston has been one of the group’s regular stops. Lucia was fearlessly sung by Olga Orlovskaya, a young Russian soprano. A glamorous redhead, she suggested Lucia’s emotional fragility from her first appearance. Orlovskaya excelled at coloratura. She totally nailed the mad scene, negotiating the perilous changes in tempo and dynamics and hitting all the high notes without apparent effort. Her performance was heartbreaking. As Edgardo, Ukrainian Igor Borko, was the real thing, an Italianate tenor with the requisite ping. A soloist with the National State Opera in Kiev, one wonders why he doesn’t have more of a presence in major houses in the United States. I’ve heard far less persuasive tenors on the stages of supposedly major American companies on many occasions. In the gorgeous Act I duet with Lucia, in which the two promise to exchange vows of love on the eve of Edgardo’s departure for France, Borko’s and Orlovskaya’s voices mixed beautifully, creating a sound greater than the sum of its two (excellent) parts. In the minor role of Raimondo, Lucia’s tutor and spiritual advisor, veteran American bass William Powers was powerful and brought attention to his subtlety and skill whenever he sang. Other principals, including Plamen Dimitrov as Lucia’s brother Enrico, Arseni Arsov as captain of the guards, Viara Zhelezova

as Lucia's maid, and Yuri Nikolov as Lucia's ill-fated husband — all Bulgarians — were all fine, with Dimitrov especially deserving of praise. Krassimir Topolov, a Bulgarian who has been the company's principal conductor since 1995, kept the proceedings moving with a propulsive beat."

David Bonetti — February 5, 2011

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa staged a winning LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR at the Garde Arts Center, New London, CT last night with a standing ovation from the appreciative audience. A very welcome debut with TLE this season as Lucia is Russian soprano Olga Orlovskaya, aptly dubbed in the program "dramatic coloratura." Her solid, round-toned voice beamed in the first-act duet with Edgardo and second-act duet with Enrico, soared where it should in the sextet, and thrilled with nimble fioriture, clearly placed high notes, and trills in the mad scene. She acted all moods of her role most convincingly: deep affection with Edgardo, consternation with Enrico, and derangement in the mad scene and even in the first act "Regnava del silenzio," where she was clearly frightened by her vision of the ghost of the slain woman in the well. Her looks are as lovely as her voice. Another star of the performance was Ukrainian tenor Igor Borko as Edgardo. His rich voice had all the right dynamics, including pp at several key moments. He was justly bravoed after "Fra poco a me ricovero." A handsome man, he looked and acted his part very well. The third star was American basso William Powers. Plamen Dimitrov was adequate as Enrico. Bulgarian mezzo, Viara Zhelezova sang a strong-voiced Alisa in Act I, making a good case for Lucia's handmaiden's case against her mistress's romance with a Ravenswood. TLE's usual conductor Krassimir Topolov led the fine TLE orchestra in a well-synchronized performance. Giorgio Lalov, as always, created very persuasive stage direction. His unit set--panels at right and left with stained-glass windows and a staircase in the middle--effectively supported changes of scene, with the good lighting of Gueorgui Bajukliev. Another fine production from Teatro Lirico."

OPERA-L — John Deredita — February 2011

REVIEW: BOSTON LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

"Teatro Lirico d'Europa's visit, with Lucia di Lammermoor, had the sine qua non for the required vocal and dramatic fireworks in the abundantly red-haired Russian coloratura, Olga Orlovskaya, who mowed down the famous Mad Scene. Her closest matches were Met and City Opera bass-baritone William Powers as Lucia's sympathetic priest Raimondo and the always-winning Bulgarian mezzo-soprano Viara Zhelezova as Lucia's faithful companion."

Boston Phoenix — Lloyd Schwartz — March 2011

"Fabulous!!! Our Lucia (LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR) (Olga Orlovskaya) was amazing. Many said it was our best opera yet. We can't wait for BUTTERFLY!! Thank you so much, Jenny."

Carolina Anderson, GM-Daytona Beach Symphony Society — January 2011

Puccini — TURANDOT

Good Show Teatro Lirico!

"Puccini's final masterpiece 'Turandot' was given a grand presentation by the Teatro Lirico D'Europa Saturday evening. To have performers as professional as Teatro Liricos travel here to McCain strikes me as a blessing to be most grateful for."

MANHATTAN MERCURY NEWS — Ben Nyberg — March 2000

TURANDOT Explores the Poles of Passion

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa boasted a fine orchestra, a well coached chorus and strong voices from both the demanding principal roles and smaller secondary parts. All the singers acquitted themselves honorably starting with Leslie Morgan as Turandot. Roumen Doikov sang the prince with a robust tenor that rang true and clear. He drew bravos from the crowd for "Nessun Dorma," the opera's famous aria. Qilian Chen won the audience's heart as Liu. After the final chorus: "Gloria a te!" the audience rose to give the entire ensemble a warm ovation."

NEWS LEADER — Larry T. Collins — March 2000

TURANDOT Shows that Opera can be Exciting, Entertaining...

"A beautiful performance by talented actors captivated an entire hall full of viewers. The costumes were absolutely gorgeous. The story takes place in ancient Peking and the garments reflect that era with beautiful shades of gold, jade and crimson. The lighting effects added to the perfection of the costuming, causing their garb to fluctuate in hues, depending on the color they stepped into. The beautiful Chinese soprano, Qilian Chen, has an exquisite soprano voice, which combined with her beautiful facial and bodily expression, evoked several ovations, and on one particular occasion, brought tears to the eyes of yours truly."

SOUTHWEST STANDARD — Bobbilynne Shackelford — March 2000

"For music lovers, it was a stellar weekend, for Saturday night's production of TURANDOT was magnificent. What a thrill to hear the full Teatro Lirico D'Europa orchestra accompany a cast of sixty singers! Chen's (Liu) two arias proved to be shining moments as she floated her pianissimo high notes impossibly above the orchestra. Leslie Morgan sang an excellent Princess with just the right degree of ice in her voice, while Roumen Doikov's glorious tenor gave the role of Calaf an extra dimension. His "Nessun dorma" was outstanding. The sets were beautifully done, costumes were lavish and the voices outstanding. They used no microphones! All the voices projected above the large orchestration."

ILLINOIS TIMES — Ann Kerr — March 2000

TURANDOT Production Expertly Performed

"G. Puccini's final opera presented at the Sangamon Aud. by Teatro Lirico D'Europa embellishes the classic story of the ice princess thawed by a dedicated swain. Doikov expertly conveyed that Calaf is essentially a steamroller with a deep soul. The yearning conveyed by his tenor voice emphasized Calaf's unstoppable quest to win the princess and pierced through the orchestral and vocal accompaniment. Morgan's Turandot attained the right degree of hauteur, using her formidable voice to intimidate. Qilian Chen as Liu, the slave girl exquisitely sung portrayal foreshadowed her character's tragic fate. "Nessun dorma" is a terribly difficult piece, and happily Doikov did not disappoint. The sets were quite effective and colorful, as were the oriental costumes."

THE STATE JOURNAL REGISTER — Jacqueline Gerber — March 2000

TURANDOT generous with voices, emotions

"The Teatro Lirico production of Puccini's 'Turandot' had a generous display of voices and emotions. Roumen Doikov's Calaf was at the head of the list. The Bulgarian tenor looks young and eager, phrases with musical sensitivity and flaunts terrific high notes. The others were firmly on the plus side. Chinese soprano Qilian Chen, a sophisticated vocalist who securely perched series of radiant high pianissimos...made a sympathetic stage personality. AVaile Beckman...hurled out the top tones like firebombs. She also had good musical instincts and theatrical imagination; she attempted a characterization, which is more than most Turandot's do. The orchestra played with skill, enthusiasm and confidence born of lots of experience of 'Turandot.' The chorus poured out quality sound that joined with the orchestra to create a solid musical superstructure for the performance. High energy American conductor Joseph Illick was always there for his singers; both he and the players were attentive to the wonderful details of color and atmosphere in the scoring. The public got its money's worth. Beckmann and Doikov...were miles ahead of the last Met-touring cast. The audience loved it. Boston has been more than a decade without big opera and

uninhibited Italianate singing. Next season Teatro Lirico proposes longer runs for both 'Aida' and 'Nabucco.' If they do people will come."

BOSTON GLOBE — Richard Dyer — March 2000

Lirico's Turandot is a grand evening in small setting

"The Teatro Lirico D'Europa proved Monday night that it is possible to produce an opera as big as Puccini's 'Turandot' at the Emerson Majestic Theatre. With savvy and heart this European based touring company directed by Giorgio Lalov did itself proud in the best American "let's put on a show" tradition. Both Monday and Tuesday night performances were sold out in advance. There were people at the ticket entrance holding signs asking to purchase extra tickets, and one audience member reported hearing an offer of \$200. for one. Illick's orchestra played well, sometimes beautifully. Tenor Roumen Doikov gave the evening's finest performance as Calaf. His big sturdy voice grew in warmth throughout the opera...he didn't disappoint those who were in the audience mainly waiting for his hit tune, the aria, "Nessun dorma."Soprano AVaile Beckmann from Canada raised the roof-and peeled the paint-with a huge strident voice...and Chinese soprano Qilian Chen used intelligence and heavenly pianissimo...a performance of distinction. Lalov hopes to bring the company back to Boston next year. I'd get my tickets early if I were you."

BOSTON HERALD — T. J. Medrick — March 2000

BOSTON TURANDOT

"This company has been touring Europe for 14 years, giving thousands of performances with professional, grown up casts. Now on it's first American tour, TLD packed the Emerson Majestic with an audience hungry for old-fashioned, un gimmicky, pour your heart-out opera and delivered exactly what the audience wanted. Evocative sets filled the stage. The chorus was both vocally and dramatically impressive. The competent and enthusiastic musicians were led with zest and musical imagination by gifted, young Joseph Illick. Teatro Lirico's stage director, Giorgio Lalov who has sung at La Scala never left you in doubt about what was going on. Leslie Morgan who has sung the role with several regional opera companies and orchestras was an effective, neurotic Princess. The sturdy Doikov (Calaf) had a real tenor ring. The major crowd pleaser was Chinese Soprano Qilian Chen as the slave girl Liu. She acted with touching dignity and had more than a serviceable voice that was capable of scene-stealing high pianissimos. Teatro Lirico D'Europa promises to return to Boston next year with Verdi's 'Aida' and his rarely performed, utterly uninhibited third opera 'Nabucco.' People will be lining up early."

BOSTON PHOENIX — Lloyd Schwartz — March 2000

"Tamara Kutsenko, who took the role of Turandot in the Teatro Lirico D'Europa production Wednesday at the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, handled it as persuasively as anyone. Roumen Doikov sang Calaf with a bright, strong, Italianate tenor. Kenneithia Mitchell was a gentle, effective Liu. Conductor Krassimir Topolov kept the score moving briskly. The orchestra played with power."

LOS ANGELES TIMES – Chris Paslis, February 2001

Turandot provides a taste of real Italian culture

"The performance brought to life Puccini's beautiful music and the intriguing libretto. Tenor Roumen Doikov brought an almost athletic vigor to the role of Calaf and drew a standing ovation for his hearty rendering of 'Nessun dorma.' The best vocal performance may have been by Kenneithia Mitchell as Liu. Her voice doesn't cut through the airwaves. It gently separates them. Director Giorgio Lalov conveys the magical message of transformation in 'Turandot.' His staging makes it clear that not only must Calaf conquer Turandot, he must allow Turandot to conquer him to find mutual love. It's interesting that the program notes quote Joseph Campbell's "The Power of Myth" to elaborate on the libretto's themes of transformation."

THE DESERT SUN – Bruce Fessier – February 2001

Puccini's TURANDOT

"Some super singers! Oh those featured singers! Russian soprano Irina Bozhedomova and Bulgarian tenor Roumen Doikov could knock your socks off with their voices leaving you drooling at every sparing note. Bozhedomova's voice easily captured attention and her combination with Doikov was shattering. Kenneithia Mitchell sings Liu with a mellifluous, finely etched voice. The audience gave the players a rousing reception."

UTICA DISPATCH OBSERVER – Jonas Kover – February 2002

"The touring Teatro Lirico put on a solid, moving TURANDOT at Veterans Memorial Auditorium last night. Fans couldn't get enough of Roumen Doikov's soaring tenor. He got a huge ovation for his searing rendition of 'Nessun Dorma,' the heroic aria. Real artistry came from a young American soprano, Kenneithia Mitchell, as Liu who gave us a fleshed out character and managed to blend tenderness and defiance. As a vocalist she was stunning. Mitchell proved a master of the sweet caress. Teatro Lirico is one of the few touring companies that dares, or can afford to put on large scale operas."

PROVIDENCE JOURNAL – Channing Gray – February 2002

Turandot warms hearts of local opera buffs!

“Local opera buffs came out en masse Thursday to the Philharmonic Center. Teatro Lirico's full-scale production's clever sets beautifully evoked the royal palace pavilion — the Forbidden City in Peking. With its orchestra of 50 musicians, chorus of more than 40 trained singers, and soloists that have already launched international careers, Teatro Lirico successfully interpreted the work's legendary Chinese characters. Puccini's masterpiece is known as a soprano-killer, with the role of Turandot as difficult as Wagner's Isolde. Russian soprano Irina Bozhedomova's penetrating voice evoked just the right balance of fire and ice that the role requires. As Calaf, tenor Roumen Doikov is a find. His rich, vibrant voice filled the hall, and his famous aria, “Nessun Dorma,” aroused cheers and bravos from the audience from the sheer beauty of his voice. Another performer who was a favorite with the audience was the American soprano, Kenneithia Mitchell, who played Liu. It is no wonder she has won so many scholarships and awards. A performance that was certainly above average for a touring company.”

NAPLES DAILY NEWS — Corinne Dunne — February 2002

Teatro Lirico TURANDOT Entertains a Packed House!

“The Charleston Concert Association presented Teatro Lirico D'Europa's production of G. Puccini's ‘Turandot’ to a packed house on Thursday night. It is a feat itself to tour a fully staged production of Turandot’ with an orchestra of 50, a 40-voice chorus and massive sets, not to mention providing singers with the physical stamina to meet the vocal demands of the lead roles. The Teatro Lirico D'Europa has put together a production that is professional, credible and entertaining. The Turandot, Irina Bozhedomova, has a trumpet-like voice that cut through the house with ease. Her “In questa reggia” filled the house with icy fury. Roumen Doikov, Calaf, has a full, dramatic tenor voice that excited as well as also carrying in all his quiet moments. Kenneithia Mitchell as Liu possesses a lovely lyric voice. The orchestra conducted by Krassimir Topolov proved quite up to the task and the chorus sounded fully professional. The sets were attractive and highly functional and the performance moves at a good pace thanks to artistic/stage director Giorgio Lalov.”

CHARLESTON POST AND COURIER — Jenni Johnson — March 2002

“This TURANDOT is a very good production—even good to look at, efficient and smart. The orchestra glistened with color and the chorus resonated with power and bloodthirsty urgency. Doikov nailed “Nessun dorma,” threw his arms up in a victorious V, and brought down the house. As Calaf, he inhabits the role and is consistently believable. He's a generous and vivid singer. The 32-year-old Russian soprano, Irina Bozhedomova, has a firm, focused, sometimes even blazing voice, which the high tessitura of the title role

demands. Liu was the young Korean soprano Su-Jin Lee, who can pull her big voice back into the most delicate pianissimo. She has an expressive face too.”

BOSTON PHOENIX – Lloyd Schwartz – March 2002

Russian Soprano lifts stellar TURANDOT

“Wednesday night's TURANDOT is the best performance the Teatro Lirico D'Europa has brought us so far, better even than the production of this same opera two years ago. Irina Bozhedomova (Turandot) has an expressive theater face and the soprano has a fascinating voice with a girlish timbre she can shoot through a magnifying glass so that high notes burst into flame. She sings with imagination. Liu, the American soprano, Kenneithia Mitchell, offered a compelling contrast to Bozhedomova's voice. It is ample, warm and vibrant and she has the ability to perch a soft high note with perfect poise. Best of all, she suffuses every phrase she sings with emotion. The audience adored her. Roumen Doikov rose to the occasion, acting with concern and conviction, and singing with power, breadth of phrase, and passion. He concluded “Nessun dorma” with a sweeping vocal flourish and wide-flung arms, and the audience went crazy! The handsome production was spruced up, and the staging is the most persuasive work company director Giorgio Lalov has given us to date. The splendid chorus could have walked away with the show if Doikov, Mitchell and Bozhedomova hadn't been there.”

BOSTON GLOBE – Richard Dyer – March 2002

It's no riddle why TURANDOT is a treat!

“Puccini's TURANDOT was the opera that introduced Teatro Lirico D'Europa to Boston two years ago. Once again the Teatro Lirico proved that it's got exactly the kind of voices-and the kind of nerve-that make this difficult to cast opera really sing. Conductor Krassimir Topolov led a musically passionate performance with company stalwart tenor Roumen Doikov on hand as the exiled Calaf and two most promising young sopranos as the women vying for his affections. As the royal riddler, Russian soprano, Irina Bozhedomova, displayed an attractive stage presence and sang with a bright, surprisingly girlish tone. Her voice projected easily. She vividly conveyed the character's pride, fear, and finally love, through sensitive facial expressions. Doikov, of course, kept his head, and his splendid rendition of “Nessun dorma” brought down the house.”

BOSTON HERALD – T. J. Medrek – March 2002

TURANDOT, Another Great Catch for Portland Concert Association!

“The TURANDOT by Teatro Lirico D'Europa was one of the best touring shows brought to Merrill Auditorium... in terms of singing, staging and musical values. One doesn't usually find singers in a touring company that make the audience jump up and shout bravo but Teatro Lirico has found one in tenor Roumen Doikov who plays Prince Calaf. Soprano, Irina Bozhedomova was imposing as Princess Turandot but soprano, Su-Jin Lee, stole the show as the slave girl Liu. The sets were marvelous for a touring company. The orchestra was excellent in Puccini's difficult score. Merrill Auditorium was filled in spite of a sloppy spring snowstorm. The audience applauded individual arias and choruses and gave the company a long standing ovation at the final curtain.”

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD — Christopher Hyde — March 2002

CAST EQUAL TO THE CHALLENGE OF TURANDOT

“Turandot is grand opera with large — massive crowd scenes, exotic settings, heroic arias that require voices of steely brilliance. Gold Coast Opera (in collaboration with the touring company Teatro Lirico d'Europa) made a valiant effort to present Puccini's massive canvas and managed to field a cast that was equal to the challenge on January 22 at the Coral Springs Center for the Arts. The production offered some impressive vocalism. Victoria Litherland (a well traveled soprano who has sung leading roles at the New York's Metropolitan Opera) was every inch the imperious Princess Turandot, whose penalty is death for suitors who fail to solve her three riddles. By the final duet, her large dramatic voice unfurled lustrous vocalism, capped with thrilling high C's. As Liu Barbara Quintalini's sizable lyrico-spinto soprano embraced Puccini's vocal line with impassioned fervor, bringing great poignancy to Liu's death scene. As Prince Calaf, Gabriel Gonzales displayed an ardent lyric tenor with no sign of strain in the upper range. Nessun Dorma was sung with taste as well as passion. Dimiter Stantchev brought unusual stature to the often, innocuous role of Timur. Stantchev's dark Slavic bass (in the manner of Ivan Petrov and Boris Christoff) exalted in rotund declamation.”

SOUTHFLORIDA.COM — Lawrence Budmen — January 2007

“This "Turandot" produced by Teatro Lirico D'Europa, which has brought "Tosca," "The Marriage of Figaro" and other fine operas to Daytona Beach, went all out with glorious sets, lavish costumes, good casting and lively choreography and direction — not to mention the orchestra's rousing performance. Liu's arias in Act I, when she sings of her love for Calaf, and before her death in Act III were superb: rich, ringing, inspired. And the tenor brought the house down with his "Nessun dorma." "Turandot" left its audience delighted.”

DAYTONA BEACH NEWS JOURNAL — Laura Stewart — January 2007

“Turandot was FABULOUS!!!! The audience did not want to leave the theatre! They were so thrilled. We have many opera "buffs" and they all were raving. Many said they never had the opportunity to see Turandot live and were thrilled that they could see it in "their" theatre. Thank you (and Giorgio — who by the way is a hit at our dinners) for all you do to bring wonderful opera to the US.”

Jeanne Sigal — Garde Arts Center, New London, CT — February 2007

"Turandot" was Puccini's last opera, and his most fantastical. The story, like many fairy tales, is built around a princess with a problem. For Princess Turandot, daughter of the Chinese emperor, the problem is the rape and murder of a distant ancestor, another princess, which has left her (never mind how) with an implacable anger at men. Princes try for her hand and, when they fail to answer her riddles, find themselves headless. Enter Calaf, a prince in disguise, to break the ice princess's resistance and make her his bride. With its seamless construction and delicate Oriental touches, Puccini's score creates an atmosphere of myth and magic while advancing the emotional tale with great economy. The central love story is shrewdly interlaced with two subplots, one involving Calaf's father and the slave girl Liu, who have come to Peking looking for Calaf, and the other, the comic ministers of the executioner, Ping, Pang, and Pong. As a result, our attention moves back and forth between the simple, tender emotions of the secondary characters — affection, devotion, humor — and the mythical erotic duel of Calaf and Turandot.

“Teatro Lirico is a touring company that has visited Boston often since it began touring in the United States in 1998, after a decade in Europe. Founding director Giorgio Lalov imports an all-Bulgarian chorus and orchestra and hires most of his leading singers from the opera houses of Sofia and other eastern European capitals, which seem to be bursting with big voices.

Heroic ones are needed for Calaf and Turandot. The Bulgarian tenor Roumen Doikov as Calaf has a tenor of bronze, and uses it skillfully. He was not a romantic ideal; he wandered around the stage like a professional wrestler, challenging anyone to a fight. As Turandot, the Russian-born Olga Chernisheva is tall and achingly beautiful, with an appealing, dark-hued voice. It lacks the ideal sword-point gleam at the very top, but she managed the torturous high line and drew and kept your eye.

The Liu of Elena Razgulyaeva, another Russian, was touching and rose to tragic grandeur in her Act II confrontation with Turandot. Hristo Sarafov, Yuri Nikolov, and Georgi Dinev, as the comic ministers, were superb in their long Act II trio, sung before the curtain. Krassimir Topolov conducted with taut discipline. What more could one want? Teatro Lirico aims high, and comes very close to its mark.”

David Perkins — BOSTON GLOBE — February 2007

Turandot appropriately lavish

“Where sweet lovers come to die.” Now there’s a great definition of opera. Actually, it’s a line, translated from the Italian in Puccini’s “Turandot,” which was performed by the Teatro Lirico D’Europa on Tuesday night at Proctor’s Theatre. Love and death were in ample supply. It’s probably written down somewhere that the titular princess Turandot must sport a huge shining headdress and soprano Olga Chernisheva came well supplied, with about 10 inches of gold and rubies. But more importantly, any singer taking on the role must have strong high notes and plenty of power to sustain them.

Chernisheva was equipped there too. Tenor Roumen Doikov, too delivered the goods vocally, especially in the crowd-pleasing hit ‘Nessun Dorma.’ As Liu, soprano Elena Razgylyaeva confessed her anguished love with an unbridled and beautiful sound, pitch perfect in its legato soar upward. She was a soft counterpoint to Turandot’s severity. Ping, Pang and Pong gave the best ensemble performances of the evening. The orchestra was impressive in the exposed fanfares and thunderclaps of act two. Conductor Krassimir Topolov always kept Puccini’s pacing in full tilt.”

ALBANY TIMES UNION – Joseph Dalton – February 2007

“Teatro Lirico D’Europa presented Puccini’s final opera TURANDOT on Tuesday night at Proctor’s Theatre. There were many good things about the production. Tenor Roumen Doikov as Calaf, the prince showed solid stamina, projected with strength and thrilled the large crowd with the famous third act aria, “Nessun dorma.” As Princess TURANDOT, soprano Olga Chernisheva sang with intensity and forcefulness. Her voice was quite dramatic in its color. Dimiter Stantchev as Calaf’s father Timur had a resonant smooth bass that projected easily over the orchestra. Soprano Elena Razgylyaeva as Timur’s slave girl was fabulous. Her voice was of such clear purity and she sang with such immaculate phrasing, diction and superb control of her range that her two big arias didn’t seem enough. She was also the best actress. Costumes in the royal court were appropriately ornate in a palette of ivory, coral and blues. And the dragon scrim was terrific. The orchestra under Krassimir Topolov was energetic.”

SCHENECTADY GAZETTE – Geraldine Freedman – February 2007

TURANDOT at Rockford’s Coronado Theatre

“The opera was simply wonderful. The singing was wonderful, the sets and costumes were wonderful, and your company is gracious and lovely to work with. We look forward to future engagements. THANK YOU.”

Mary Ann Smith – Coronado Theatre, Rockford, IL – February 2007

“Turandot was Puccini's final opera, and, appropriately, the final operatic performance by Teatro Lirico d'Europa this season at the Blanche Touhill Performing Arts Center. After having seen all three of the productions-Madama Butterfly, Lucia di Lammermoor and Turandot-I was most impressed and overwhelmed with Turandot. From its gorgeous and vivid performances to the beautifully detailed set, Turandot was a stunning spectacle and a captivating emotional experience. This production of Turandot featured breathtaking and passionate performances by its entire cast. In particular, Soprano Olga Chernisheva gave a strong, vibrant performance as the cold Turandot. Her physicality and facial expressions were honest and colorful, and her voice a myriad of melodic sounds and strong emotions. Rouman Doikov provided Prince Calaf with a strong, vibrant voice, rich in texture and powerful in emotion. His egotism and self-confidence command the whole stage, giving the role a powerful and engaging quality.

Visually, Turandot was spectacular. The costumes were colorful, vibrant, and added a gorgeous contrast to the beautiful set design. The lavish set featured a beautiful scrim painting of a Chinese village, along with a striking palace that boasted incredible detail and even more luminous colors. The lighting effects were also noteworthy; various light changes and the use of colored lighting thoroughly set the mood throughout the performance. In particular, the use of a red spot to draw attention to the executioner was solemn and especially effective in setting the appropriate mood.”

www.kdhx.org – Kelly Levins – Moore – February 2007

“Great performance of TURANDOT. Great cast. George Klauss from the Opera Guild called to specifically comment on how much he enjoyed the production. Looking forward to Boheme next season! Cheers!”

Mitchell Gershenfeld – Director of Pres. and Theater Ops – McCallum Theatre, Palm Desert, CA

“Thanks! TURANDOT and Great Moments were well received! All of my donors will support again next year.”

Kris Sabel, Vilar Performing Arts Center, Vail, CO – February 2011

“We really enjoyed the performances. TURANDOT was wonderful. Also the music from the Opera Gala was incredibly beautiful. Your crew and performers are very polite and wonderful people and we look forward to their visit every year. Thanks for continuously providing GREAT shows!! Take care until next year!”

Kim Hannold, Vilar Performing Arts Center, Vail, CO – February 2011

"I wanted to tell you how gracious all of the singers and instrumentalists were to me. (TURANDOT) I'm sure that they were nervous about having someone new leading them with so little pre-concert contact. I would appreciate it if you would pass these sentiments onto the company. I attended a fundraising event yesterday and received dozens of positive comments from people that were in the audience. It's a pity that we really don't have press here. You certainly would have gotten some good quotes. Anyway, thank you for letting me step in for this performance. I had a lot of fun."

***Maestro, Jeffrey Rink – Performance of TURANDOT in Niceville, FL
Matty Kelly Performing Arts Center – February 2011***

ABOUT TURANDOT

'Thanks!! Loved the leads...Orchestra was great. The aria (Nessun Dorma) was worth the price of admission. Female leads were super. I got many good comments from my audience."

Clifford D. Herron, Ph.D., GM – Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Niceville, FL – January 2011

"Astonishing is the word that comes to mind. For a touring company to mount such a sublime production of TURANDOT, replete with powerful and beautiful singing, effective staging and a fine orchestra and chorus—well, as I said, that's astonishing. Our audience loved it. I wish you could have been here to witness the standing ovation, the bravos and bravas. I can honestly say that in the years we have hosted Teatro Lirico productions we have steadily built an audience for opera which historically has not been part of the musical geography here. As for the reception—that was wonderful. Thanks to Giorgio and the cast members who participated, especially the "three tenors" who absolutely wowed the dinner guests. Your performers are interesting and friendly people who mixed with the crowd and related with them genuinely and warmly. It was a magical evening. Thanks to you for setting it up for us."

Bob Borich – Panama City Music Association – January 2011

"We had a record number of attendees (for TURANDOT)!!!

Renee Page – Marketing Director – Sunrise Theatre, Ft. Pierce, FL – January 2011

"The show (TURANDOT) was wonderful. Great casting!!

Milt Russos, GM – The Artist Series – Jacksonville, FL – March 2011

"TURANDOT was fabulous! Extremely well done and the audience could not get enough (LONG standing ovation with an extended curtain call). Bravo! Simon Kyung Lee did a superb job with the aria "Nessun dorma". Applause was heard before he finished! The orchestra and singers were on their mark yesterday. Also, thank you for having some of the principals join our reception following the opera. It was a nice way for our loyal members to show their appreciation to your artists for their talents. We have already begun selling pre-season tickets to next years performances. Everyone is excited about La Traviata on February 5th. Thank you again for a wonderful performance! Bravo!"

Christine Parent — OPERA NEW HAMPSHIRE — presenter of this performance of Teatro Lirico at Palace Theatre, Manchester, NH — March 6, 2011

TURANDOT went really well! Milt Russos was there for the performance as was Karen Longacre & several other staff members. Everyone has offered rave reviews.

Kellie Cosner — Event Coordinator, The Artist Series — Jacksonville, FL — March 2011

Puccini — MADAMA BUTTERFLY

PUCCINI'S MADAMA BUTTEFLY DELIGHTS TOUHILL AUDIENCE

"Puccini's opera "Madame Butterfly" was performed in front of a sold-out audience at the Touhill Performing Arts Center on Saturday night by Teatro Lirico d'Europa, a European opera touring company formed in 1988 by Giorgio Lalov. The company is scheduled to make 80 performances of opera this season in the U.S. The backdrop of the piece was contemporary Japan. The songs, lighting, characters, plot and musical accompaniment intermingle to keep the audience on the edge of their seats waiting to know what will happen to poor Cio-cio-san. After the first act is finished, Cio-cio-san has officially been married for many years and is living with her child Sorrow, played by Christian Lalov. Pinkerton has been away and everyone is awaiting his return. This is where Cio-cio-san (soprano, Victoria Litherland) commands the stage and reveals the many emotions of a woman who is torn between truth and lies, reality and fantasy, love and death. She sings about living in disgrace or ending the pain with death. She also sings in hopes of Pinkerton's return and how she cannot wait to see her husband. Her deliveries of these dichotomy-like emotions are extreme, yet accurate. They truly conveyed the feelings of a person torn between optimism and pessimism. She eventually commits suicide upon the return of her husband, who has married back in the Americas. Mrs. Pinkerton, played by Vesselina Ponorska, accompanies Pinkerton back to his home in Japan. All of Cio-cio-san's fears come to the surface and she kills herself after running everyone off so she can be

alone. The opera ended to standing ovations as the audience was moved by this stellar performance."

Myron McNeill—THE CURRENT, St. Louis, MO — November 2006

MADAMA BUTTERFLY — St. George, Utah — October 2006

"Madama Butterfly opened our season this year and what an opening! We had a full house both nights and the audience couldn't seem to get enough of them. I've gotten so many compliments on their terrific performance, what a way to begin the season, huh? I'm still floating. Victoria was outstanding! Not only is she a superb soprano and a good actress, she is also kind and accommodating. Both she and Giorgio attended the luncheon yesterday and those in attendance loved them! It was because of Victoria that our little three — year old was able to do so well on stage. The child's mother said that she was not afraid of going on stage because of the loving way Victoria treated her. And, speaking of Giorgio, he is fantastic. Over the 21 years I've been doing this, there are some managers who are difficult and disagreeable and it creates a situation where I won't book an artist on a return engagement (no matter how good) because of the manager or tour director. BUT you couldn't get better than Giorgio. He is very professional and seems to work without a stressful ruffle. He does an outstanding job. There weren't any problems. It seemed to go off without a hitch. After the concert last night I didn't get back stage to thank them. Would you please convey my deepest gratitude to all of them and especially Victoria and Giorgio? Thank you too, Jenny, for all you do to make this a success. We all profit from it. I look forward to next season."

Gail Bunker — Celebrity Concert Series — Cox Performing Arts Center, St. George, Utah

Teatro Lirico Singer Flutters through BUTTERFLY!

"A heartbreaking Cio-Cio-San. That's exactly what Teatro Lirico D'Europa offered in Qilian Chen who sang the title role. With her radiant smile and demeanor, Chen easily evoked the idealistic, trusting 15 — year old geisha who marries the cad Pinkerton. Chen was up to revealing the levels of tragedy. She went the marathon distance with strength and dignity and with subtle and affecting phrasing. She carried the opera to its triumphant conclusion."

LOS ANGELES TIMES — Chris Pasles — February 2002

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa tours with a 50-piece orchestra and 40-voice chorus plus all the sets and costumes necessary to present grand opera in a stylish, very European way. The success of 'Madama Butterfly' rises and falls with the title role. Soprano, Su-Jin Lee did not

disappoint, offering as dramatic a rendering of Cio-cio-san as might be imagined with her seamless, powerful voice and suavely elegant acting style. Roumen Doikov's sharply focused tenor voice allowed his singing to project above the orchestra's commanding presence. Nicolai Dobrev's Sharpless was a musical triumph. Elena Marinova portrayed the role of Suzuki with grace and beauty, blending magnificently with Su-Jin Lee. The solid performances of the orchestra along with compelling performances in all the supporting roles gave this production a musical polish that would grace any stage in the world."

THE TRIBUNE (San Luis Obispo, CA) – Alan Boehmer – February 2002

Madama BUTTERFLY at Stanley's

"Su-Jin Lee as the ill-fated Cio-cio-san sang the role of the teen lover with stunning voice and astute dramatics. Lee used her high lyric soprano to etch the sorrowful wails of an unfortunate love. Besides her gripping vocals, Lee also captured the soul of the girl and the roller coaster of emotions in her every gesture. The audience gave the cast a rousing reception at the finale."

UTICA DISPATCH OBSERVER – Jonas Kovan – February 2003

A Magnificent Madama BUTTERFLY

"Su-Jin Lee was most convincing as Cio-cio-san. It's rare to see such fine acting ability, combined with magnificent vocal cords. Act II, perhaps had the finest singing, notably "Un bel di vedremo" and the flower duet with Elena Marinova as Suzuki, who captured the emotions of every moment before her mistress experienced them. Lee rose above the pack. The suicide scene was heart-rending. The opera was well produced, as indicated by the attention and extraordinary quiet of the audience. Sets were simple yet effective, lighting was extremely well done; costumes were attractive and reflected the period Puccini intended. The orchestra deserves high praise for its sound and conductor Krassimir Topolov did a superb job. Roumen Doikov as Pinkerton and Nicolai Dobrev as Sharpless sang very well. The chorus sounded great. This is a first class organization. Let's hope for a return."

THE STAR (Chicago Heights) – D. J. Luksetich – March 2003

Lirico's BUTTERFLY: All Things Bright and Beautiful!

"It's not often that Boston — or any town — hears a BUTTERFLY on the order of Korean soprano — Su-Jin Lee: her voice was almost too big for Jordan Hall, but it remained full and rich at the top, the aural equivalent of a room full of cherry blossoms. She also has the most radiant smile. Her characterization was superb. Mexican tenor, Gabrielle Gonzales, brought a rich voice and stock-but sensitive characterization to Pinkerton. Ted Lambrinos was more

nuanced as Sharpless, whose face registered increasing shades of dismay as Pinkerton contemplated the joys of "Japanese marriage." The chorus sang sumptuously and the orchestra gave Puccini's score both physical and emotional weight."

BOSTON PHOENIX — Jeffrey Gantz — March 2003

Heroine Gives Wings to Touring BUTTERFLY!

"Korean soprano Su-Jin Lee was the compelling focus of the action Saturday night as Teatro Lirico D'Europa brought its BUTTERFLY to the Kravis Center. Lee was a persuasive Cio-cio-san, gifted with a strong, rather dark voice, that held up well throughout the evening and that ably covered the gamut from awakening passion to bleak despair. Just as comprehensive was her acting range. She inhabits the part completely. Italian tenor, Maurizio Graziani, was a good Pinkerton with a pleasing, soft edged lyric tenor that blended suavely with Lee in the big love duet that closes Act I. There was fine singing also from the American baritone Theodore Lambrinos as Sharpless, and Elena Marinova, as Suzuki, who was at her best in the Act II flower Duet. Teatro Lirico's orchestra acquitted itself well and conductor Krassimir Topolov proved to be a sensitive accompanist. A 'Butterfly' well worth seeing, especially for its lead soprano, whose Cio-cio-san came through much as Puccini would have liked, as a real flesh and blood person with whom the audience can deeply empathize."

PALM BEACH POST — Greg Stepanich — November 2003

In search of the perfect Butterfly, we found her.

This "Butterfly" wows Boston audience with a stunning performance that is the essence of pure vocal and visual artistry. "It gives me chills when done right, and I got that chill Sunday afternoon — still do as I write this review. It's the romantic in me. Puccini's opera "Madama Butterfly" wowed its Boston audience with a stunning performance by soprano Olga Chernisheva in the title role of Cio-cio-san when it played to a packed house at the Cutler Majestic on March 4, 2007. Too bad there was only one performance. Ms. Chernisheva gave a performance that was simply spectacular. Her romantic "Vogliatemi bene" with amazing tenor Orlin Goranov, who also sang the part of Rodolfo in Friday's "Boheme," is all the more reason to be amazed. This is what brings people to the opera, and if the buzz at intermission is any indication of whether the sentiments expressed herein are representative of the vast majority of the audience in attendance on Sunday, this performance would have to be rated one of the best in quite a while. Ms. Chernisheva is a fit, youthful looking and very attractive Butterfly — not 15, but as one member of the audience remarked, "It's nice not to have to see an overweight sixty year old trying to sing the role." Well said. Another member of the audience who plays with the Boston Symphony remarked how impressed he was with the stamina of the orchestra and singers who, he too,

saw on the same stage Friday evening. As for Mr. Goranov's performance, we can only add, Bravo! His performance as B.F. Pinkerton was crisp, his voice clear and strong throughout, and his stage presence was commanding, as was the vocal and physical performance of baritone Gary Simpson, who sang the role of U.S. Consul in Nagasaki. Singing the role of Suzuki, the maid to Butterfly, was Bulgarian mezzo-soprano Viara Zhelezova, another Teatro cast regular and entirely dependable vocal talent in this remarkable and busy traveling ensemble of talents. Two other worthy performances that must be mentioned here are: Giorgio Dinef, who sang the marriage broker, Goro in a wonderfully animated and natural manner; and bass Vladimir Hristov, who sang the role of The Bonze, a Buddhist priest and Butterfly's uncle, which he sang and played regally. Well done! A "tip-of-the hat" also must go to the chorus. In Butterfly, I always await the procession song, "Ecco, Son giunte al sommo del pendio," which has to be one of the most beautiful procession songs in all of opera. Here it was done to perfection, with a wonderful display of color and superb vocal beauty. In this production, the scenery by Vailntin Topencharov was colorful and realistic and the lighting by Gueorgui Bojukliev was effective and imaginative. Nicely done on both counts. I was moved by this production as was the audience and fully involved in the life of this remarkable Butterfly, which says a lot. Brava Ms. Chernisheva."

OPERAONLINE.US — Paul Walkowski — March 2007

NOTE FROM ADMINISTRATION — Majestic Theatre, Boston — March 2007

"We really had a very positive response from patrons. One man came up to the window and said that Saturday night was the most expressive version of Carmen he'd ever seen. Another woman came to all four performances and said she'd had a great weekend. People leaving last night were commenting on what a wonderful evening the concert provided. I had a couple of patrons tell me they were planning to drop their other opera subscription and subscribe to Teatro Lirico because the other company did Butterfly as well and thought yours was better in every aspect. Congratulations!"

Christina Harrington — Cutler Majestic Theatre at Emerson College, Boston, MA

HANKIES WERE OUT FOR FINE BUTTERFLY

"The Teatro Lirico D'Europa production of "Madama Butterfly" at Merrill Auditorium Wednesday night successfully emphasized the emotional aspects of what is already a tear-jerker of an opera, to the extent that Orlin Goranov, who played Lieutenant Pinkerton, got a few boos (for the role, not his excellent performance) during the standing ovation that followed. The large audience was absorbed in the tragic story, as well as Puccini's lovely and sometimes authentically Japanese music. Actually, baritone Gary Simpson, who plays the sympathetic U.S. Consul Sharpless, half in love with Cio-cio-san (Madame Butterfly)

himself, seemed to receive even louder applause than the rotten Pinkerton. Artistic and stage director Giorgio Lalov makes Sharpless even more lovable than he usually is, implying, for example, that the consul is paying Cio-cio-san's rent after her desertion by Pinkerton. In the opening scene, Pinkerton is all in white, while Sharpless, who tries to warn him about trifling with Madame Butterfly's affections, is in black. By the end of the opera, Pinkerton is in his dress blues, darker than Sharpless' suit. The opera was well sung and acted throughout, especially by Olga Chernisheva in the demanding role of Cio-cio-san, in which she hardly ever leaves the stage after her first appearance with the wedding party. As staged, the running together of the second and third acts, without intermission, made the opera seem a bit too long, especially at the heightened state of emotion it generates. The audience needs at least a slight break to get dry handkerchiefs. There is some comic relief, in the antics of the marriage broker Goro (Giorgio Dinef) and the hapless suitor Prince Yamadori (Hristo Sarafov), who manages to convey moral deformity by the physical curling up of his fingers. For the lovers of orchestral music in the audience, Puccini has a great deal of fun with the American national anthem, which appears at appropriate and inappropriate moments throughout the opera. He also endeavors to imitate Japanese musical forms and, I believe, even the bamboo flute known as the Shukahachi. The live Sofia Symphony Orchestra, under Krassimir Topolov, played the score sensitively and with understanding. The sets and costumes were also well done, especially for a road show. The paper house and garden overlooking the bay are settings where one can actually imagine living happily ever after. And the super-titles were both well written and understated.”

Christopher Hyde — Portland Press Herald — March 2007

Madama Butterfly — Teatro Lirico d'Europa — Cutler Majestic Theatre, Boston

Teatro Lirico D'Europa brought "Butterfly" to the Cutler Majestic Theatre on Friday in a traditional production that combined its wonderful, big-voiced singers who made the most of Puccini's soaring melodies and shrewd sense of dramatic pacing. The big moments never failed to hit their mark. I heard the first snuffles, as I usually do, when Cio-Cio-San rushes offstage and brings out, for the first time, her half-American child.

In the title role, Russian-born soprano Olga Chernisheva looked beautiful, and moved gracefully. She had plenty of volume, and topped her entrance with a soft, easy C-sharp. She was dignified and strong in her final moments. As Pinkerton, Bulgarian tenor Orlin Goranov was vocally splendid. He cleaved the house with his high notes, and yet was capable of beautiful soft singing, too. The smaller roles were well sung, especially Viara Zhelezova's warm-voiced Suzuki.

David Perkins — BOSTON GLOBE — October 2007

Jacksonville, FL BUTTERFLY — November 2007

The Soprano was wonderful — what a voice and she was also a great actress. Standing ovation. I thought all of the principals were excellent. She was also wonderful with the child! We all tend to forget how intimidating being on the stage can be for a child, but Ms. Esperian took the child in her arms when introduced and held her. Obviously she knew just what to do to put the child at ease. Giorgio also did another wonderful presentation — maybe one of the best yet! Thanks Again!!

Milton A. Russos
Executive Director — FCCJ Artist Series — Jacksonville, FL

Note from GM of Newberry Opera House, SC about BUTTERFLY — January 2008

It was wonderful, thank you so much. Your folks were fantastic and the crew very easy to work with and very professional. Butterfly herself was just gorgeous, a lovely voice — nothing but great comments from the audience! Please come back next year.

Deborah Smith, GM
Newberry Opera House, Newberry, SC

BUTTERFLY in Clearwater, FL — January 2008

What a night!!!!!! Thank you and Giorgio so much. Performance was wonderful. Orchestra. Singers. Set design. We did 1460. Thanks again. Talk to you soon!

Bobby Rossi
Director of Entertainment
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, Florida

Gold Coast Opera: Madama Butterfly, a review

In recent seasons Gold Coast Opera has formed a working relationship with Teatro Lirico D'Europa. On February 19 Cavendish led Puccini's Madama Butterfly at the Coral Springs Center for the Arts. A strongly cast, intelligently conceived production offered a compelling evening of Music Theater. Teatro Lirico founder Giorgio Lalov's direction was straightforward, moving the drama toward its final inevitable tragedy with a minimum of artifice. Vailntin Topencharov' set emphasized simple, clean lines that suggested a garden and hilly path next to the heroine' s house. His multi-hued costumes filled the stage with color, an eye catching wedding gown rich in blends of white and yellow pastels. Elena Razgylaeva embodied the heroine Cio-Cio-San Her gleaming lyrico-spinto soprano is effortlessly produced. Cio-Cio-San' s treacherously difficult entrance aria was capped by a fearless high C. A consummate singing actress, Razgylaeva turned Un bel di into a dramatic declaration of faith rather than mere vocal display. Her agitated death scene

proved a final musico-dramatic tour de force. Razgylaeva encompassed the heroine's emotional spectrum in a radiant vocal palette that could ring out in fury and rhapsodize in romantic ecstasy.

Lawrence Budmen — South Florida Sun-Sentinel — February 2008

TEATRO'S BUTTERFLY HAS WINGS — Naples, FL — March 2008

'Madama Butterfly' was the first opera I ever saw. I was 11 years. Five Butterflies later, an outstanding production will send me out of the theater muttering the same thing. So the Teatro Lirico d'Europa performance at the Philharmonic Center for the Arts Monday night earned my highest praise. "Madama Butterfly" ranks on Opera America's list as the all-time most performed operas here.

The dew points in "Madama Butterfly" are as plentiful as its musical zeniths. Teatro's artistic director, Giorgio Lalov, has wisely cast it with acting as well as vocal strength. Foremost is Olga Chernisheva, a Cio-Cio-San of vast range. Chernisheva develops Butterfly skillfully from blushing 15-year-old — a coy bride in denial that she is rented — to a resolute matriarch, determined to keep her loyalty, and in the end, her honor.

There are few moments when Chernisheva isn't on stage and singing, yet she is the heroine to the end. She refuses to showboat (Brava, Butterfly!) on the famous "Un bel di (One fine day)." She harmonizes as beautifully with Suzuki in their "Flower Duet" as she does on her wedding night with Pinkerton in a thrilling "Viene la sera (Evening is falling)."

Orlin Goranov is her vocal match as the shallow Lt. B.F. Pinkerton, who rents his wife as facilely as he rents their wedding home. Goranov's tenor is astoundingly melodic, powerful and emotional. Plamen Dimitrov made his debut as Sharpless, the emasculated American consul, and he has a good feel for his role and a warm baritone voice. The background star of the production is Viara Zhelezova — a strong, supportive mezzo who played the loyal Suzuki with blend of ferocity and wisdom. Vladimir Hristov worked a trio of supporting roles, including that of the oily marriage broker, with relish.

The Naples Philharmonic is developing a potential second career as opera orchestra, sparkling in its performance of MADAMA BUTTERFLY Monday under Joe Mechavic who has complete command of the synergy between orchestra and singer. It was wonderful. It was awful. I never want to see it again.

NAPLES DAILY NEWS — Harriet Heithaus — March 2008

The show (MADAMA BUTTERFLY) was FABULOUS! The cast was sweet and wonderful and Hilda was brilliant! The little boy we chose was terrific and we heard AMAZING feedback from the audience. BRAVO!!!! This was an excellent company and very kind and

considerate too. It's so wonderful to work with nice people. Not everyone is as nice or as accommodating as you are. Once again, we had a great time on Sunday and the cast (and orchestra) was outstanding.

Susan Agin
Managing and Artistic Director
Queensborough Performing Arts Center
October 2010

BRAVO! It was a wonderful production of Madama Butterfly. The set was well done and the lighting dramatized the changing seasons, transcending the audience of Madama Butterfly's small house in Japan. In general, the principals were tremendous and I had a few opera aficionados seek me out to mention that they enjoyed the main characters immensely...and the applause was loud! The orchestra played well. There are some wonderful melodies throughout the performance and they really did a good job. The one that comes to mind is the music between the transition in Act 2, during the vigil. Your group did a wonderful job with our second grader that was playing Sorrow. He was very nervous but a cute addition to the evening.

Christine Parent, President, Board of Directors

The audience (for MADAMA BUTTERFLY) was very enthusiastic. It was a wonderful performance, and everyone loved it. Hilda was brilliant, and she was so sweet with my little grandson. Hilda was flawless and Pinkerton stole my heart. Thank you for sending us such a great production.

Lillian Harder
Brooks Center for the Performing Arts, Clemson University
October 2010

We are thrilled by last night! (MADAMA BUTTERFLY) The soprano was so strong and beautiful. Pinkerton's voice was beautiful. The audience loved the opera and we are competing with the MET simulcasts at the same university...

June Davis, Marketing Wilmington Concert Series
Keenan Auditorium, Wilmington, NC – October 2010

The Opera (MADAMA BUTTERFLY) was passionate, charming and wonderful! Standing ovation lasted five minutes at least. Job well done!

Risa Kell, GM -Wilmington Concert Series – October 2010

Opera NH — October 2010

The opera (MADAMA BUTTERFLY) was wonderful — your Butterfly (who John and I love) gave me chills the minute she started singing. I think that it was the longest standing ovation I have ever witnessed at one of our operas! Can't wait to see one of my top 3 favorites — Turandot!

*Richard Bojko
Former President BOD, Opera New Hampshire — October 2010*

The opera was fantastic! Patrons were raving about how wonderful Madama Butterfly was. A long time opera patron wants to start a "Friends of the Opera." We also had 38 students from the Middle School across the street from the theatre and they loved... loved...loved it! A lovely evening was had by all.

Jeanne Sigel, Development/Marketing, Garde Arts Center, New London, CT, October 2010

Teatro Lirico BUTTERFLY November 2010

Teatro Lirico D'Europa's MADAMA BUTTERFLY received a deserved standing ovation at the Garde Arts Center, New London, CT last night. Artistic Director Giorgio Lalov scored another triumph with smooth stage direction showing character and motivation very well, excellent costume design with beautiful, colorful kimonos, and set design with a an effective screened house—all credited to Lalov. The vocal star, appropriately, was Elena Razgylaeva a TLE soloist since 2006, in the title role. Her pure, beautiful voice, a bit more lirico than spinto, handled every note perfectly, with excellent phrasing. She movingly portrayed Butterfly's hope in a lovely and exciting "Un bel di," her relations with Sharpless and Yamadori in Act II, and her tragic determination at the end. She was so physically gorgeous that one faulted Pinkerton for choosing Veselina Ponorska's rather hefty Kate as well as for his abandonment. She almost looked 15 years old in the first act, and for that but especially for voice and acting, Razgylaeva was just about the best Butterfly I've heard and seen. Viara Zhelezova also sang Suzuki with a clear, strong voice and gave a fine sense of Suzuki's combination of strong support and vulnerability. Orlin Goranov sang well enough as Pinkerton, with some fine high notes. TLE regular Hristo Sarafov sang Yamadori strongly and looked aptly older. Plamen Dimitrov was a rich-voiced, well-acted Sharpless. The local girl En-Hua C. Holtz, of Chinese descent, looked perfect as Dolore, smiled appealingly throughout, and related to the other characters very well. This was her first public performance TLE's staple conductor Krassimir Topolov led a well-coordinated performance with good sound from the TLE orchestra. I recommend this BUTTERFLY, which will travel to other cities.

John Deredita -OPERAMUSICBROADCAST.COM

All I can say is "BRAVO!" Thank You, Thank you! Our audience loved Madama Butterfly! Madama Butterfly played to a near sell out crowd on Saturday night. The professional touring group of nearly 70 singers, musicians and crew from all over the world brought our audience to their feet. Edgerton's own 4 year old, Madeleine Goetsch played the role of Sorrow. We had a benefactor who purchased 33 tickets at \$30 each and gave them to the high school for students to attend. I am happy to let you know that all students were in attendance even though the Green Bay Packers were playing a play off game for the Super Bowl at the same time as our performance. I received this message from one of our Teachers this morning: One student told me this morning that she begged and begged to go. Finally her mom said yes. She loved the whole opera and said, "That was beautiful. The music — everything. I was in tears so many times, especially because there were these little funny parts — that just made the whole thing even more real and sad.

*Paul M. Tropp, EPAC Coordinator
Edgerton Performing Arts Center, Edgerton, WI — January 2011*

There are no words to truly describe the incredible performance of Madama Butterfly last night. When the curtain went up on that beautiful set and costumes, you just knew you were about to experience something truly special, and we did. The voices came from God above, what blessed people we are to have such talent in our midst. What is so special about your company is not only the talent of your performers and creative staff, but the friendliness and caring of everyone, this was so evident in the treatment of our little "Sorrow" Pearson Hafer, whose Daddy is stationed in Afghanistan, but because of the kindness and patience of your performers we able to send many photo's that were shown around the soldiers posted with him. Thank you so much to everyone involved.

Maureen Jones

Warfield Concerts — Helena, AR — January 2011

MADAMA BUTTERFLY closed our 59th season and we couldn't have wished for a better finale. The cast was superb. Hilda Ramos as Cio-Cio San and Orlin Goranov as Pinkerton were spectacular. In addition to their exceptional vocal skills, they were excellent actors. Ms. Ramos was the perfect Butterfly and many in the audience were weeping at the end of the tragic love story. Teatro Lirico D'Europa has delivered yet another remarkable opera and we can't wait until next year's DON GIOVANNI. Thank you for bringing such wonderful opera to Daytona Beach.

Carol Anderson, GM, Daytona Beach Symphony Society, March 2011

MADAMA BUTTERFLY was very good. It was well received and the audience loved it.

John Wilkes – Sunrise Theatre, Ft. Pierce, FL – March 2011

Bravo! Bravo to Teatro Lirico D'Europa for your wonderful Madama Butterfly! Your international cast sang their hearts out and truly represented the best in international opera talent. Hilda Ramos was thrilling in her portrayal of Madama Butterfly and her voice was exquisite. Sets and costumes were beautiful! Your worldwide cast brought opera lovers to their feet in in Columbia, South Carolina!

It was truly a magical night and we heard nothing but rave reviews. A sampling: "Fabulous!...the best Butterfly I've seen in 30 years, and I've seen Butterfly all over the world!" "Hilda Ramos' voice soared...exquisite!" "...sets and costumes were beautiful!!!" "The music...everything..was wonderful!" "All the soloists were outstanding!" "From now on, in Columbia, Madama Butterfly will undoubtedly belong to Teatro Lirico D'Europa." Thank you, Giorgio and Jenny.

***Kathy Newman, Chair
The Palmetto Opera, Columbia, SC, May 2011***

Both opera fans and newcomers alike were enchanted by Teatro Lirico's breathtaking performance of Madama Butterfly. The cast won over the entire audience with their totally entertaining presentation of Puccini's opera, as evidenced by standing ovations at both performances. Special kudos to the beautiful and gifted Hilda Ramos, who displayed not only an amazing vocal virtuosity but also exceptional acting skills in her sensitive and utterly believable portrayal of Madama Butterfly.

***Tish Lowe, Pаметto Opera Board
The Palmetto Opera Board of Directors, Columbia, SC***

I know "rave reviews" will burst forth from all around our board room table when we meet. Meanwhile, from my viewpoint... the Butterfly I saw on Friday night and Sunday afternoon was THE ABSOLUTE BEST operatic performance I've ever seen in Columbia, and can compare favorably to operas seen in London, Paris, Trieste, New York. The setting of Drayton Hall was perfectly geared to the sets, voices and drama on stage. All facets of the production were first rate, and Butterfly herself was captivating and enchanting in every way. The whole experience takes local opera to a whole new level.

Lee Minghi – Board Member , The Palmetto Opera

The Board know and understand the tremendous effort it took to pull this MADAMA BUTTERFLY off. There is no doubt that this has been a monumental undertaking for our opera company or that it has been a monumental success. We have not only had nothing but rave reviews for the performance, we have had long-time opera aficionados tell us that they have seen Madama Butterfly all over the world and this was without a doubt the best. We have also had significant contributions to Palmetto Opera SINCE the performance. Everyone wants more.

Kathy Newman – The Palmetto Opera

I've attended well over a hundred operas in such venues as New York, London, Chicago, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Seattle, Charlotte and even Flagstaff and many others, but I've never encountered a performance surpassing that (MADAMA BUTTERFLY) in Columbia Sunday afternoon. The staging, orchestra, and singers were all superb, and the presentation benefited greatly from the intimate auditorium. All involved are to be highly commended.

Bob Robinson – Board of directors of The Palmetto Opera

Just wanted to drop you a line to let you know how much my husband, Eddie and I enjoyed the performance of Madama Butterfly on Sunday afternoon. It was my first attendance at an opera and I was captivated by the music, the story-line, the voices, the acting, the costumes, the stage setting, etc. In preparation, I had read about the plot to better appreciate the show. We sat in the third row in the theatre and had a great view of the actors/singers who put their heart and soul into their performance. We look forward to attending future opera productions.

Sandy Stern – Hilton Head, SC

Jenny and Giorgio, our marketing (for MADAMA BUTTERFLY) resulted in drawing people statewide and even from North Carolina to the performance. There are quite a lot of opera lovers in Hilton Head, for example, and as a result of Madama Butterfly we have the opportunity to establish strong ties with them. I expect that at our next performance many seats will be held by residents throughout SC and other states-including Hilton Head. Our marketing strategy calls for increased statewide advertising. In case I haven't said it enough, thank you for what you are doing to make opera a true cultural option in SC.

Kathy Newman – The Palmetto Opera

Madama Butterfly was fabulous and a big hit with our audience. Butterfly (Hilda Ramos) was outstanding and what a voice! Thanks for such a great show!

David Nyden — Heritage Theatre — Cedar City, UT — February 2013

HERITAGE THEATRE, Cedar City, UT — February 2013

Both of the shows MADAMA BUTTERFLY and GREAT MOMENTS IN OPERA were wonderful and very well received. We so appreciate being able to bring Teatro Lirico to our community. And because we've been doing it consistently for so many years we have a family of fans and donors who feel a real connection to the company.

*Kris Sabel, Executive Director — Vail Valley Foundation/Vilar Performing Arts Center
Performing of Great Moments in Opera and MADAMA BUTTERFLY — February 2013*

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David Nyden — HERITAGE THEATRE, Cedar City, UT — February 2013

"I've heard nothing but wonderful things about the opera (MADAMA BUTTERLY)! I'll send you photos soon!"

Micah Decker, Office Manager — Newberry Opera House, Newberry, SC — January 26, 2016

"BRAVO! It was a beautiful production that moved me to tears. Every performer was magnificent. Personally, I have worked here for many years and have never gone backstage during a production. Meeting Madama Butterfly and then seeing her on stage! I will remember always. 3 other attendees feedback:

1. The local child's family had never seen an opera. They loved it, and Kendalyn, the child, had a wonderful experience.

2. Our director of development's wife came with friends and raved about the quality.
3. We even had a woman reach out to us on FaceBook to praise the show. 'I LOVED Madam Butterfly! My hubby brought me for my Birthday! Best experience ever....thank you for a wonderful performance.'

Thanks!"

**Anne E. Rodella, Director of Sales and Marketing and Chairperson
F.M. Kirby Center, Wilkes-Barre, PA — January 29, 2016**

Puccini — LA BOHEME

Realism, humor help 'Boheme' succeed

SCHENECTADY — Teatro Lirico d'Europa's production of Puccini's "La Boheme" on Sunday night at Proctor's Theatre was one of the most spontaneous performances seen in a long time. Artistic director Giorgio Lalov got his singers to communicate with each other in a realistic and often lighthearted fashion rather than just have them focus on projecting their voices. To be sure, all the singers were strong and the two female leads, Elena Razgulyieva as Mimi and Larissa Yudina as Musetta, had big voices that soared. It was a pleasure to watch the *opera* unfold. It also helped that the supertitles often had humor that made the capacity crowd laugh. The camaraderie of the four men seemed real and they all sang well together. Baritone Ilia Pavlov as Shaunard and bass Mikhail Kolelishvili as Colline each had substantial arias. Kolelishvili's aria in the final act was especially smooth and resonant. As lovers, Gonzalez and Razgulyieva had a sweet chemistry and their voices blended well. Razgulyieva's voice was clear, strong and gained strength as she went up. Her top notes were often thrilling. Because she also took her time in her arias and made the orchestra follow her, listeners could savor Puccini's melodies better. Gonzalez sometimes let loose when he hit his many top notes but other times he seemed to be holding back. He was fervently convincing when he needed to be, though. Yudina stole more than Marcello's heart. Dressed in a beautiful black dress and tossing her blond curls, she was a charismatic and marvelous coquette with a voice to match. Her famous aria in the second act was a highlight. The chorus also did nicely. Vailtintin Topencharov conceived appropriate sets and costumes were in a green, white and plum palette. The back scrim's scene was especially evocative of a cold winter storm. The orchestra was enthusiastic and supportive."

THE DAILY GAZETTE — Geraldine Freedman — November 2006

About Teatro Lirico LA BOHEME in Durham, NH

The performance of La Boheme was fantastic. The ovation went on for quite some time. Our audience especially loved Mimi and Rodolfo. As usual, the crew was great to work with. We really appreciate having your company come to UNH. Thank you again.

Mary De Turk – Johnson Theatre, University of New Hampshire – Durham, NH

LA BOHEME – Opera Done Just Right

PCA Great performances has brought Teatro Lirico D'Europa to Merrill Auditorium often enough so that the company has earned a good reputation. The audience was in excess of 1,700 including 2 rows of obstructed view seats. This particular road show was even better than Teatro Lirico's usually highly professional standard, and drew a long standing — ovation. What made this production stand out was its emotional realism. Everything contributed to the emotional effect — the stark wintery scenery, the costumes, the acting, the well played score with full orchestra, even the choreography, which contrasted the clownish antics of the four friends with the unfolding tragedy. As Mimi, Elena Razgulyeva was simply outstanding in this role. She has a glorious voice that she can modulate to the exact tone appropriate to the scene. She is one of the few to play Mimi who leave no doubt about why Rodolfo should fall in love at first sight. Tenor Evgeny Akimov as Rodolfo was excellent. He is also a good actor and his interactions with Mimi were entirely believable. Musetta, Liubov Metodieva and Marcello, Vladimir Samsonov was also well sung and acted-light, humored and with a caring undertone. Even the walk on roles made a significant contribution to the atmosphere. PCA Great performances 75th anniversary is more than living up to its expectations.

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD – Christopher Hyde

Theater is Transforming the City

The popular Teatro Lirico D'Europa's rendition of Puccini's LA BOHEME. A magnificent performance was presented to a large and appreciative audience whose thunderous standing applause was a well deserved tribute to this outstanding operatic production.

THE STANDARD TIMES – Ronald Souza – December 2005

Teatro Lirico – LA BOHEME

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa brought a meat-and potatoes version of LA BOHEME to a sold out McCallum Theatre Sunday, minus any gimmicks or artistic license. As Rodolfo, Evgeni Akimov gave a stalwart performance that rattled the rafters with his pure tone and fine enunciation. His top range was thrilling. This is a tenor whose voice soars with spine-

tingling fortitude. Olga Cherisheva's Mimi proved fully capable of the role's high tessitura demands. Marina Viskvorkina was radiant in the irresistible "Musetta's Waltz" gliding over the high tones with enviable dexterity and leading the chorus to a festive ending. The supporting cast was equally adept. Viacheslav Pochapsky's deep bass gave a dramatic heft to the philosopher Colline. Marcello was sung with robust fervor by Vladimir Samsonov. The chorus has always delivered a satisfying sound and conductor Krassimir Topolov kept the tempi zipping along in this production that brought a standing ovation from the sated audience."

THE DESERT SUN – Jeff Britton – February 2005

LA BOHEME A Stunning Success

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa had a stunning success Saturday evening with a production of Puccini's LA BOHEME that would have satisfied the most ardent opera fan. Here was a production in a classic style with solid acting and depth of sound, both of which stirred the musical soul of an audience so intensely satisfied. Artistic director Giorgio Lalov has the gift of "assemblage d'art". Veselina Vasileva's Mimi was outstanding from the start with clarity and pitch "to die for" coupled with a fragile image created from inner strength. Vladimir Samsonov's Marcello was totally convincing and his detachment/attachment with the Musetta, Liubov Metodieva, a conflicted siren in her own right with a voice to match. The last scene, wonderfully staged and powerfully sung, brought the production to a pinnacle. The chorus sang very well. Super-titles, as ever, helpful, were especially well done and excellently timed. Musetta was outlandishly stunning in act 2. Kudos to Hristo Sarafov, who comically played Benoit and Alcindoro as well as to Viacheslav Pochapsky who played a strong, philosophical Colline. November 2005 will witness the return of Teatro Lirico D'Europa to the Center for the Performing Arts. We cannot wait."

THE STAR (Chicago Heights) – D. K. Luksetich – February 2005

NOTES FROM DAYTONA BEACH SYMPHONY SOCIETY GM and booking agent about BOHEME – February 2009

"LA BOHEME was a WONDERFUL night in Daytona Beach. The theater was packed and everyone LOVED the opera. It was a major triumph!!!! People were crying with the emotional impact of the wonderful singers. Not only were the voices spectacular, but also the acting was superb. Kudos to you all. Thank you, thank you for a perfect evening. Daytona Beach is a happier place thanks to Teatro Lirico."

Carolina Anderson, GM – Daytona Beach Symphony Society

“We just had a lovely after-performance visit with Giorgio and lead singers. It was a fantastic performance! We loved the singers, their acting, everything about it. We had about 600 kids there, and they were eating it up. How about that for the next generation of opera buffs!!! We had a full house and it was such a great success. Mimi's voice was amazing, Musetta of course stole the show with her great voice and antics, and Rodolfo was wonderful not only for his voice, but he was such a fine actor as well. We are just so grateful to have had your company here. Thanks go out to you and Giorgio for all of the dedicated work you have put into bringing good opera out to where we are. It was wonderful!!!!

Nancy and Dallas – Daytona Beach Symphony Society

LA BOHEME – Clearwater Florida – March 2010

“Wonderful reaction to the show on Saturday eve, especially for Mimi (Melliangee Perez). A number of standing ovations and wonderful comments as people were leaving the theatre. Another wonderful Teatro Lirico experience!”

Robert Freedman, RUTH ECKERD HALL, Clearwater, FL

“We loved La Boheme! Mimi’s voice was perfect for her role and Musetta wowed all the young people at the pre-concert talk. Elena did a great job with the talk and was so personable. Everyone was so gracious. We look forward to having you here again.”

Regards, Maureen, Susan and Don

Warfield Concerts Committee – October 2009

Helena, Arkansas

“The performance (of LA BOHEME) was wonderful and enjoyed by all that attended. The company received a standing ovation that lasted for at least four minutes.

John Cattanach, GM – Touhill Performing Arts Center, St. Louis, MO – October 2009

Dark, deadly, tragic, but 'La Boheme' is for lovers

"La Boheme," was performed at the Touhill Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, October 22 at 7:30 p.m. by Teatro Lirico D'Europa. And an excellent performance this touring company presented. Encore, encore, encore. Where to start a very, positive review is difficult. It is a tragedy about talented, but broke, starving and dying French artists in the

1800s. But the main theme in this opera is amour, or love. These singers communicated this greatest of emotions excellently throughout the entire performance.

The orchestra, conducted by Krassimir Topolov, produced the greatest of music while never drowning out the vocalists. The sets were crisp and clean, even though they move with the opera company as they travel. It felt very much as if Paris was in St. Louis at the Touhill PAC. The costumes were first rate in every respect. The "hellcat" Musetta's flaming red dress in the beginning set her apart from every character on the stage. Mimi's green dress, although weathered, fit her character to a "T." And the male starving artist's clothing made you feel as if you were in Paris in the 1800s."

THE CURRENT, St. Louis, MO —Matthew B. Haunted — 10/26/09 Section: Arts and Entertainment

Jaw-dropping performances from an outstanding cast send this “Boheme” into the stratosphere.

“The Boston audience at Friday evening’s performance of Puccini’s “La Boheme” at Emerson’s Cutler Majestic theater were treated to what one rarely sees in a performance, jaw — dropping perfection, and I use that description decisively. This cast, this show, was simply astounding, led by an indefatigable and extraordinarily talented cast of three regulars with this company: award winning tenor Orlin Goranov, singing the role of Rodolfo, Russian soprano Elena Razgylaeva, singing the role of the fated Mimi, and Bulgarian soprano, Snejana Dramcheva, singing the role of the flirtatious Musetta, a part that she sang and acted with extraordinary depth and understanding. Vocal heights were smashed, superb acting and stage presence were the order of the evening and all, especially the audience, which was clearly captivated and this reviewer who was truly impressed, had an all around hypnotic night. Kudos, also to an outstanding ensemble cast, as well: Marian Jovanovsky, singing the role of Marcello, Plamen Dimitrov, singing the role of Schaunard, Konstantine Videv, singing the role of Colline, and the underrated and uniformly solid (and getting better) performance of Hristo Sarafov, singing the role of Alcindoro and Benoit — marvelous and wonderfully talented cast all. The performing company, Teatro Lirico D’Europa, formed in 1988, is now on its eleventh major tour of the United States and going stronger than ever.”

OPERAON:LINE.US — Paul Walkowski — October 30, 2009

“I loved it (BOHEME IN BOSTON) Loved it! Loved it! I got multiple chills from the gorgeous voices — I never tire of La Boheme. I wish you much success with it this weekend. I meant to tell you too, that I heard your ad on WCRB many many times...Thank you again, and please let me know when you'll be in Boston/New England, as I would like to take you both to dinner. “

Richard Bojko, GM — Opera New Hampshire — October 2009

NEAR CAPACITY AUDIENCE CHEERS TEARO LIRICO — LA BOHEME

On a cold and dreary Friday night (October 30, 2009) Teatro Lirico d'Europa brought its production of Giacomo Puccini's LA BOHEME to Emerson's Cutler Majestic Theatre in Boston. The brilliance of the singing warmed the heart of every opera-goer and the New England fall weather merely helped the near capacity audience commiserate with the Bohemians in their unheated garret.

Artistic Director Giorgio Lalov's traditional staging carefully followed the dictates of the score and that was a treat to be savored these days. Tenor Orlin Goranov as Rodolfo, the poet, and baritone Marian Jovanovski as Marcello, the painter, burned the former's play in a realistic stove. When their roommates, Schaunard and Colline, sung by Plamen Dimitrov and Konstantine Videv, joined them, they were an exuberant group with robust voices and tons of youthful energy.

Although Goranov is Bulgarian he has an Italianate sound coupled with a smooth legato that could melt the heart of any soprano. The fact that his is tall and slim also helps make him a believable young lover. Petite soprano, Elena Razgylaeva was a delightful Mimi who sang sweetly of her lonely life embroidering flowers. She enchanted not only Rodolfo but the entire audience.

In Act II we met the temperamental Musetta, compellingly sung by soprano and costume designer, Snejana Dramcheva, who looked every inch the nineteenth century fashion plate. The sets and most of the costumes were designed by Giorgio Lalov, but Musetta's gowns were the soprano's own designs. This multi-talented artist played her character as a softhearted ingenue with an anger problem and sang her aria with lustrous tones as she rekindled her love affair with Marcello, sung by the bronze voiced Jovanovski.

It's rare to find such luxurious casting as Jovanovski's Marcello and Dimitrov's Schaunard. They brought in the warmth of the sun with their singing. Completing the male quartet was the dark bass voice of Konstantine Videv. He was a little older and more sedate than the others and that provided a good contrast. Veteran singing actor Hristo Sarafov played the cameo roles of Benoit, the alcoholic landlord and Alcindoro the "sugar daddy" with deft comic touches and a resonant baritone sound.

The story was portrayed with tremendous emotional power and at the moment Mimi died, you could feel the impact of the tragedy throughout the house. As a result, the audience began to clap and yell "bravo" as the curtain started to descend and kept on applauding for more than five minutes.

MUSIC AND VISION DAILY — October 2009

"Teatro Lirico d'Europa presented a very well stage-directed, well sung LA BOHEME at the Garde Arts Center, New London, Connecticut. Artistic and stage director, and set and costume designer Giorgio Lalov gave us a compelling dramatic and comic rendering, with plausible, motivated characterization. For example, Musetta's "Quando m'en vo" did not have her going "soletta per la via" as just a diva singing her aria but cozying up to several men in the Momus crowd, giving Alcindoro and Marcello cause for alarm--the best staging I've seen of Musetta's Waltz. Character interaction, especially between Rodolfo and Mimi, was always at play with no stand-and-deliver. The unit set had at center a pair of large windows for the garret flat which became doors for Cafe Momus and the Act III tavern, for which they opened. Orlovskaya's pure, round-voiced column of soprano sound projected very well in Mimi's arias and the Act II ensemble. She is tall and attractive, and she related nicely to Bulgarian Orlin Gorlanov's also well-projected Rodolfo. Bulgarian soprano, Stanislava Ivanova's Musetta was clear-voiced and appropriately lyric. She looked beautiful in the black dress for Act II and the pink one in Acts III and IV. "

OPERA L – February 2012 – John Deredita

"The show went well, thank you. The quality of the performance was excellent!"

***Scott Seltzer, Programming Director
F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts – Feb 2012***

"Boheme was great! We had a good house. Giorgio is so great to work with and a real delight. It is as if we have been friends forever. We talked about Butterfly for next year. It would again be in the month of February. Thanks for everything!"

David Nyman – Heritage Theatre, Cedar City, Utah – February 2012

"LA BOHEME and The Opera Gala was outstanding, I believe the best ever. It was wonderful having selections from three diverse operas. All of the singers were good but the sopranos were particularly good this night. Boheme was very well received. Several comments about how the company just continues to get better each year."

Kris Sabel, Alberto Vilar Center, Vail, CO – February 2012

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa has done it again! Another big success for Palmetto Opera and opera lovers in South Carolina.

LA BOHEME was a stunning performance! The pairing of the incredible voices of tenor, Simon Kyung Lee (Rodolfo) and soprano, Olga Orlovskaya (Mimi) was sensational. The

supporting soloists of Teatro Lirico rounded out an amazing cast. Conductor, Krassimir Topolov was as usual, excellent. The packed house and continuous standing ovation made it clear that Saturday night was a night to be remembered. Thank you!"

Kathy Newman, Chairman of Palmetto Opera – Koger Center, Columbia SC – Winter 2015

"Mimi!" The moment Rodolfo shouted out, anguished and painful—moved the audience to tears. When the curtain came down, the audience responded with a long, standing ovation. It was the first time a full-scale opera was ever presented at The Pickwick Theatre as well as for Korean Community. Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented a traditional, full-throated, emotional performance with a great international cast, orchestra and chorus including a children's chorus. The main cast was exceptional. Rodolfo (Korean Tenor Simon Lee) sang with a vibrato and high notes reminding one of Jusse Bjorling (one of the great tenors in the 20 century) and made a great appearance on the stage. Mimi, soprano Olga Orlovskaya sang dramatically with great breath control. Rodolfo and Mimi tell the story of a heart breaking romance. The other couple presented wit seasoned with a sense of humor. Soprano, Stanislava Ivanova and baritone, Dobromir Momekov showed great vocal skill. Previously most of events in the Chicago Korean Community have been only popular music and some classical concerts but did not arrive to show the great elegance and high culture of the classical field. This LA BOHEME brought a magical evening, and officially presented for the first time, a full-scale production of opera performed with a stunning response from audience. We hope to see many more of Teatro Lirico D'Europa's productions in the future!"

Myong Lim, Korea Daily News, Chicago – Winter 2015

"LA BOHEME was simply magnificent!! Thank you for making it possible to put a full- scale opera in our community for the first time. Many of the audience members said that they didn't believe this was possible and they were very happy. We look forward to seeing you next year!"

Grace IM, GM and Event Director – Pickwick Theatre, Park Ridge, Illinois – Winter 2015

"A splendid performance of LA BOHEME this evening at the Arcada Theatre...an opera written in the 1800s and still incredibly relevant in 2015! Really, this international presentation of LA BOHEME will rival any other show we have had here at The Arcada...INCREDIBLE! See you next season. Bravo!!!"

Ron Onesti, President – Arcada Theatre, St. Charles, Illinois – Winter 2015

Bravo to this magical performance LA BOHEME

"Ft. Myers Community Concerts' second successful program following the dazzling opening concert of The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with Pinchas Zukerman on Jan. 16 was a sparkling performance of Puccini's opera La Boheme performed by Teatro Lirico D'Europa. For those of you who might not be aware of this unique opera company, here are some background notes. Teatro Lirico D'Europa was created in 1988 by the late Yves Josse, a former ballet divo and brilliant French arts promoter, and Giorgio Lalov, a young Bulgarian opera singer who made his debut at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, at age 25 while participating in Scala's famous international training for young singers. The collaboration between Josse and Lalov was a huge success in a very short time, resulting in tours with over 250 performances a season throughout France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Sicily and Portugal at 180 different venues.

Lalov created the sets and costumes for the productions and organized the chorus and orchestra in Bulgaria, central Europe and the United States. Josse booked the performances from his office in Paris. From the beginning the company established itself as highly competent, and the unusual multinational chemistry proved to be very popular. Teatro Lirico D'Europa has now completed over 4,000 performances worldwide, including 14 consecutive seasons in the USA. This is the opera company's 16th season in the US with performances of La Boheme, Carmen and concert performances of great moments in Italian opera from Broadway to opera. Bottom line this is a small but mighty opera company. The company of La Boheme was true to form with an international cast:

I cannot even imagine what rehearsals are like with an international cast like that. Puccini's great opera about talented, broke, starving and dying French artists in 1840s Paris, the opera is still and always will be a paean of amour. Puccini writes love in terms of music that touches and sometimes breaks your heart.

The singing was wonderful, it all worked, making the Community Concerts' version of La Boheme as magical as ever.

Nothing can ever top the incredible Puccini score, which always works its enchantment on me; and though it was the very first opera I ever viewed at the Old Metropolitan Opera House at age 8, I wept then as I did last Wednesday night. As a matter of fact, the waterworks start every time (and there have been many) I get to hear this incredible music. The orchestra and its conductor played richly and fully, the leading artists were quite wonderful as was the singing chorus; as a matter of fact the entire production was an affirmation of the reviews this terrific company receives; which state that this is a highly competent company, and the unusual multinational operatic talent along with the chemistry of this talented company has proven to be extremely popular with audiences, both European and American.

If last week's performance of La Boheme was any example, our Fort Myers audience gave Teatro Lirico D'Europa a four-star standing ovation, to which I can only add Bravo! Yeah! and Hip-Hip Hurray!"

***Marsha Wagner, Island Reporter — CAPTIVA CURRENT, Sanibel-Captiva Islander
Performance at Barbara Mann Hall, Ft. Myers, FL — Winter 2015***

"The audience cheered the performance of the cast of LA BOHEME last night at the Marina Civic Center. I saw several folks with tears in their eyes after the final scene— ample testimony of the compelling acting ability of the principal performers. Cheers to Simon Kyung (Rudolfo), Olga Orlovskaya (Mimi) and Stanislava Ivanova (Musetta) for their powerful vocal performances. As I remarked to the gathering at the post opera reception, their voices rank along with the best that can be heard at the most prestigious opera houses in the world. Our gratitude to Teatro Lirico for bringing this wonderful production to Panama City."

Bob Borich, Talent Chairman — Panama City (FL) Music Association — Winter 2015

"Milt Russos said it (LA BOHEME) was great! He felt the voices were some of the best he has ever heard at the opera and really enjoyed the show. He also said Georgio's lecture was very engaging and entertaining. Thank you for another wonderful show!"

Karen Williams — Moran Theatre, Jacksonville, FL — Winter 2015

"LA BOHEME was excellent! The company was terrific, talented and professional. Let's do another show next season."

Penny Watkins, GM — Marshall Artist Series, Huntington, West VA — Winter 2015

"It (LA BOHEME) was wonderful! Our audience loved it! One of the best you've brought us, and that's saying something. We're looking forward to next season (AIDA) already!"

***Mary Lee Mann — Ft. Myers Community Concerts
Barbara Mann Hall — Ft. Myers, FL — Winter 2015***

"The show (LA BOHEME) was awesome and well attended! The audience loved it!"

***Joyce Maddox, Operations Manager — Miramar Cultural Center / ArtsPark
Miramar, FL — Winter 2015***

"LA BOHEME was WONDERFUL! A great crowd. Thank you for everything!"

Faith Wilson, Executive Director — Opera NH — Winter 2015

Bizet — CARMEN

CARMEN Makes One's Heart Sing!

"There were many positive elements to Teatro Lirico D'Europa's production of Bizet's CARMEN, but those of us who were there will doubtless remember the evening for the thrilling performances of mezzo Kirstin Chavez and tenor Jeffrey Springer as the fearless gypsy and the soldier who loves her — to death. Chavez is beautiful, she's a terrific actress and she has a lovely mezzo sound that she produces with ease throughout the range. Springer's portrayal of Jose was equally vivid. His robust, bronze-tinged tenor filled the Majestic with powerful sound from start to finish. Conductor Krassimir Topolov got a strong, no nonsense reading from the players. The staging by Giorgio Lalov was vivid in the intimate interactions of the leads including the beautifully bright-voiced Veselina Vasileva (Micaela) and charismatic Vladimir Samsonov as winning toreador Escamillo."

THE BOSTON HERALD — T. J. Medrek — March 2005

ENSEMBLE CAST SIZZLES in Teatro Lirico's CARMEN!

"Last night's performance of CARMEN really cooked. Credit goes to the excellent Bulgarian ensemble of chorus and orchestra and two Americans in the starring roles. Kirstin Chavez has sung the role at the New York City Opera. She's physically and vocally limber, and revels in her femme-fatale looks. She has a bright lyric mezzo with a strong top and sings with many a teasing, personal, and humorous inflection. She can play the castanets, and she acts up a storm, while always keeping her place in the ensemble effort. Tenor Jeffrey Springer has a strong, tireless voice with good high notes. His desperation, despair and degeneration were palpable. Veselina Vasileva brought fervor and gleaming high notes to the role of Micaela. Vladimir Samsonov, the swaggering toreador Escamillo, seemed to be having fun and acted with supreme self-congratulation that fits his character. Viara Zhelezova unleashed a formidable sound as Mercedes and the smugglers were terrific. The chorus poured out tone that left the ears ringing and the orchestra did some elegant work for Krassimir Topolov who kept things moving along in a stylish way. Giorgio Lalov's simple, sensible production gave his stars plenty of leeway to do their own thing."

THE BOSTON GLOBE — Richard Dyer — March 2005

CARMEN — Lied Center of Kansas

"A sold out house waited Saturday evening for the opening curtain of Teatro Lirico D'Europa's CARMEN at the Lied Center. The role of Carmen was sung by Kirstin Chavez. Her silky mezzo-soprano was perfect for the role, and she looked the part of the fiery and sensuous gypsy, taking control of the stage in her opening "Habanera" scene as she slithered barefoot across the stage, flirting with one man after another. Soprano Veselina Vasileva as Micaela sang the part impressively. Her "Je dis que rien" was a high point , rocking the second balcony with high Cs and concluding with prolonged applause. Igor Denisov showed a commanding stage presence as Escamillo. Costumes were colorful, with many flounced dresses in plentiful supply. The stone and brick urban setting, lighted in warm earth tones was quite satisfactory. The orchestra performed well, with especially nice work by bassoon, flute and harp. The subtitles were rendered in lively colloquial English and were a welcome addition."

LAWRENCE JOURNAL WORLD — Dean Bevan — March 2005

CARMEN (New Jersey Performing Arts Center)

"On March 18 Teatro Lirico D'Europa performed G. Bizet's popular opera CARMEN for a full house (2700) at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. Stage director Giorgio Lalov presented a traditional retelling of the story aided by solid looking scenery and elaborate costumes by Vailtine Topencharov. Since three excellent flamenco dancers from Ballet Arabesk travel with this company, the presentation included dances that were an integral part of nineteenth century French opera performances but are seldom seen these days. The title role was sung by rising star, Kirstin Chavez. She has sung at the New York City Opera and will make her debut at the Metropolitan Opera next season. A charismatic, green-eyed seductress, this Carmen was as irresistible to the audience as her stage lovers. Her voice was even throughout its registers with luminous high notes and luscious, creamy chocolate low tones. Jeffrey Springer was a strong Don Jose who sang with a smooth legato and ringing top tones. He portrayed an impulsive character whose reaction to a stressful situation was violence. Moldovan baritone, Vladimir Samsonov, sang his Toreador Song with powerful, robust tones as he strutted across the stage like a champion bull-fighter. Veselina Vasileva was a poignant Micaela who sang her lovely third act aria with lustrous silvery tones that soared over the orchestral accompaniment. Krassimir Topolov conducted the Sofia Symphony in a brisk but intense rendition of the beloved masterpiece and the audience reacted with tumultuous applause at the end of the evening."

OPERA JAPONICA — March 2005

Sensual CARMEN Heats up Lied!

"A sold out Lied Center crowd was on hand Saturday for the Teatro Lirico D'Europa's production of CARMEN. Kirstin Chavez, the stunningly beautiful mezzosoprano gave us a CARMEN as sensual as Marilyn Monroe, as bright as Kathryn Hepburn and as down to earth as Sandra Bullock. Chavez held all eyes. She also held all ears. Chavez dramatic range, pitch-perfect intonation, and dramatic ability made us understand her character's innate sense of joie de vivre and apprehension. Defiantly throwing her raven locks at the constraints of the Spanish patriarchal society, the exotic Chavez teased and taunted with an effort no less devastating than Sharon Stone in BASIC INSTINCT. Chavez leveraged her pinup girl good looks with a repertoire of come-hither gestures that kept men in the cast and audience spellbound. Whether thrusting her bosom forward, or standing haughtily with hands on hips or flashing her million-dollar smile, Chavez held all in rapture. We were also treated to the singing and acting talents of tenor David Corman who gave us a substantive Don Jose. Igor Denisov's Escamillo and Veselina Vasileva's Micaela, were impressive. Super titles above the Lied's proscenium arch provided translations of the French lyrics adding greatly to the audience comprehension and enjoyment. The magnificent music of Bizet was brought to vivid vocal and orchestral life under the capable baton of Krassimir Topolov."

TOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL — Chuck Berg — March 2005

CARMEN — Lucas Theatre — Savannah, Ga.

"Teatro Lirico gave a buoyant performance of CARMEN filled with lovely singing, sharp acting and an entertaining comedic sensibility. David Corman did a fine job playing Don Jose. He has a sweet and muscular tenor, able to break glass one moment and hold your breath the next. His ability to release Jose's agony at story's end effected the right amount of pathos. Galia Ibragimova was a wonderful Carmen. Ibragimova kept the humanity in Carmen and didn't allow her to devolve into a gross cartoon of wantonness. Instead, the mezzo-soprano was, at turns, saucy, demure, coquettish and sexually aggressive. All the things that make a world class Jezebel. Ibragimova's voice was as rich in color as CARMEN is rich in allure. The conflicting themes of fate, love and freedom made sense to the capacity audience last night, evoking a standing ovation."

SAVANNAH NOW — John Stoer — February 2005

CARMEN AT KRAVIS CENTER — W. Palm Beach

"The setting, performance and acoustics were a treat to both eyes and ears and well received by the sold out audience. A theatrical production gives theatergoers an escape from reality and 2 hours of pure pleasure. This goal was accomplished by the Teatro Lirico's

production of CARMEN, played to perfection by Galia Ibragimova. The supporting cast of soldiers and flamenco dancers combined into a flawless presentation under the direction of Giorgio Lalov. The conclusion was a standing ovation which touched the hearts of both singers and audience. "

Out 2 NEWS – West Palm Beach – February 2009

Mary and I saw "Carmen" yesterday and agreed that this was the best Teatro Lirico production we've seen. Galia Ibragimova (Carmen) was particularly outstanding in both acting and singing. She made the audience care about what happened to her more than anyone else I've seen in the role. Don Jose also was very good. His obsessive approach was evident from the beginning, and there was a believable chemistry between the ill-fated lovers. The drama built to a genuinely intense final scene. Micaela exuded sincerity, Escamillo projected the assurance of someone used to having his way, and Frasquita and Mercedes sang superbly and created distinctive, memorable characters.

The entire ensemble seemed involved in the action, the Spanish dancers added something above the ordinary to the emotionally charged atmosphere excitement, and the conductor adopted a pace that suited the singers, the acoustics and the story.

The audience responded very favorably, many with a standing ovation. I was able to read the super-titles easily without the monocular I normally use (though I didn't need to refer to them often).

Note from WALTER SKIBA – writer for The Times of Northwest Indiana – February 2007

Our audience loved your Carmen! Several board members reported back that patrons can't wait for Aida. All agree that the principles were wonderful, and again please thank them for coming to our post opera reception, where our patrons can tell them themselves."

Richard Bojko – Presenter, Opera New Hampshire – October 2008

Greetings! What a marvelous evening we had last night. Thank you... thank you... thank you! BRAVO Teatro Lircio d'Europa and the Carmen cast and orchestra. Much love and affection!"

Jeanne Sigel – Garde Arts Center, New London, CT – October 2008

Warner Theatre an asset to Torrington, CT

It was intermission time and the drummer, Bob Bequillard Sr. of Winsted, and the classically trained singer, Marilyn Cone of Moodus, dismounted the wide balcony staircase to enjoy a glass of wine at the Warner Theatre lobby. They were spectators this fine Sunday afternoon, enjoying a superior live performance of Bizet's "Carmen."

Teatro Lirico D'Europa, a European touring opera company widely known for magnificent voices and artful acting, was at its best.

THE REGISTER CITIZEN — Owen Canfield — October 2008

I got very nice reviews people who saw CARMEN and thought it was excellent. I am pleased that the performance was so top notch.

*Judy Barkett, Vice President
VenueTech Management Group, Inc. (Presenter) — San Francisco, CA — October 2008*

REVIEW: 'Carmen' is an operatic gem

There is no other woman in the world of opera like Carmen, the heroine of Georges Bizet well-known masterpiece. And on Thursday evening at Emens Auditorium, Muncie residents discovered exactly why this is the case. Set in the Spanish city of Seville, but performed in Bizet's native French, "Carmen" is an operatic tour-de-force. The story of the gypsy woman, Carmen, and her lover, Don Jose, this work is incredibly dramatic, often times irrational and always brilliant. It is opera at its core. The Russian mezzo-soprano Galia Ibragimova is perfect in the lead role. Her voice is outstanding and it is impossible to keep your eyes off of her when she traverses the stage. She is Carmen, from the sway in her hips to her mocking laughter at the men who fall for her. She is worth the ticket price alone, but, luckily, the other leads were equally as impressive, playing their roles with complete success. The Mexican tenor, Gabriel Gonzalez plays Don Jose, the man who falls for Carmen with such passion, he forgets the woman he truly loves, Micaela, and ruins his career, to be by the heroine's side. Gonzalez is every much the equal to Ibragimova, which is essential when performing against such a strong character. He convinces the audience that he must leave everything behind for Carmen, even though it is clear to everyone that this can cause nothing but problems for everyone involved. And then there is poor Micaela, played sweetly by German soprano Christin Molnar. She does not appear very often on stage, but when she does, the audience cannot help but feel complete sympathy for her. Her love is gone and there is nothing she can do about it except sing with a sadness that seeps into the soul.

This touring production was as good as it gets when it comes to opera performances. Their voices were strong, although the acoustics at Emens weren't perfect, and their acting was

over-the-top, which is exactly what is expected in opera. Opera is also not typically performed in English, but with super titles above the stage at Emens, the audience was welcome to follow along with ever murmur. This, of course, isn't necessary with a good opera performance. This is clear when Molnar's character is singing with creeping sadness over the love she has lost. She is alone on the stage, her soprano ranging to unbelievable proportions, turning the audience to her side, causing them to feel her loss with every inch of their bodies. English isn't necessary to empathize with her performance, which is why she is great as well. For those who were in the audience on Thursday, what they saw was a performance to rival any large city production. And at the end there was nothing else to say but, "Bravo!"

THE STAR PRESS — IVY FARGUHESON — November 7, 2008

Carmen was absolutely breath taking. I am so thankful that I got to see it! Truly, I hope your company comes back again. I will be first in line to go. I love opera, and it was such a breath of fresh air to get to see that in BOONE! Thank you so much Ms. Kelly!

Note from Emily Dunn, Lifestyles Reporter for The Appalachian — Boone, NC — November 2008

We are very happy with the production of CARMEN in terms of the singers, orchestration and staging. It was definitely one of the best opera productions we have hosted. I overheard many positive comments from audience members. We appreciate you and Maria for your attention and responsiveness to various details involved with this performance and look forward to the possibility of working with you again.

***Note from Sali Gill-Johnsonson, Director
Appalachian State University Farthing Auditorium — November 2008***

Review: CARMEN

"SCHENECTADY — A near-capacity crowd came to be entertained Friday night at Proctors by Teatro Lirico d'Europa's production of Bizet's "Carmen." It was not disappointed. Almost single-handedly, mezzo-soprano Viara Zhelezova as Carmen captured the hearts of the audience and all the men on stage, including tenor Mauricio Trejo as Don Jose and baritone James Bobick as the toreador Escamillo

Carmen is one of those kinds of roles that require a singer to be as much an actress as she is a vocalist. Zhelezova inhabited the role with a brazen, feline seductiveness that spelled danger in big letters. She taunted her victims with relish and abandon. Even better, she sang to these men with an unusual degree of nuance that was almost conversational. She

caressed the tones and enunciated the French words with clarity. There was no mistaking her intention.

Don Jose falls for her challenge and in his famous aria in Act II when he tells her how he thought of no one else while in prison, Trejo sang with poignancy. Their chemistry was good. Trejo was also very charming in his duet with soprano Elena Razgulyieva as the sweet Micaela. Razgulyieva's voice soared with an effortless clarity.

The singing from the chorus and the other leads was at a high level. More importantly, their acting kept abreast of the demands. Stage director Giorgio Lalov blocked the crowd scenes well. Vailtine Topencharov designed a brick-lined set for exterior and interior scenes that dictated a palette of reds and golds. The costumes, which were pretty, reflected those colors.

It was a nice touch to include actual Flamenco dancers in the club scene. As Zhelezova sang standing on a picnic table, the three dancers spun and tapped in elegant combinations. The crowd particularly appreciated this segment and gave them strong applause. The orchestra under conductor Krassimir Topolov did very well. Balances were never a problem. English super titles were understandable."

DAILY GAZETTE – Geraldine Freedman – Saturday, February 28, 2009

(CARMEN) was terrific last night, Jenny. Best in years. Thank you!!!"

Phillip Morris, GM – Proctors Theatre – Schenectady, NY – February 2009

Teatro Lirico wows with Bizet's 'Carmen 'By Diane Barney "Teatro Lirico D'Europa's staging of George Bizet's classic opera "Carmen" at the Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre on November 2, 2008 — brought wonderful opera singers, authentic costumes, professional dancers and a full orchestra.

There were excellent performances from tenor Gabriel Gonzalez, who played Don Jose; soprano Christin Molnar, who played Micaela, a peasant girl; and especially mezzo-soprano Galia Ibragimova, who played the saucy cigarette girl that gives the opera its name. Gonzalez turned in a strong vocal performance as Don Jose, brilliantly projecting the torment of his loss of Carmen's love in Acts 3 and 4.

Molnar, a German soprano with excellent vocal projection, made a sturdy Micaela, a young innocent woman who is in love with Don Jose and cares for his very ill mother. Even though she had a small part, her performance was very touching and communicated authenticity.

Ibragimova, a Russian singer with strong vocal control, is dramatically secure in Carmen's steamy seductive nature, the emotional glue that holds the story together. Her strong performance shined in Act 3, in which she foresees the future in fortune-telling cards, then realizes the imminence of her death.

But it is in Act 4 that Ibragimova captivated the audience with her dramatic and vocal fireworks. In the opera's culminating moment, she took a ring off her finger and threw it to the ground, just before Don Jose stabbed her to death. A small disappointment was the choreography of a dance — with feet tapping, arms waving, skirts swirling — that missed the essence of what a Spanish folk dance should be. Still, it was entertaining.

The orchestra's performance of seductive and alluring music under the direction of Krassimir Topolov captivated throughout. VPAT technicians did a superb job of displaying the supertitles (the English translation of the French libretto). If you enjoy opera — — even if you might have questions about a French composer's vision of what Spanish music is — — this was one to see, especially if you are a newcomer to the art form."

"(CARMEN) was wonderful as usual. We did 1518 SOLD. House looked good and as always cast was friendly and seemed to enjoy being here again."

Bobby Rossi, Director of Entertainment — Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, FL — February 2010

"Bravo! CARMEN was wonderful. Another terrific performance. Thanks for all you bring to Opera New Hampshire!"

***Faith Wilson/Executive Director - Opera NH
Presenter for Teatro's CARMEN at the Palace Theatre, Manchester, NH — 2014***

"The performance of CARMEN was outstanding. Lots of great compliments! Thanks for doing what you do!"

Will Beekman, GM — F. M. Kirby Center — 2014

"CARMEN was beautiful! I really enjoyed Giorgio's pre-performance lecture too. Thank you for providing a great production!"

Karen Williams — Moran Theatre, Jacksonville, FL — 2014

Nothing but Bravos for Carmen!

"Without a doubt our audience was convinced that when it comes to opera, it can't get much better than your CARMEN performance. Last Saturday they showed their appreciation with rave reviews and a standing ovation that never seemed to stop. The lovely Viara Zhelezova, our Carmen, commanded the stage from the moment she walked on and immediately convinced the audience she was the seductive, beautiful and fiesty gypsy, Carmen. Likewise, Simon Kyung Lee became Don Jose, the man who is willing to sacrifice everything for Carmen's love. Their excellent voices and their top-notch acting completely captured the hearts of our audience. Add the outstanding performances of Olga Orlovskaya as Micaela and Dobromir Momekov as Escamillo and it was an ensemble that sizzled! You and your cast have made many fans in South Carolina these past four seasons. We appreciate you and can't wait for next season!"

***Kathy Newman, Chair, The Palmetto Opera, Columbia, SC
Performance at Koger Center, Columbia, SC — 2014***

"We got excellent feed back about the soloists for CARMEN!"

Bobby Rossi, GM — Ruth Eckerd Hall — Clearwater, FL — 2014

"CARMEN was absolutely fabulous! Carmen herself (Viara Zhelezova) was terrific, and of course, I am in love with Giorgio Lalov. What's next?"

Deborah Smith, GM — Newberry Opera House — Winter 2015

Puccini — TOSCA

TOSCA Leaves Audience in a Good Mood, Wanting More!

"The traveling production of TOSCA by Teatro Lirico D'Europa left the CAPACITY audience in a good mood, wishing for more. Soprano, Victoria Litherland, was excellent in the title role. She has sung TOSCA before with the Austin Lyric Opera and last week was in Seattle, starring in MANON LESCAUT. She was paired well with tenor, Cesar Hernandez as Mario. Baritone, Vailry Ivanov was appropriately villainous as Scarpia, emphasizing the character's sadistic side rather than his mock piety. The secondary characters were well sung. The sets and costumes were first rate. Everyone deserved the long standing ovation at the final curtain."

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD — Christopher Hyde — February 2004

Teatro Lirico's TOSCA Comes Up Big!

Everything about Friday's TOSCA, the outstanding final program in the Symphony Society's International Series, was big. From the moment the curtain rose, it was clear that the nearly 50 members of Teatro Lirico's orchestra were too many for Peabody Auditorium's pit. The result was a voluminous sound, just right for the outsized passions in the opera and for the singers who expressed them. Under the direction of Giorgio Lalov, the focus is always firmly on the romantic tragedy TOSCA represents. Teatro Lirico's cast, elegantly costumed and supported by an orchestra able to express the operas immense emotions, was tremendous in their ability to make every nuance felt. In the title role, the young American soprano shone. Pearce's voice, rich and warm, shifted with emotions that spanned the gamut, and her acting made marvelously theatrical gestures entirely believable. David Corman (Cavaradossi) and Pearce were deeply affecting. Their stunning voices had the greatest impact. They were in every way, terrific.

DAYTONA BEACH NEWS JOURNAL — Laura Stewart — March 2004

TOSCA in MANCHESTER, NH — October 2007

Thank you for an amazing and wonderful performance! Giorgio and your people are great to work with, as seconded by the Palace staff...all most accommodating. Your principle singers (and the rest) gave our audience what they came for — a truly wonderful operatic experience. We rec'd much positive feedback (even at intermission) and our supporters are looking forward to Carmen and Aida already! Please thank your principles for attending our post-opera reception. I hope that they experienced directly from the attendees the appreciation of the hard work that they put into their art, as well as the praise they deserved. We look forward to a nice, long relationship with you — and so do our audience!

Richard Bojko, Director — Opera New Hampshire — Manchester, NH — October 2007

TOSCA in AMHERST, MA — November 2007

We've had nothing but wonderful comments about the performance of Tosca last Sunday.

*Halina Kusleika — Assistant Director of Programming
Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts — Amherst, MA*

TOSCA in New London, CT — January 2008

“All your cast were professionals! What lovely voices — I had spent the weekend in NY, came home yesterday at 2pm, went to the theatre, went home to change, went back to the theatre, had the opera dinner and HAD TO STAY FOR THE WHOLE SHOW BECAUSE I

LOVED IT! Thank you for all your hard work in allowing us to present fabulous operas in New London, CT.”

Jean Sigal – Garde Arts Center – New London CT

TOSCA in BOSTON – January 2008

Teatro Lirico d'Europa's Tosca was the kind of production in which Puccini's villain (Baron Scarpia, lecherous chief of the Roman police) wipes a tear from the cheek of the heroine (opera star Floria Tosca) and then licks the tear off his finger. You've got to love it! I've sat through my share of boring, passionless Toscas and this one was neither. It was fun. Russian soprano Olga Chernisheva was a terrific Tosca, with her big voice (perhaps too big too much of the time) and glamorous looks, whether boiling over with misguided jealousy or nuzzling the painter Cavaradossi (even in church!), terrorized by her sadistic tormentor (Scarpia will stop torturing her lover only if she agrees to sleep with him) or plunging a knife into his loathsome heart. Her big aria, "Vissi d'arte" ("I lived for art") was more impressive than heartrending, but find me another soprano who can sing this demanding role so well and also look so convincing in it.

As Scarpia, American bass-baritone William Powers, snarling a menacing laugh as the first-act curtain descended, was not the subtlest of actors. Chewing the scenery, silent-movie-style, seems to be his meat and potatoes, but he responded vividly to every phrase, and he's got the vocal chops. Handsome Bulgarian tenor Orlin Goranov was in better voice last season as Butterfly's Pinkerton. Still, the basic timbre of his voice should be the envy of a lot of other tenors, and he and Chernisheva made a most convincing pair of lovers. As the Sacristan, Constantine Videv turned every fussy little gesture into a gem of comic characterization. And Giorgio Dinev was very creepy as Scarpia's henchman.

BOSTON PHOENIX – Lloyd Schwartz – January 2008

TOSCA at Lucas Theatre, Savannah, GA – January 2008

(TOSCA was) very well received, a great night all around. I spoke with Giorgio briefly during load-in but I had to leave before the end of the show (battling bronchitis) so did not see him afterwards. Please pass on my thanks!”

Ken Carter, General Manager – Lucas Theatre – Savannah, GA

TOSCA at Keenan Auditorium, Wilmington, NC – January 2008

(TOSCA) was a smash hit, with the audience standing and shouting and whistling, and their applause was no more than the company deserved for a truly wonderful production — Act 2

being the outstanding Act. Voices costumes, VERY good acting, great sets, and the Sofia Symphony played really well in very cramped conditions. I was particularly thrilled since this was the first of the productions I've booked through you actually to arrive here, and it bodes very well for the future. It was an absolutely sold-out house, by the way. Speaking of the future, perhaps we can begin to think about possible dates for your Moscow orchestra, and also to look at what operas are available for 09/10. It seems quite likely that I'll be taking two bookings from you again that season, and so I'd ideally like to start to set them up, so that I can then plan the other two events around them. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Fred Wharton – Wilmington Concert Association – Keenan Auditorium – Wilmington, NC

TOSCA in Jacksonville, FL – January 2008

The show was great. I thought this was one of the best sets. Certainly the set for Act 1 was beautiful. The cast was great – some great actors in addition to great voices. Scarpia was one of the best I have seen.

Milton A. Russos, Executive Director – FCCJ Artist Series – Jacksonville, FL

TOSCA in Cedar Falls, Iowa – February 2008

All feedback I have heard this morning has been very positive. I have heard a number of compliments on the high quality of voices within the company, which is wonderful for us, as we have had negative experiences with opera companies in the past. We will be starting discussions for booking our 09-10 shortly. Please send me your offerings for 09-10 whenever you have that set.

Molly Hackenmiller-Gallagher – Bluedorn Performing Arts Center

TOSCA AND OPERA GALA – Vail, CO – February 2008

Great audience response. The soloist for TOSCA were all terrific and the orchestra sounded the best it ever had.

KRIS SABEL, Executive Director – Vilar Performing Arts Center – Avon, CO

TOSCA in Palm Desert, CA – February 2008

Very nice production as always! Thanks for bringing it to us. Looking forward to your new production of Aida next year!"

Mitchell Gershenfeld, Director of Presentations and Theater Operations – McCallum Theatre

TOSCA in University Park, IL — February 2008

Our Theatre Manager reports that the artist who played Flora (TOSCA) was fantastic, and the tenor was also equally amazing. Our audience wanted autographs from the cast, and apparently loved the show.

Burt Dikelsky, Executive Director — The Center for Performing Arts — University Park, IL

TOSCA at Clemson University, Clemson, SC — February 2008

TOSCA was absolutely fabulous — everything you said it would be, and I could not have been more pleased. Our house was about 80% full, in spite of terrible cold and rain. I was thrilled that people braved the elements to come to the performance.

The singers were incredible and I could not believe how they projected. The acoustics in our hall are fabulous, and really showed off the singers to the max. I thought the orchestra was excellent as well. I was mesmerized from the opening chord and just did not want the evening to be over. Powers was fabulous — what a voice. I'm sure he and Jennifer Larmore are quite a pair, and that's an interesting bit of news for me to know that they are married because I was so taken with her at Spoleto in 2006.

When is Teatro Lirico in this area in 08-09? You really do have a wonderful company, and I have received amazing comments — one yesterday from a very snooty and critical patron who has seen many productions at the Met, and she told me that she could not find any fault with the company.

My production supervisor said that your crew was very easy to work with and I love to keep him happy. Thank you for sending such a great show.”

Lillian Harder — Brooks Center at Clemson University — Clemson, SC

Teatro "Tosca" a must-see

Naples gave Teatro Lirico its best compliment Monday, standing through four finale bows after the company and three guest stars sailed through “Tosca” at the Philharmonic Center for the Arts. When Michael Hayes — Mario Cavaradossi — sang his defiant “Vittoria! Vittoria!” the volume set a few ears ringing in the front rows. Hayes slipped commandingly into the role of the ill-fated rebel sympathizer, stoking a beautiful voice with good dramatics. He delivered a wrenching execution-eve “E lucevan le stelle (And the stars were shining)” farewell and duet with Tosca, who has plotted, in vain, her lover’s escape.

In the last two years, Teatro has been embedding guest stars into its productions and performing here with the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra, a double injection of quality. With Kallen Esperian in the title role, it was another high: a lyric soprano with the acting ability to be the spitfire Tosca. Esperian's laurels, like Hayes', are extensive. She has had to hold her own against Placido Domingo and the late Luciano Pavarotti, so she can be expected to inhale a role like this one, as she did Monday.

Floria Tosca's role isn't a vocal gymnastic trial. But it's full of emotional moments such as "Vissi d'arte," a tearful rebuke to God for having left her in the clutches of Scarpia, the corrupt and lecherous chief of police. For those who don't know the story line, God delivers, leaving a carving knife nearby for Tosca to plunge into her would-be rapist's heart. Esperian delivered as well, singing a strong, poignant plea half-prone on the floor, and executing her tormentor ferociously. As Tosca kneels over the body, a horn report in the score sounds, and Esperian snaps her head up, hitting the audience full-force with a look of terror at what she has done. It's a riveting scene.

As Scarpia, William Powers sounds so much meaner than he looks. He's got the requisite brutal baritone to make us squirm, deep and dark.

Enabling this continuing roll toward professional perfection is the Philharmonic, under the baton of a veteran operatic conductor, Steven White. There's no comparison between this orchestra's ability and any other we've heard behind opera, which is going to be a fact of life with a full-time, professional symphony. The Phil's operas are becoming can't-wait-for-the-next-one quality."

HARRIET HOWARD HEITHAUS
NAPLES DAILY NEWS — February 2008

Teatro Lirico gives compelling performance of 'Tosca'

"The touring company, which this season will put on at least 30 productions of the opera, always puts its best foot forward. For this show, the voices were uniformly big and solid and the acting frequently kept pace with the quality of singing. Russian soprano Elena Razglaeva as Tosca had a lovely even range, luscious tones, and a clarity to her phrasing that was appealing. All her arias were done well. She projected the greatest amount of emotion in her second act aria in which she asks God why He rewards her this way. She posed just long enough on the parapet before jumping at the end to allow the huge crowd to get caught up in the moment. There was good chemistry with the charming Bulgarian tenor Orlin Goranov as her lover Cavaradossi. His voice soared easily through his famous arias. He was also light on his feet and ambled about the stage in a comfortable and realistic way. Bass-baritone William Powers projected the lecherous, rapacious character of Scarpia through an expressive face and a nonchalant manner that quickly became

malevolent. Except for his sardonic laugh at the end of Act I he never satirized Scarpia. Rather, he seemed to gather all the light around him like a black hole. His superb singing was smooth and elegantly phrased and he colored it with edge or crooned to good effect. Sets, by necessity, were basic but provided enough of a locale. Scarpia's red and orange "office" was more like Hades but the final parapet with the twilight/dawn light was evocative. The orchestra under Krassimir Topolov did well and gave the singers plenty of space. The principal clarinet was particularly good in the opening of the final big aria in Act III. Supertitles, too, were cogent and well timed. "

***Geraldine Freeman
Schenectady Gazette
March 2007***

TOSCA — Flynn Theatre, Burlington, VT

"It was a very very good production. We were really thrilled. Olga was wonderful, as were all the principals. Great singing and really good acting as well. Jane and I couldn't have been happier. Thank you so much and kudos to the company and crew."

***Natalie
UVM Lane Series
Burlington, VT***

TOSCA — Flynn Theatre, Burlington, VT

"Everything went beautifully last night and we were very happy with the performance...excellent singing and acting. Please thank Giorgio for us!"

***Jane Ambrose
Director, UVM Lane Series
Burlington, VT***

TOSCA — NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER — Newark, NJ

On behalf of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, I would like to thank you for Teatro Lirico D'Europa's TOSCA on November 11, 2007. As expected, the performance was simply exhilarating for all the attendance. The 2007-2008 season mark the Tenth Anniversary of NJPAC. From the very beginning we set out to establish a world-class performing arts venue. Teatro Lirico D'Europa's performance was certainly in the spirit of that mission. It's no surprise that Jenny Kelly Productions and NJPAC have developed a great relationship through the years. Here's to a future of many more memorable moments.

Barake Sele, Assistant Vice President, Programming — New Jersey Performing Arts Center

TOSCA was wonderful, which is the norm for one of your productions. Cheers!"

John Wilkes, GM – Sunrise Theatre – Ft. Pierce, FL – February 2013

These are some of the comments I got back about TOSCA: "The 'set' was authentic-looking. The lighting was perfect! Tosca had a beautiful voice and the way she moved around the stage was graceful. Cavaradossi had a great voice. Baron Scarpia played the part of the infatuated jealous scoundrel very well. His lust for life and indulging in all that it has to offer including "all the beauties and wine..." would put George Clooney to shame! The live orchestra was magnificent and the choral singing in the background gave it an ethereal experience for the ear. Can't think of anything else to say, just that it was GREAT! I also heard from more than one person that Tosca has an amazing and powerful voice."

Jessica Gloria, Director – Miramar Cultural Center – February 2013

"TOSCA was a great production, a great success! The after-party was a big success, too and everybody enjoyed meeting Giorgio and the cast members. They were very nice to visit with us after the performance. Thank you for all you all did and do, Jenny. I announced next season's schedule in my welcome remarks and in the program, so we've officially started next season's promotion!"

***Kathy Neuman, Chairman – Palmetto Opera performance at Koger Center
Columbia, SC – March 2013***

"All I can say, with the loudest voice I have, is GRAZIE!! This production of TOSCA was simply amazing! The attention to detail, the costumes, the incredible set pieces, the absolutely amazing orchestra and the voices...oh those voices!!! I actually brought in vocal students from surrounding high schools for their first live opera experience, and I truly believe it was life changing for them! They have not stopped talking about it! Thank you again, and HURRY BACK!"

***RON ONESTI, President/CEO – The Onesti Entertainment Corporation
The Arcada Theatre, St. Charles, Illinois – January 2016***

Translation of TOSCA review from THE KOREAN DAILY NEWS/Chicago

It was simply a magnificent performance! TOSCA displayed a beautiful, traditional stage setting with full orchestra and chorus that brought a very high quality of the art form. Teatro Lirico D'Europa's 2nd season in Chicagoland left a memory of great pleasure and inspiration in the community. Former Metropolitan opera star Bill Powers performed the role

of as Scarpia. Korean tenor Simon Kyung Lee was Cavaradossi and the title role of Tosca was sung by Rosa D'Imperio, who sang "Vissi d'arte" invested with deep emotion and a fine vocal technique to which the audience responded with great applause. Tenor Simon Kyung Lee sang the role of Cavadossi with conviction and clarity of voice quality throughout the performance, specially outstanding in his desperate aria "E lucevan le stelle" which brought tears of emotion. As the devilish character Scarpia, bass Bill Powers was simply perfect!

At the conclusion of of Act III the entire audience responded with a HUGE LONG STANDING OVATION for several minutes. After the show, many members of the audience expressed how much they enjoyed the evening and hoped there will be many more to come in the future."

*Min Kim, Reporter — Korea Daily News
North Shore Performing Arts Center, Skokie, Illinois — January 2016*

G. Verdi — AIDA

AIDA Brings Audience Marvels of Ancient Egypt!

"Verdi's AIDA marched into a sold-out Anderson Center Thursday night. Ofelia Hristova was lovely as Aida and showed an excellent command of dynamics, from riveting fortes to the very softer pianissimo. Roumen Doikov as Radames is a powerful tenor with a great sound. Ambra Vespasiani as Amneris gave an incredibly stirring performance, masterfully plunging her character into the depths of despair, making the audience applaud her performance even before the music ended. The vitriol she hurls at the priests who condemn Radames to die garnered her curtain call to numerous enthusiastic shouts of "brava!" A wonderful performance was also turned in by Theodore Lambrinos as Amonasro. His rich baritone and convincing acting made his appeal to the Egyptian king and his persuasion of Aida to betray Radames among the best scenes in the opera. The sets for Aida were excellent, especially the enormous Egyptian scene quilted on a tapestry, the Sphinx head and the backdrop of the royal palace at Memphis -an expertly painted tromp l'oeil. Aida is ethereal and beautiful. Verdi's masterpiece remains magnificent."

BINGHAMTON PRESS AND SUN BULLETIN — February 2001

Teatro Lirico D'Europa Lights Up Anderson Center with Verdi's AIDA!

"The Anderson Center welcomed its first full opera. Those who entered early caught an unimpeded view of the set rising above the stage with the majesty of an ancient temple. Prisoners were brought in to a lavish scene of dancers and chorus, with the entire company

filling the stage. Amonasro's voice was clear and powerful like a true King. Ambra Vespasiani (Amneris) effectively communicated the tragedy of a woman torn between love and anger. She was met with deafening applause at her curtain call. Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented a sumptuous story. Hristova (AIDA) played her role with the delicate sweetness of a woman in love. Costumes were lavish and the lighting played off the gilt fabric and jewels laden on Amneris, drawing the eye to her every time she moved. Aida was a wonderful addition to the season as evidenced by the full house and ticket buyers being turned away at the door."

PIPE DREAM RELEASE – Binghamton, NY – February 2001

Strong Voices make Troupe's AIDA Verdi Good!

"With Boston Lyric Opera in the middle of a run of Strauss' 'Salome' it was left to the enterprising Teatro Lirico d'Europa to provide Boston with a Verdi tribute with AIDA. Now in its second major USA tour, Teatro Lirico D'Europa offered a principal quartet of singers who displayed an instinctive grasp of Verdi's musical line and did so with often-gleaming vocalism. The opera is undeniably a masterpiece. Its return is always welcome when the singers can satisfy Verdi's considerable demands. Roumen Doikov, as Radames, solidified the positive impression he made last year as Calaf in the company's 'Turandot.' The Bulgarian tenor has the looks and manner of a retired prize fighter-not inappropriate for portraying a warrior-and an appealing, brawny voice with big, ringing high notes. Veteran American born baritone, Theodore Lambrinos, sank his teeth into the sonorous vocal line Verdi fashioned for the short but important role of Amonasro with richness and power. As Amneris, Italian mezzo soprano, Ambra Vespasiani, has a big, lush voice that dominated the famous Triumphal Scene ensembles. She achieved real pathos in the Judgment Scene. In the title role, soprano, Galia Gortcheva, used her attractive, Slavic tinged soprano to nice effect. If what you want most from a night at the opera is big, authentic voices, you wouldn't have been disappointed on Monday."

BOSTON HERALD – T. J. Medreck – February 2001

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa delivers a lot of bang for the public's buck. There was never a dull moment! Soprano, Galia Gortcheva (AIDA) a leading artist of Belgrade Opera, sang very carefully. A strong lyric soprano, she has a reliable high C and can float a lovely pianissimo across most of her range. She moves well and uses her long arms expressively. Ambra Vespasiani, [Amneris] a tiny spark plug of a woman with a large voice, fearlessly flung out from booming chest tones to blowtorch top notes; she tore down the house in the Judgment scene. Tenor Roumen Doikov, seems to enjoy singing the part-and to rejoice in the smiling fortune that made him a tenor. He is a rock-solid vocalist and his stage personality is boyish and eager to please. He's got the high notes and delivers everything else honestly and

securely. The Greek-American baritone, Theodore Lambrinos, has been on the stage for the better part of 40 years; he knows his business and brought a ferocious dramatic presence to Amonasro. Conductor Krassimir Topolov was spacious and stylish while the chorus of Bulgarian voices poured out thrilling sound."

BOSTON GLOBE — Richard Dyer — February 2001

2nd Boston Globe Review AIDA

"Ofelia Hristova has a true Aida instrument and temperament. She also has the stage presence and wore two drop-dead diva dresses. Hristova created a regal, powerful and sympathetic characterization. She came onstage...acting and reacting; she also let her soprano soar over the ensembles. Her voice has a fascinating dark timbre and voluptuous texture. It recalls that of fabled Turkish soprano Leyla Genzer, and she has a comparably glowing pianissimo. Her Italian is more idiomatic and vivid than Deborah Voigt's was on the broadcast from the Met last Saturday afternoon. Hristova was at her best in the Nile Scene and crowned her "O patria mia" by floating the closing wide-spanning phrase on one breath, as Verdi directs, and that is something you will hear once in a thousand performances. The audience got its money's worth and then some."

BOSTON GLOBE — Richard Dyer — February 2001

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa has given more than 2,000 performances in Europe since 1986. Last year on its first American tour, it came to Boston with Turandot, a rip-roaring production with big voices, and a strong chorus. Teatro Lirico is back in the centenary year of Verdi's death with AIDA. The backdrops of Karnak and the Pyramids across-the Nile are evocative. Two colossal statues menacingly flank the action. The orchestra is excellent and so is Krassimir Topolov's conducting, which keeps things moving along without losing any of Verdi's atmospherics. The chorus is superb-full bodied, vigorous, grown-up voices. Theodore Lambrinos, as Amonasro, conveyed a believable character. He could sing too. And so could Doikov [Radames] with brightly resounding stenorian tones, and primitive raw material to spare. The big hit of the evening was Vespasiani (Amneris)...pouring out a huge, vibrant, ferocious sound that knocked you out of your seat. You couldn't help being impressed. Teatro Lirico has some voices!"

BOSTON PHOENIX — Lloyd Schwartz — February 2001

'Aida' Marches to Victory at Peace Center!

"Friday night's Peace Center audience was treated to a sterling performance of AIDA by Teatro Lirico D'Europa and a fitting tribute to Verdi. The opera was on wings itself as Doikov

brought to life the hero of the story, Radames, singing with bright, strong tones and crystal clear diction. The line up of voices showed plenty of resources at hand for the European touring opera company. Ofelia Hristova's Aida transported us to a psychological landscape of conflicting loyalties. She gave a tender performance. Her pianissimos were delicate and luxurious with exquisite ornamentation in "Ritorna vincitor," and her key Act III aria "O patria mia." Unforgettable was mezzo soprano, Ambra Vespasiani's Amneris. The woman is one huge voice crammed into one tiny body. But you would never know that if you closed your eyes and allowed her smoldering, ember voice to pound and cajole you with her demands, manipulations and lamentations. I loved her "Vieni o diletta appressati," reeling in the unsuspecting Aida, and her judgment scene duet opposite Doikov. Brooklyn born Theodore Lambrinos as Aida's father, wielded a fabulous baritone-strong and rich as dark chocolate, booming from his full-throated arias. Lambrinos sings with authority. He has owned this role from his Metropolitan Opera days. Basso Emil Ponnorski — King, and Dimiter Stantchev — Ramfis' sonorous deliveries were the glue for the story's meaning. Teatro Lirico's orchestra under the baton of Krassimir Topolov was exceptionally good as were the company's corps de ballet and splendid chorus. The sets were impressive including the huge Egyptian domestic scene quilted on a tapestry and the massive temples dominated by a sphinx head. My seatmates were thrilled with the production."

Ann Hicks — THE GREENVILLE NEWS — February 2001

AIDA Performance Kept Audience Glued to Every Change in Tone!

"Pyramid power came to the Stanley Performing Arts Center Saturday night in the form of AIDA. For a traveling show, the Teatro Lirico D'Europa production was of majestic scope, with full-stage scenery and props taking you back to the Egyptian dynasties, magnificent singing, an orchestra of 50, a chorus of 45 and nine dancers... The presentation was irresistible. The expressive singers kept the Great Artist Series audience of 2,513 glued to every change of tone. Roumen Doikov, an exciting and robust tenor plays Radames. Soprano Galia Gortcheva, sings Aida with dramatic intonations that clearly put across the lowest plea or the highest point of outrage in a spellbinding manner. Amneris the Egyptian Princess is portrayed by Ambra Vespasiani. Her soaring and simpering voice displays romantic, jealous and destructive emotions with a vengeance. The singers perform in impressive sets that change in every scene. The opera opens in a columned temple with two stage height statues at each end. It converts to a temple crowned by a boulder sized head of a pharaoh... the suite of the princess with a large red and gold Egyptian tapestry at back and a couch in lion shape for royalty to dwell in. There's also a scene with the twin pyramids and the Nile River in the background-and a split stage scene in the final act. The chorus in white Egyptian costumes with long sashes in front filled up the stage. The leads left the audience with mouths agape."

Jonas Kovan — UTICA DISPATCH OBSERVER — February 2001

"Monday night the Philharmonic Center for the Arts marked the 100th anniversary of the great composer's death [G. Verdi] with a version of AIDA by Teatro Lirico D'Europa. The company has toured Europe since 1986 with its stable of professional singers, 50 — member orchestra, 40 — member chorus and ballet ensemble, and it provided the stage with a heady whiff of Ancient Egypt. It has been said that Verdi hated cheap effects and circus-style production. He probably would have approved of the elegant sets used by Teatro Lirico D'Europa; they were colorful and evocative. The orchestra under the baton of Krassimir Topolov also had a vivid presence. From the moment Radames, played by tenor Roumen Doikov, opened his mouth to sing "Celeste Aida," in Act I, it was apparent that this company is capable of making music on a superior level. Doikov has a strikingly beautiful voice, robust, full and with vibrant high notes. The company's Aida, Ofelia Hristova, has performed with great critical acclaim on the company's national tours. Her voice is big and her coloratura is true. The high point of the evening was the performance of Ambra Vespasiani as Amneris. This young mezzo from Italy has it all. Her expressive, rich voice is beautifully trained and her acting reminds me of Callas at her best. She was truly the star of the evening and the audience made it clear that they recognized she is more than a good singer. She is world class. There were also fine performances by Dimiter Stantchev as Ramfis, and Theodore Lambrinos as Amonasro. Lambrinos is a Metropolitan Opera veteran. His deep, resonant voice and his stage know-how lent enormous stature to his role. This was an evening of glorious music from the master."

NAPLES DAILY NEWS — Corinne Dunne — February 2001

Aida brought the audience to their feet

The presentation of the Teatro Lirico D'Europa was nothing short of amazing. The voices of the soloists were powerful. They rang out over the orchestra and consumed all those who attended. The stage and costumes for the production were first rate. The entire Egyptian theme was captured in the set designs and echoed throughout the main auditorium as the orchestra played. Despite the incredible voices that joined the main characters on stage, there were two performers that stood out and made their voices ring out over the orchestra and into the hearts of the audience. First was the voice of Radames. The tenor (Roumen Doikov) had no problem projecting his voice with accuracy and precision. The second voice that captivated me was the mezzo soprano voice of Amneris, Princess of Egypt (Tatiana Ishemova.) Her voice had an incredible range. It was obvious that the performers assembled on stage, were well trained and knew how to captivate an audience. Kudos to Teatro Lirico D'Europa for the fine performance!"

DEFUNIAK SPRINGS HERALD — February 2001

Well-crafted AIDA a Treat for Alamo City!

"Seeing a production of G. Verdi's grand opera "Aida" in San Antonio is a treat indeed. That it was performed ably-by a professional touring group complete with orchestra, chorus, and ballet ensemble-makes it so much better. The polished voices and excellent orchestra and chorus successfully drew the audience in to Verdi's story. From the opening prelude, the orchestra's precision and polished competent sound allowed the audience to relax. What takes place on stage is a vision of Egypt at its most exotic. Teatro Lirico's set was large in scale...huge stone pillars covered with hieroglyphics, 12 foot statues and a great stone face suspended above center stage. Tatiana Ishemova's mature, mezzo soprano voice was one of the highlights of the performance, rich in the lower register and powerful in the upper range. Her commanding stage presence befitted a pharaoh's daughter. Ofelia Hristova [Aida] displayed a particularly good control of softer notes in the high register. In the Act II ("O patria mia") a lovely lyrical style stood her in a good stead. Doikov as Radames was a robust, taut and well-trained tenor. The lively presence of ballet dancers provided sheer delight for the eyes. Especially good was the solo dancer. Other fine voices rounded out the performance including that of the Priest-bass, Ivan Tomasev, and Aida's father, American baritone, Mark. C. Gargiulo."

SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS – February 2001

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented its resplendent production of G. Verdi's grand opera masterpiece Aida to a large and happy McCain Auditorium audience. It certainly gave our crowd its money's worth. I found the overall high artistic quality of their achievement quite remarkable. The set looked as if built of Egyptian pyramid stone, a gigantic sphinx loomed behind it, flanked by a pair of monumental effigies. The bigmooned Nile scene scrim suggested a sense of depth and scope as well. The regal principal's costumes had a weighty dignity that elevated them to large than life status. Aida sported two different but equally splendiferous gowns. Choral robes accented the unified power of the king's minions and the dancers' skimpy balletic wear subtly implied their role of obedient functionaries. Under the firm and sensitive direction of Maestro Topolov, the partnership of instrumental and vocal sonorities was exceptional. A performance of Aida is a rare enough event anywhere. Here at McCain it's most likely a once-in-a lifetime thrill. I hope you enjoyed and valued it as much as I did."

MANHATTAN MERCURY NEWS – Ben Nyberg – March 2001

Touring Company Makes a Spectacle of AIDA!

Teatro Lirico D'Europa succeeded in bringing a sense of spectacle to the Lied Center stage. The sets featured a massive-looking stone arch, a gigantic pharaoh's head, huge statues flanking the stage and a tromp l'oeil background of massive colonnades retreating into the

distance The performers were on an equally grand scale, with big, big voices and broad acting. The eight dancers succeeded by appearing to be more numerous than they actually were, and in melding classical ballet with some exotic and beautiful movements. The chorus filled the stage and sang enthusiastically. For Sunday's sold — out performance we heard Ofelia Hristova as Aida, a genuine dramatic coloratura. She floated her high notes with extraordinary beauty and impeccable technique and she had enough power to fill the house. She was well matched by Roumen Doikov-Radames, a powerful tenor that remained round throughout his range. Judith Engel was genuinely moving as Amneris. The orchestra conducted by Krassimir Topolov, did full justice to Verdi's remarkable score.

KANSAS CITY STAR — March 2001

Grand opera came to Springfield, IL last weekend -Verdi's Aida, and it was very grand indeed. Giorgio Lalov, the artistic director, believes that one must remain true to the composer's vision of the opera and his company puts on a truly magnificent production. Lalov travels with an orchestra of 47-no synthesizers, no cheating-just a fine group of musicians that execute Verdi's score with great skill and authenticity. The sets were beautiful! They alone drew spontaneous applause from the audience as the curtain rose. The opening staging for the royal palace at Memphis was elegant, and a huge tapestry that set the scene for Amneris' royal suite was breathtaking. The singers were magnificent. Lalov obviously has a touch of genius in casting his roles. Ofelia Hristova's soprano voice soared in the title role of Aida. Judith Engel sang a stunning Amneris. Roumen Doikov's glorious tenor lent veracity to his love for Aida. Mark Gargiulo was especially good as Amonasro. An absolutely gorgeous part of this production was the ballet group of eight dancers! Their costumes were marvelous, and their execution flawless-a fabulous visual enhancement for the opera. The very large audience was also very appreciative-and rightly so. I can't wait till next year!

ILLINOIS TIMES — Ann Kerr — March 2001

Teatro Lirico D'Europa's 'Aida'

"Teatro Lirico, brought a large contingent to town for the production. Besides the essential lead singers, it had the Sofia Symphony Orchestra in the pit, a full male and female chorus, and a corps of eight or so splendid dancers. The many huge sets and backdrops marvelously recreated the beauty and awesomeness of the era of the Ancient Egyptian pharaohs and the sets were effectively illuminated with special spots at crucial scenes. The varying colorful and imaginative backgrounds added much to Friday's staging, even eliciting applause when the curtains were drawn open. An exceptionally smart logistical decision came about when Teatro Lirico used the ballet corps to entertain as the celebration focus during the Triumphal March music. A superb ballet performed by both male and female

dancers. Moreover director Lalov benefited from good singers. A genuine find was the stirring tenor, Roumen Doikov, as the heroic warrior Radames. Blessed with the clear clarion sound of previous purveyors of the role, young Doikov shone brightly throughout. All his notes could be heard without exception-and they were worth hearing as well. The young Yugoslavian basso Ivicsa Tomasev acquitted himself handsomely as the high priest of Isis, thanks to a marvelous low range. Another solid lead was mezzo soprano, Judith Engel, as the Egyptian Princess Amneris. Performing in the tradition of many Amneris before her, the American born and trained Engel sang the bejeebers out of her part!"

KALAMAZOO GAZETTE – March 2001

A Grand 'Aida' Is Triumphant at The Garde!

"In its first performance in the region, the touring Teatro Lirico d'Europa staged an 'Aida' in its full glory at The Garde Arts Center. The 50-piece orchestra, the commanding Egyptian sets, a 40-voice chorus in splendid costumes, a corps de ballet and a cast of robust, Verdi-sized voices successfully brought a big-city opera experience to New London. The production did full justice to the majesty and boiling passions of Verdi's work. As Radames, Roumen Doikov was a perfect fit for the drama. Supple throughout the range and hair raising at the top, he announced his mastery early with a stellar "Celeste Aida" and in the later ensembles, rang true atop the big chorus and full orchestra, even at the most towering crescendi. As Ramfis, bass, Ivan Tomasev, was a towering presence, both physically and vocally and the two warring kings, Egypt's sung by bass Emil Ponorsky and the defeated Ethiopian sung by American baritone Theodore Lambrinos, were equally commanding. Tatiana Ishemova, (Amneris) warmed to the task and in the final act, her anguished outcries were terrific vocal theater. Along with the monumental sets evoking ancient Thebes and gold-be-dazzled costumes, the large orchestra was crucial to the score's success. The dance scenes were high points."

THE DAY – March 2001

"Friday night's AIDA at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts featured Teatro Lirico D'Europa; an international company of excellent soloists, musicians, singers and dancers. With strong principal voices, a full competent choir, a stellar orchestra and stunning costume and set design, Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented a superb rendition complete with projected English super titles. Set designer Vaintine Topencharov created an impressively monolithic Egyptian set of obelisks, trompe l'oeil columns and gargantuan pharaoh statues. The three principals are first rate. As Radames, tenor Roumen Doikov was simply outstanding. His full tenor voice intertwined beautifully with Amneris and Aida-Italian soprano, Rosella Redoglia. Other standouts included bass Ivica Tomasev as a high priest of

Isis, bass Emil Ponorski as Egypt's King and the strong corps de ballet, which added more spectacular costumes...clearly accomplished dancers."

BURLINGTON FREE PRESS – March 2001

A Trip down the Nile

"Considering the compromises usually made by touring opera companies, the sets for this AIDA were far above the norm, with appearance of solidity and a strongly traditional Egyptian feeling. A large suspended terra cotta pharaoh's head flavorfully dominated several scenes while a stunning black and gold tapestry of a flat profiled Egyptian dancer dominated Amneris's suite. A shimmering moon reflection on the water and silhouettes of pyramids made the third act evocative. The beautiful static tableau of dancers was welcome to the eye, even more so when it gradually came to life with very graceful, idiomatically Egyptian dancing."

BUFFALO NEWS – March 2001

Teatro Lirico's 'Aida' just right to the last detail

"The Teatro Lirico D'Europa's performance of "Aida" at Merrill Auditorium got it just right, even after a snow-filled journey from Rochester, NY. The sets were remarkable, the singers thoroughly professional-the full orchestra better than most in any opera pit, the chorus strong and well rehearsed, and the ballet dancers spectacular. The production admirably served the purpose of bringing real grand opera to an audience... and there wasn't a microphone in sight. Tenor Roumen Doikov was excellent as Radames and baritone Theodore Lambrinos as Amonasro was superb. Tatiana Ishemova as Amneris was quite moving. The title role was sung by Ofelia Hristova. Her arias were gorgeous. The ballet dancers were superb. The audience gave everyone a long standing ovation."

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD – Christopher Hyde – March 2001

AIDA Wins New Fans in Heartfelt Lied Center Show!

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa put the "grand" in grand opera with impressive sets that placed us cheek to jowl with the Sphinx and the pyramids. A large and impressively costumed cast of royals, priests, priestesses, captains, foot soldiers, functionaries, slaves and Ethiopian prisoners was likewise impressive. The spectacle was further enhanced with on-stage trumpeters and a sultry ballet danced by 8 exotic sylphs. Also noteworthy is the spectacular phenomenon of the trained opera voice capable of filling a huge theater like the Lied. Ofelia Hristova, (Aida) Roumen Doikov, (Radames) and Judith Engel, (Amneris) were key in

bringing Verdi's impassioned musical drama to vivid dramatic life. It was a wonderful night. A full and enthusiastic house stood and cheered at the final curtain."

TOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL — March 2001

Verdi's Classic AIDA Takes Full House Captive!

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa's production of Verdi's classic tale AIDA was magnificent in every sense of the word...a performance finely tuned and beautifully crafted."

LAWRENCE JOURNAL WORLD — March 2001

'Aida' — a Grand Opera at the Grand!

"Patrons of Opera Delaware had a great treat recently when the Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented its version of Verdi's AIDA in our own Grand Opera House. The combination of thrilling voices, glorious music, gripping drama and magnificent settings provided stimulating entertainment."

GREENVILLE COMMUNITY NEWS — March 2001

"Brilliant tapestries, gold brocade fabrics and monumental statues created the opulent, regal ambiance this work demands. Set in stone the elaborate sets for 'Aida' created the regal atmosphere of the ancient Egyptian court."

ROCHESTER TIMES UNION

"Remarkable voices! Strong conducting! A well planned production. All the lead singers had better than modest voices, with promising international careers ahead of them. The orchestra was about the size you'd find in the pit at the Metropolitan Opera, giving full value to Verdi's musical intent, including onstage trumpets. Giorgio Nottv conducted with solid control and even a touch of grandeur and passion. Soprano Ofelia Hristova as AIDA did not have to push. She sang with distinction. Her 'O Patria mia' was beautifully phrased, tonally radiant. Lev Kuznetsov sang Radames with stoic projection. Mezzo soprano, Stefka Mineva acted with her voice. Her scene at the end was powerfully tragic."

SCHENECTADY TIMES UNION

"Complete with a splendid chorus, a well schooled orchestra, and a cast of soloists with big sumptuous voices...this 'Aida' has genuinely thrilling moments! It's well worth hearing. The

number of people traveling with this 'Aida' is unusually large for a touring opera company. This pays off in the number of musicians in the pit and the full-throated chorus. Such numbers are of particular importance in the triumphal concerted scenes with which 'Aida' abounds. All benefit from the close rapport between the astute conductor, his polished orchestra, and the singers and dancers. The production is elaborately set with ancient Egyptian scenery."

VARIETY — Markland Taylor

AIDA Lives up to Billing as Opera to see this Year!

"This 'Aida' was great. Teatro Lirico D'Europa created the illusion of magnitude with big props, large backdrops painted with the perspective depth, and the largest ensemble of singers and musicians to ever accompany a local opera. The grandiose music, conducted with passion, was more than enough to make this 'Aida' memorable. The choirs attained a mystical quality with wondrous harmonies. Individual vocal honors go to Roumen Doikov as Radames. He deftly negotiated each change and projected each passage clearly. Ofelia Hristova as Aida did shine in the soprano register. She executed the beautiful 'O Patria mia' with conflicting emotions."

THE DESERT SUN — Bruce Fessier — February 2000

Traveling Aida Lives up to Lavish Description!

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa's touring 'Aida' provided plenty of spectacle for ticket buyers. Elaborate sets, gorgeous costumes, superb musical direction of the 50 — piece orchestra and an excellent corps de ballet added to the production's elegance. Singing by the principals was very good and they received strong assistance from a cast of more than 40 supporting singers. Tenor Roumen Doikov, who opened the show with a well-sung version of "Celeste Aida," was an audience favorite. As Aida, soprano Ofelia Hristova sang powerfully in the upper range and sweetly in the pianissimo section of the role's signature aria "Ritorna Vincitor" and "O Patria mia." Her passionate and very well sung duet with Doikov in the 3rd Act was the highlight of the evening. The conductor led a well-prepared and lushly appointed orchestra in a flawless performance. Judging from the enthusiastic reception the company received from the sold out audience, let's hope Teatro Lirico D'Europa will be back with more."

NORTH COUNTY TIMES — Pam Kagan — February 2000

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa puts on a good show, as witness this 'Aida.' Verdi's masterpiece score is treated with respect, beginning with a 60-member orchestra in the Cerritos pit. The

singers in this production performed solidly. Roumen Doikov, the Radames, possesses a thrilling and consistent tenor voice of healthy, Italianate ring. The staging by company artistic director, Giorgio Lalov, is direct and practical. Aida, Ofelia Hristova rose to the Verdian challenges with dramatic color, technical ease and beautiful high notes."

LOS ANGELES TIMES — February 2000

AIDA Comes Up Big, On the Stage and Off!

"This AIDA was the most exciting production to come to Scranton in a dozen years. The 45 piece orchestra played gorgeously, the 40 voice chorus was more than able to acquit itself, and the six principals were really quite wonderful."

SCRANTON TIMES — March 2003

The performance was wonderful, — best yet! Best attendance in years also, despite the snow. The audience gave overwhelming applause — and commented that it was worth the wait. We did brisk advanced sales for our 2009-2010 season so we are really looking forward to our next performances, and can't wait for your selections for 2010-2011! Thanks again for a great performance. Opera New Hampshire looks forward to a long relationship with you."

Richard Bojko — Opera New Hampshire — Manchester, NH — January 2009

Troupe in fine voice for Verdi

"A large audience at Merrill Auditorium was transported to sultry ancient Egypt on Thursday, one of the coldest nights of the year, courtesy of PCA Great Performances and Teatro Lirico d'Europa. The traveling opera company has brought many excellent and fully staged performances to Portland over the years. Their "Aida ... was no exception.

Mezzo-soprano Tatyana Kaminskaya, who sang the role of Amneris, Pharaoh's jealous daughter became its most powerful and interesting figure, dramatically and vocally. Olga Chernisheva was equally at home in the title role of a woman caught between her love of country (Ethiopia) and the military leader of the Egyptians, Radames, sung by tenor Rumen Doikov. Baritone Marian Jovanovsky made a strong Amonasro, King of Ethiopia and Aida's father. All of the voices were distinctive enough to combine well in Verdi's famous duets and trios. Although the principal voices were first-rate, most striking about the production were its ancillary features — the live orchestra conducted by Krassimir Topolov the lovely and graceful corps de ballet, which substituted for a phalanx of priests, the distinctive costumes, and a monumental set design that did quadruple duty through all four acts. The small male

and female choruses, which Verdi makes as important to the action as those in Greek tragedy, demonstrated once again that power does not reside in numbers.”

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD – Christopher Hyde – January 17, 2009

Teatro Lirico’s “Aida,” a solid blend of color, realistic sets, superb costuming, and strong vocal and orchestral heft.

“Aida is a triumphant opera in four acts, only two of which (the first two) contain any memorable arias or music. Still, it is considered one of Verdi’s most popular. The audience at the opening night performance of this venerable classic at Emerson’s Cutler Majestic in Boston was treated to an impressive display of mighty vocal talent, solid musical accompaniment, and impressive visual sets color, lighting and costuming.

The clear standout performer in this production was soprano Elena Razgylaeva, who sang the role of Aida. She had a strong, nuanced vocal delivery that carried well throughout the theater, and delivered a performance that was natural and relaxed. The orchestra was always well modulated, and never in competition with the singers. Kudos to conductor, Krassimir Topolov. The audience seemed to particularly enjoy the performance of Marion Jovanovsky, who brought to the role of the King of Ethiopia, a palpable energy and sense of purpose. His delivery was kinetic, his acting was superb and his presence was commanding. And we might add to this fine job the strong ensemble performance of bass Vladimir Hristov, singing the role of the King of Egypt and bass Dimiter Stantchev, who gave a superb performance as high priest, Ramfis.

The entire cast, as well as the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and ballet dancers, who were magnificent, I might add, gave this show a big show feel and a big show sound, as we have come to expect from Teatro Lirico D’Europa.”

***Emerson College’s Cutler Majestic Theatre
OPERAONLINE.US – Paul Joseph Walkowski – January 16, 2009***

"AIDA was a WONDERFUL production! The singers were first-rate, most notably Elena Razgylaeva. What a voice! We loved the sets, the costumes, the dancers, everything was just great. It is amazing to us that the group can do this night after night with such excellent results. Our thanks to you, Giorgio, and the whole company for doing this wonderful work for us. It was the perfect ending to our "Winterfest." We look forward to La Boheme.”

Nancy and Dallas Weekly – Daytona Beach Symphony Society – January 2009

"I just want to tell you what a wonderful performance of AIDA we had this afternoon. It was exquisite and flawless and everyone in the audience was entranced. It was our best opera yet! Thank you, thank you and we are very much looking forward to LA BOHEME next month."

Carol Anderson — Daytona Beach Symphony Society — January 2009

The performance was excellent and a great audience response. The new set looked really fine.

Robert Freedman, Director — Ruth Eckerd Hall — Clearwater, FL — January 2009

"Wonderful!!!! Great production...thanks."

Enoch Morris, GM — River Center Theatre, Columbus, GA — January 2009

"The production was fantastic — as all of your productions you have delivered to me. I would like to go with another production next season to try and build the market here in Fort Pierce. Again, Jenny, the production was as expected, great. Will speak with you next week."

John Wilkes, GM — Sunrise Theatre — Ft. Pierce, FL — February 2009

"The vocalists, orchestra and dancers were all ON for the performance in Prescott and performed beautifully."

***Deb McCasland, GM — Yavapai College Performance Hall
Prescott, AZ — February 2009***

"It was very well received, as was the Great Moments in Opera evening. The orchestra was very tight, perhaps the best they have ever sounded. Elena (Razgylaeva) has such beautiful voice and she makes it seem so effortless, our donors can't stop talking about her. Thanks so much to you and Giorgio for making it possible for us to present such a wonderful company in our community. It really means a lot to us."

***Kris Sabel, GM — Vilar Center — Vail, CO — February 2009
(regarding AIDA and Opera Gala)***

“Teatro Lirico D’Europa returned to the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts over the weekend bringing more grand opera in the form of Giuseppe Verdi’s great Aida which filled the stage with action and angst along with three glorious hours of singing. The Sofia Symphony Orchestra and chorus gave excellent support to the half dozen principal singers and the big scale set was certainly good enough for the hall. The singing was decidedly first-rate. There is an awful lot to see on the stage with the different levels of sets, the large chorus singing parts like a character in the plot and dancers who perform ballet in several sequences. This production did have strong performances from the critical roles: Olga Chernisheva as Aida was delicate and beautiful but with soprano voice enough to sing this demanding role over the length of large opera. Tenor Gabriel Gonzalez returned from his earlier triumph at Cerritos, singing Radames extremely taxing character while gaining admiration for the music and sympathy for his acting of the complex soldier. Lastly, Tatiana Kaminskaya wrapped herself around the double-edged persona of Amneris making her evil in her jealousy and heartbreaking in her remorse. The two ladies singing on “Fu la sorte dell' armi a' tuoi funesta” when Amneris gets Aida to reveal her love for Radames was exceptionally moving and Radames profession of love “Pur ti riveggo, mio dolce Aida” was strong enough to have some in the audience reaching for handkerchiefs. Aida is a lot of opera, a large scale show with an exhausting amount of dialogue but in the end it is very much worth staying to hear the telling of this tragic story.”

Glen Creason – Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts – February 2009

“Oh my! The show was absolutely marvelous!! As you know, this is our 50th year anniversary in which we've been presenting professional artists and one of our very discerning and distinguished patrons gushed, "This is the very best thing this community has EVER seen!" Not a bad comment huh? Thanks much!"

Gail Bunker – Cox Performing Arts Center – St. George, UT – February 2009

“Everything was wonderful! I have a friend who is the chairman of an opera company that is about to go bankrupt. I told him about you and I think you guys will be the answer for them to bring opera to their community. I will keep you posted and put him in touch with you. Thanks!”

***Mitchell Gershenfeld, Director of Presentations and Theater Operations
McCallum Theatre – Palm Desert – February 2009***

“AIDA was a very successful performance for us. Thanks for bringing us popular products year after year.”

*Craig M. Springer, Ph.D., Executive Director
Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts – February 2009*

THRILLING AIDA from Prescott, AZ

“Staging "Aida" is a huge undertaking. It requires a large orchestra and good-sized chorus along with dancers and a full complement of soloists. Few regional companies can afford to do it justice, so it was quite an amazing feat when the touring company Teatro Lirico d'Europa brought this opera in all its complexity to Prescott, Arizona on 6 February 2009. It was the same show that had already received great critical approval on the east coast and would soon be enjoyed in California. The brand new traditional production by Giorgio Lalov featured structures resembling museum pieces from the age of the Pharaohs that were decorated with copies of Ancient Egyptian art, as well as attractive, well-tailored costumes. Olga Chernisheva was a poignant Aida. She has already proven to be a consummate actress. Here, she sang with power and finesse. Russian born and American trained, she has the right sound for Italian opera. She was passionate in her duets with Rumén Doikov, her Radames, while her top notes radiated above this opera's huge ensembles. In the quieter moments, she sang with sweet plangent tones and an intimacy that made a real person of her character. Doikov was somewhat less of an actor, but he had the robust high notes that his role demanded and he was a commanding military leader. Tatyana Kaminskaya who sang the role of Princess, Amneris, Aida's rival for the love of Radames, has an enormous voice of great beauty and distinctive coloration. She easily surmounted the full orchestration of the Judgment Scene and her enthralling sound rolled out over the audience like the waves of an ocean. The most interesting young singer in the cast was the Amonasro, young Macedonian baritone Marian Jovanovsky. With his easily produced, sizeable dark voice and its glinting bronze overtones, he conveyed the bite of the drama. Vladimir Hristov was a properly overbearing king, while his high priest, Ramfis, sung by bass, Plamen Dimitrov, was menacing and dismissive of foreigners. Both of them added much to telling the details of the sad love story. Sweet voiced soprano, Snejana Dramcheva, offered a few moments of respite from the melodramatic story with her lovely invocation of the Egyptian gods while the Sofia Symphony Chorus, augmented with voices from a Colorado conservatory, sang with exquisite harmonies. Krassimir Topolov conducted with brisk tempi and the Sofia Symphony, played Verdi's gloriously orchestrated score with accuracy and precision. Needless to say, this excellent performance of the Verdi grand opera was a rare treat for the people of Prescott Arizona.”

Susan Hampton – Music and Vision Daily – Feb. 2009

"Thank you bringing us AIDA yesterday afternoon at Tilles Center. The performance was a real delight, and the AIDA in particular was wonderful. In the end the house was not bad-- something like 1300 sold; both the general audience and our sponsors (a wonderful family, opera-lovers) were very pleased. Hopefully we can do something with you in 2010 -- 2011. Best regards to Giorgio."

Elliott Sroka , GM -- Tilles Center, Long Island -- AIDA -- March 2009

"I am the new Director of the Miramar Cultural Center and will handle all bookings for next season. I enjoyed Teatro Lirico's AIDA and look forward to Teatro's CARMEN production coming here in February!"

Stephen Kantrowitz, GM -- Miramar Cultural Center, Miramar, FL -- January 2016

"I enjoyed the performance! The principals had great voices and the sets and costumes looked great! Giorgio was his usual charming self at the pre-show program. Always a hit!"

***Milton Russos, GM -- The Moran Theater
Times Union Center for the Performing Arts -- Jacksonville, FL -- January 2016***

We hope you are safe in that blizzard! It (AIDA) was a great production! This is the most impressive set you have ever brought here...really beautiful! And the costumes were beautiful too. The dancers provided a colorful diversion with their gold and bling. Good choreography. We thought all of the soloists were top-drawer! Amneris, Amonasro, and Aida were especially fine singers, as were the basses. Thank you for another excellent production, and we look forward to next year's!"

Dallas Weekly, Programming Director -- Daytona Beach Symphony Society -- January 2016

"The performance of AIDA was wonderful! Everyone just loved it. The total count of seats was 1,300. I had a nice conversation with Giorgio. Hope you fared ok in the snow storm!"

***Christine Gerhardt, Director of Operations -- Daytona Beach Symphony Society
Performance at Peabody Auditorium -- January 2016***

The show (AIDA) was wonderful and the audience loved it! The photos that were taken will be sent to you as soon as I receive them."

***Joyce Maddox, Programming Director -- Miramar Cultural Center
Miramar, FL -- January 2016***

Our audience at The Marina Civic Center was absolutely delighted with Teatro Lirico's performance of AIDA yesterday afternoon. The show is meant to be a visual spectacle and indeed it was. The set was marvelous—displaying the splendor and intrigue of ancient Egypt. But the best part was the powerful singing of the Amneris, Aida, Ramades and Ramfis. It was great to have the company back here for the eighth time—never a disappointment. Also, many thanks to Giorgio and cast members who warmly and generously participated in our post-opera reception and dinner. What a successful afternoon and evening!"

***Bob Borich, Program Director — Panama City Music Association
Performance at the Marina Civic Center — Panama City, FL — January 24, 2016***

The show itself (AIDA) was fabulous! We were all very impressed and VERY grateful. You should be proud of your crew. We are as always grateful for the beautiful show you provided and the Spanish dancers added great flair..."

***Judith Feinberg — Opera New Hampshire (presenter)
Palace Theatre — Manchester, NH — Feb. 14, 2016***

The sets and the costumes of AIDA were great and the voices were spectacular! We want more of these great artists. Thank you for bringing them to us! Looking forward to next year's CARMEN."

Mary Lee Mann, GM — Barbara Mann Performing Arts Hall — Ft. Myers, FL — February 10, 2016

G. Verdi — RIGOLETTO

If the rest of the season matches this production in artistic quality, it's going to be one hell of a good season for opera in Boston

"This is the 8th season of touring in the U.S. for this hardworking European company, and its opening in Boston with Verdi's popular "Rigoletto" was a propitious occasion, indeed. With smart and colorful sets by Vailntin Topencharov and a moody use of lighting by Giorgio Bajukliev, this production had all the feel of big theater. The sets filled the stage of the Cutler Majestic fully and added to a mood for this production that was at times both elegant and at others ominous. Well done!

But sets and lighting were not all that shone last night. The magic of this production was an outstanding cast that could not only sing, but act as well. I must acknowledge at the start

the wonderfully honed instrument of Russian soprano Larissa Yudina, whom we saw dazzling the audience in last year's "The Magic Flute." She thrilled us then with her Queen of the Night rendition of "Der Halle Rache Kocht in Meinem Herzen" (The wrath of hell is burning in my bosom), and she thrilled us again last night as the vulnerable and innocent Gilda. Ms. Yudina is gifted with amazing tonal clarity and vocal agility, and she put it all to good use in a performance that was wonderfully moving in all the right places. Brava!

Equally up to the task was baritone Vytautas Juozapaitis who's tortured characterization of Rigoletto was near flawless, strong and acted with intelligence and emotional depth. Mr. Juozapaitas has a full baritone that displays nice range and clarity, and coupled with the ease with which he commanded the stage, provided just the right measure of appeal that communicated to the audience the conflict and suppressed rage the character, no doubt, felt toward those who used and mocked him. Nicely done!

In the role of the Duke of Mantua was tenor Igor Borko. Mr. Borko has a remarkably flexible tenor voice that is balanced and smooth, and when reaching for the higher notes, is remarkably flexibly and full even at the higher range. He gave a realistic and underplayed performance that made his character seem more human and flawed than evil and devilish. As with the rest of this fine cast, he remained consistently vocally strong throughout and navigated the stage nicely and with solid presence. Bravo!

I particularly liked the deep, rich bass sound of Mikhail Kolelishvili, who sang the dark role of the assassin Sparafucile, and the lovely, of mezzo-soprano tones of Viara Zhelezova who sang the role of Sparafucile's sister. Ms. Zhelezova was particularly sensuous as she enticed the Duke, while gliding her hands along her exposed midriff and hips — a nicely adept addition, adding to the realism of the part she played.

The role of the chorus and orchestra here was and is important, and last night this chorus was both animated (natural in their movements on stage) and full-sounding. It was a well-balanced performance that added considerably to everything else that was going on on stage. The orchestra, under the leadership of Krassimir Topolov gave a fine rendition of the score, a performance that, in the end, had to be considered a big plus for all.

Teatro's "Rigoletto" had all the shine of a big stage production supplemented by the talents from a superb cast of performers who could sing up a storm and act as well. In a word: Wonderful! If the rest of the season matches this production in artistic quality, it's going to be one hell of a good season for opera in Boston."

OPERAONLINE. US — Paul Walkowski — October 2006

Players noteworthy in jester's dark tale

"The touring opera company Teatro Lirico D'Europa brings Verdi's opera "Rigoletto" to the Cutler Majestic Theatre every couple of years or so, and did so again last night for a weekend run. You can never get enough of a genuine classic, and with hits like the soprano's "Caro nome," the Act III Quartet and the tenor's ultra-famous "La donna e mobile," "Rigoletto" is a guaranteed pleaser. The Teatro Lirico production of this opera, directed by company artistic director, Giorgio Lalov, remains thoroughly traditional. And Krassimir Topolov led the orchestra with the vigor we've grown happily accustomed to from this conductor. Above all else, a performance of "Rigoletto" ultimately stands or falls on the merits of the principal singers. Tenor Igor Borko, as the Duke, displayed a good-sized, attractive voice, his highest notes have a nice bloom to them, and I admired the way he underplayed his big aria rather than just belting it out.

And as Gilda, soprano Larissa Yudina won me over immediately with her bright, cool sound bolstered by an attractive flutter. In the pivotal title role, Vytautas Juozapaitis — fondly remembered for his marvelous performance of the title role in Mozart's "Don Giovanni" with the Lirico here in 2003 — sang with a dark, commanding, tragedy-tinged baritone that vividly conveyed the character's flawed humanity and despair. And he masterfully delivered the role's two big arias. The crucial but smaller roles of assassin-for-hire Sparafucile and his Duke-bait sister Maddalena were excellently filled by Mikhail Kolelishvili and Viara Zhelezova."

THE BOSTON HERALD — T. J. Medrek — October 2006

RIGOLETTO: Emotional, Enlightening Show!

Teatro Lirico D'Europa to filled the roles with singers that elevate Verdi's music and cause the audience to leap to its feet! 'Rigoletto' staged with a full orchestra contained all the elements of grand opera, a majestic set, period costumes, a deep baritone, a strong tenor and a sailing soprano!"

LAWRENCE JOURNAL WORLD — Jan Bliss — March 2002

Opera has Place on Kansas Stage!

"A sold-out crowd jammed into the Leid Center for the Teatro Lirico D'Europa's exuberant production of RIGOLETTO. Hailing each aria, each duet and the show-stopping quartet of Act III with hearty rounds of applause, the audience was transfixed. This was a 'Rigoletto' that put the "grand" into grand opera, captivating hard core opera devotees as well as a host of young people. Thanks to Teatro Lirico's excellent cast and orchestra, G. Verdi's masterpiece soared. Nicolai Dobrev (Rigoletto) sang his heart out with a huge voice that filled the Leid. As Gilda, Kenneithia Mitchell showed off an expressive coloratura voice and

a crystal shattering top range that left us in awe. As the charismatic Duke, tenor Roumen Doikov also took bows. It was a wonderful evening. An enthusiastic audience stood and cheered for Teatro Lirico D'Europa's heartfelt performance."

TOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL — Chuck Berg — March 2002

Dazzling RIGOLETTO

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa is fast becoming a fixture in Rochester. On Friday Teatro gave a splendid rendition of Verdi's 'Rigoletto,' in every respect a fitting finale to Opera Rochester's season. The sets were traditional and colorful, the acting sincere and believable and the singing often dazzling. Much of the credit goes to the intelligent planning of artistic Director Giorgio Lalov. 'Rigoletto' is a tough opera to produce. Lalov called on his cast to give performances that were often down to earth and believable. Lalov kept the action sharp, focused and inevitable. Teatro's orchestra, expertly conducted by Krassimir Topolov, performed with sweep and vitality, providing solid ground for the singers; the fine male chorus sang with attention to detail and precise diction. The singing and acting were uniformly strong. Rigoletto is perhaps the most demanding role for a baritone and Nikolai Dobrev was equal to the task. His stentorian instrument was always clear and resonant. His Act I aria "Pari siamo" was sensational. Soprano Kenneithia Mitchell was a delightful Gilda and her performance of "Caro nome" was the highlight of the evening. This piece is always a show stopper but Mitchell's rendition seemed to actually stop time. Her warm, plummy voice was capable of stupendous high notes and she dispatched trills, runs and other embellishments with easy elegance. Tenor, Roumen Doikov, portrayed the Duke with Renaissance elegance. His singing was technically fabulous. Opera Rochester has invited Teatro back for next season. I can hardly wait."

DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE — John Pitcher — March 2002

"I'm not alone in hoping that Giorgio Lalov, the talented singer turned creator of Teatro Lirico D'Europa stays well, healthy and continues to bring us such magnificent productions as last Friday's 'Rigoletto.' Do you remember last years' AIDA? This production was equally well done — the sets were not skimpy as in some traveling shows and oh, those voices! We can only hope to see more from this company in years to come."

ILLINOIS TIMES — Ann Kerr — March 2001

RIGOLETTO Hits All The Right High Notes!

"Monday evening's production of "Rigoletto" got everything right. The sets worked because attention was paid to details from the hall of the ducal palace with its slyly erotic central

painting to the effective tromp-d'oeil painted backdrop of the palace. This production featured three strong lead singers. Nicolai Dobrev sang the part of Rigoletto with confidence. He used the full range of his rich baritone voice to shape a convincing character performance, moving from bitter sarcasm to the most tender love for his daughter, before his final fall into despair. Dobrev was particularly effective in conveying the lightning quick shifts of mood in his aria "Pari siamo." American soprano Kenneithia Mitchell proved to be an ideal Gilda, bringing the role of Rigoletto's daughter alive with vivid emotion. Mitchell's warm, vibrant voice easily stood up to Dobrev's in their duets, while her beautifully shaded phrasing in her aria "Caro nome" brought the house down. Roumen Doikov has a clear, well-projected tenor and there was something irresistible about his portrayal of the hormonally driven Duke. The first few notes of "La donna e mobile" brought a shudder of recognition from the audience and Doikov gave them exactly the kind of performance they had come to hear. Bass, Alexi Ivanov, made an effective Sparafucile and mezzo Elena Marinova sang a surprisingly strong Maddalena, with both at their best when joining Dobrev and Mitchell in the exquisite last act quartet. The choral singing was very well focused and conductor Topolov elicited a well paced, detailed performance."

BUFFALO NEWS – Jan Jezioro – March 2002

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa examined one of the great black comedies, Verdi's RIGOLETTO. The singing filled the whole neighborhood. They sing like they've got opera deep in their bones. The performance was a direct injection of European taste, coming from a place where opera is a true passion, not a passing thought. The singing was extraordinary from the beginning. Nicolai Dobrev played the jester, a noble baritone with a facile instrument. Kenneithia Mitchell [GILDA] soared up and above her part with ease. As the Duke, Roumen Doikov seduced all with audacity. The chorus sang with gusto and confidence. The orchestra under Krassimir Topolov sounded terrific."

BOSTON HERALD – Keith Powers – March 2002

"In the title role of RIGOLETTO, 33 year old Nicolai Dobrev found an appropriate venue for his imposing voice. He underlined the nastiness of the jester's mockery and his pain felt real. Soprano Kenneithia Mitchell revealed a voice of rose petal loveliness and quicksilver agility and an appealing earnest personality. When she emerged for her curtain call she greeted the rapturous applause in an uninhibited victory gesture. Teatro Lirico's star tenor, Roumen Doikov's top notes are among the best in the tenor business today, right on target and with a golden gleam. Once again the magnificent chorus was worth the price of admission. A thoroughly enjoyable, full-blooded and welcome production."

BOSTON PHOENIX – Lloyd Schwartz – March 2002

RIGOLETTO Delivers Grand Opera to Valley!

"The Palm Springs Opera Guild of the Desert had to be pleased with its selection of Teatro Lirico D'Europa's RIGOLETTO Sunday at the McCallum Theater. RIGOLETTO is a crowd pleaser made even more appealing to the sold-out crowd by the fine voices of Europe 's largest touring company. Baritone, Nicolay Dobrev, sang the title role with passion and power but it was his duets with sensational young American soprano, Melody Alesi, as Gilda that received the most applause. Their soaring voices blended beautifully, creating moments of aching poignancy and completely capturing the emotions of the enthusiastic audience. Alesi takes the stage with style and intelligence and possesses the voice of a worldclass opera star. Tenor, Roumen Doikov's Duke was full of swagger and hubris."

PALM DESERT SUN — Jack Lyons — February 2003

Clowning Around in a Fine Fashion — RIGOLETTO

"A gripping production, musically and theatrically. Costumes and sets are gorgeous, and the stage is filled with color and vitality. Tenor Gabriel Gonzales not only sings wonderfully but gives the Duke and immense appeal. Theodore Lambrinos gives an equally rich performance as the hunchbacked jester, Rigoletto. His easy, unforced baritone gives full expressive strength to his "Pari siamo" and to his rage filled "Cortigiani". Soprano Melody Alesi won the audience's heart as Rigoletto's daughter Gilda. Alesi gave the aria "Caro nome" virtuoso singing."

SYRACUSE POST AND STANDARD — Neil Novelli — March 2003

"A dramatically compelling and generally splendid vocal performance. Teatro Lirico's singers are fervent and musically accurate, and their chorus work continues to be quite remarkable and singular in the opera world at large. The handsome set and lavish costumes were evocative and beautiful. Theodore Lambrinos' portrayal was edgy and dramatically vivid. He gave a wistful plangency and flawless musicianship to his "Deh non parlare al misero" and a forceful ringing account of his Cortigiani" with exquisite portamento in the abrupt, final pleading before his tormentors. His duet with his daughter, "Si vendetta" was flawless in timing and vocal contrast. The Gilda of young American soprano, Melody Alesi, was stunning. Her steady and completely unforced tone, pitch perfect coloratura and soaring pianissimi were among the vocal highlights of the evening along with her breathtakingly lovely singing of "Caro nome." Mexican tenor Gabrielle Gonzales brought appropriate good looks, fine vocal support and phrasing and plausible acting to the role of the Duke. From a vigorous "Questa o quella" to a fine account of "Parmi veder" he displayed smooth legato, excellent breath control, lots of flexibility and beautiful top notes."

ITHACA JOURNAL — Stephen Landesman — March 2003

Teatro Lirico's RIGOLETTO, a Performance to Savor!

"Last night's RIGOLETTO, the latest from Teatro Lirico D'Europa, was a keeper, one of the best traveling operas to come through here in a long, long time. But then Teatro Lirico has emerged as top dog among touring companies. The company has always boasted great singers. Their RIGOLETTO boasted an appealing cast. Rather than stylized staggers, we got true-to-life responses to deeply felt emotion. As the night's GILDA, American soprano, Melody Alesi, slid into a melting "Caro Nome," her big first-act aria, she stretched her arms heavenward, as though feeling love for the first time. This was a big orchestra — so big it spilled out of the Vet's pit onto the corners of the stage. Duke, John Fowler, was more than up to the task, especially in those ringing high notes. His top voice was true and clear. But the big voice in the show belonged to Russian baritone, Sergei Moskalkov who sang his heart out as the crippled Rigoletto. Alesi, as Gilda, was no less impressive. Her "Caro Nome" was perfection, with bell-like high notes and butter smooth runs.

PROVIDENCE JOURNAL — Channing Gray — February 2004

"After a year's absence, opera's "road warriors," Teatro Lirico D'Europa, were back at McCain Auditorium with a wonderful production of Verdi's RIGOLETTO. Splendid by any standards, the presentation was especially stunning for a touring company. Soloists, chorus, pit-orchestra, musicians, sets, costumes, you name it-Teatro Lirico delivered it all first-class. Teatro Lirico went the extra mile by mounting a company of artists committed to making their every performance glow with unique conviction and special intensity. Sergei Moskalkov's (RIGOLETTO) voice is nimbly powerful and tenderly expressive, and his physical portrayal totally centered. Soprano, Veselina Vasileva, made a lovely, doll-like Gilda of wide-eyed innocence and trusting naiveté. Her far from doll-sized voice made itself heard alike over fellow singers and a full-blown orchestral storm. Even her dying tones had carrying weight. John Fowler cut a fine figure as the selfish Duke. High marks as well for the excellent chorus that contributed significantly with both vigor and precision. Finally, much credit is due Maestro Matakiev, who maintained a perfect balance between pit and stage throughout."

MANHATTAN MERCURY NEWS — Ben Nyberg — March 2004

Lirico's RIGOLETTO Steals Hearts!

"RIGOLETTO proved to be yet another in the company's string of successes in what's becoming an eagerly anticipated annual Boston residency. Lucky Boston! Teatro Lirico's secret? Its artistic director, Giorgio Lalov, trusts opera and the singers who put their throats and hearts on the line for us and their art every night. Not for one minute did Lalov's staging follow the modern approach seen far too often at Boston Lyric Opera, by trying to improve

on the beautiful original, which speaks so eloquently for itself. Here there were no gimmicks, no tricks, just Verdi's tale from the composer through the singers to us. Heaven."

BOSTON HERALD — T. J. Medrek — March 2004

Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach, FL — January 2010 — 1600 seats sold

"We just returned from the wonderful RIGOLETTO. Everyone loved it. Gilda, Rigoletto, the Duke...everyone was great. We thought the sets and costumes were so beautiful. We are so glad to have such a great working relationship with you and your company...we feel blessed, so thank you!"

Nancy and Dallas Weekly — Daytona Beach Symphony Society

RIGOLETTO was FABULOUS!! I have had so many people tell me how much they loved it. And you sent us the most wonderful cast! I can't thank you enough. Lyle Sunderland will have the DVD ready by the end of the week and will mail it to you. I'm sure you will be very pleased. I'm very excited about having TWO operas next season. LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR and BUTTERFLY. Wow! Thank you again for making Daytona Beach a happy cultural place."

Carol Anderson, General Manager — Daytona Beach Symphony Society — January 2010

Last night was a glorious night! The costumes were beautiful and the sets lovely. The audience gave Rigoletto A STANDING OVATION — both after the performance and in the lobbies while they left to face the freezing night air, and this morning. I have received phone messages and emails galore!"

**Jeanne Sigel, Development & Marketing Director
Garde Arts Center, New London CT — February 2010**

"The performance (of RIGOLETTO was wonderful! The cast was superb, and the sets beautiful. Our audience loved your Rigoletto (Palmen Dimitrov)! Thank you for a great season ending performance, and we look forward to Butterfly and Turandot next season (we had many subscribers sign up last night already!)"

**Richard Bojko, General Manager; President, Board of Directors
Opera New Hampshire — Palace Theatre, Manchester, NH**

After several years as a board member and president, I am taking a break! My term expires at the end of June, but for all intents and purposes, our new president will take over as of Thursday 6/10. I have your contract for 2010-2011 in the mail to you. Please send a signed copy back.

It has been my great pleasure to work with you over the years. You and Giorgio have been a godsend to OperaNH, bringing quality performances at an affordable price to us to offer to our audience. It will be nice to sit and fully enjoy a performance without the distraction of running the operations! YES — we will keep booking with you. I forgot to ask for 2011-2012 offerings to present to our meeting tomorrow. Can you email them to me?

Richard Bojko — OPERA NEW HAMPSHIRE — June 2010

Everything was wonderful!

Everyone in the cast was chatty and friendly, I enjoyed myself and I know the audience did too. Their enthusiasm was infectious. The costumes by the way, were absolutely beautiful. Let me know what you are planning for next year. We have been wondering if TOSCA would be a possibility. Love you."

Maureen Jones — Warfield Concerts

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to present, once again, one of your world-class Operas. This past Saturday we presented Verdi's Rigoletto. As the show played on, it was not uncommon to hear cheers coming from the audience. The performers and the orchestra were excellent. Not only are the actors good, but also the set and the costumes are also exceptional. We look forward to the continuation of a mutually beneficial relationship. Bravo!"

***Susan Agin, Executive and Artistic Director
Queensborough Performing Arts Center — February 2012***

"RIGOLETTO was superb, your soloists soared. You could hear a pin drop as "La donna e mobile" began and the applause that followed was thunderous. Thank you again for a great show — and as always your crew and performers are so easy to work with. Looking forward to next year."

Deborah Smith — -Newberry Opera House, Newberry, SC — February 2012

"RIGOLETTO was GREAT! Looking forward to LA TRAVIATA next year and maybe some dance after that too!"

Mary Lee Mann — Barbara Mann Theatre, Ft. Myers, FL — February 2012

"I was worried how RIGOLETTO would go over. It is, after all, a dark and brooding opera. But the cast and the performance lifted the situation to a level where the audience could appreciate and identify with the essential humanity of Gilda and Rigoletto. The soprano role (Gilda) was particularly well sung and it was joy to have Simon Kyung Lee back again in a lead role, this time as the villainous Duke. The baritone role of Rigoletto (Dobromir Momekov) was powerfully sung. The audience loved the performance and gave the cast a vociferous and enthusiastic response. Another winning production from Teatro Lirico D'Europa! As for the post opera reception. It was simply wonderful. Giorgio and the four cast members he brought along were cordial, warm, receptive, and conversational. All are thoroughly delightful persons who thrilled our guests with beautiful music and camaraderie."

Bob Borich, Talent Chairman — Panama City Music Association — February 2012

REVIEW: BALTIMORE RIGOLETTO

"Thursday, March 11, 2010, at the Hippodrome Theater in Baltimore, an ample crowd of opera fans and would-be aficionados attended a production of Giuseppe Verdi's Rigoletto presented by Giorgio Lalov and Baltimore Opera Theatre. From the first notes of the overture to the final curtain there were abundant orchestral and vocal performance highlights to assure a successful evening. Led by conductor Krassimir Topolov, the orchestra capably supported the vocal and dramatic achievements of the talented soloists and able chorus. For regional opera, the sets, costumes, and lighting were grand. The staging was remarkable. The appreciative audience rewarded the performers with boisterous applause throughout the evening. Any doubts that one might have held about the company prior to the performance were emphatically banished. This was a first-rate production.

The role of Rigoletto was performed by young Verdi baritone Nelson Martinez, who began his career in Cuba and who, at this juncture, has sung several roles in a number of venues across this country and abroad. His voice is larger than life, deeply expressive throughout the entire vocal range of the role. From poignantly and plaintively delivered pianissimos to super-grand explosions of sound with power to spare, his dramatic emotional impact was always impressive. With his immense vocal and acting talents, he convincingly portrayed the old and deformed court jester, capable of hurling derisive insults himself, but profoundly vulnerable to the terrifying curse that humbles him and portends the tragic outcome that unfolds.

The Duke of Mantua was portrayed with vocal ease and a great deal of polish and swagger by Ukrainian tenor Igor Borko. With numerous credits in this country and abroad, Borko brought a wealth of experience and exceptional timbre and stamina to his impressive performance. Most notable were the Act I aria about a life of pleasure with as many women as possible (Questa o quella — "This woman or that") and the more famous Act III aria about the wonderful inconstancy of women (La donna e mobile — "Woman is fickle").

Gilda as sung by Puerto Rican soprano Magda Nieves was performed exactly as you would want. She was the epitome of youth and innocence. She was tender, pure, and articulate in vocal delivery and dramatic portrayal. I found her exceptionally demure and pleasing in her Act I aria in which she adoringly repeats the name of her newly found love, Gaultier Malde (Caro nome — "Dearest name"). Of the many others in the cast, William Powers, an American, as the assassin Sparafucile and Viara Zhelezova, from Bulgaria, who sang both Maddalena and Countess Ceprano, were standouts. Lest you think I forgot, I must mention how well performed was the famous and abundantly loved quartet in the final act. The four singers gave a spacious and well — tendered account, each voice given its perfect due!"

Andrew Pappas — THE BALTIMORE SUN — March 2010

"The company did a lovely job! RIGOLETTO was warmly received by our audience! I believe the company had a good time here!"

***Kris Sabel, Executive Director — Vail Valley Foundation
Vilar Performing Arts Center, Beaver Creek, CO — 2014***

"Tonight's performance of RIGOLETTO at Koger Center for the Arts was fantastic. Soaring voices, spectacular sets, and wonderful performances by Teatro Lirico D'Europa, South Carolina Philharmonic musicians, USC Opera students, USC Dance Troupe dancers, Palmetto Mastersingers, and our talented extras made for a memorable evening of opera. Thanks to all of you and to our many donors and volunteers who made this evening possible.

Board of Directors of The Palmetto Opera — Koger Center — Columbia, SC — Feb. 20, 2016

"I thought the standing ovations would never stop! Emotionally charged, vocally superb, a great director and beautiful sets! What more can you ask in a grand opera production? Thank you for the outstanding performances you have brought to South Carolina's capital over the past six seasons! It felt like a family reunion with so many familiar faces in the RIGOLETTO cast and Melody Alesi as Gilda was a superb addition! An amazing, gifted young lady and her bel canto singing style is superb. I understand why her previous

performances as Gilda with you resulted in such rave reviews. Our season opener was a night to remember!"

Kathy Newman, Booking Agent and Chairperson — Palmetto Opera — Koger Center — Columbia, SC — Feb. 20, 2016)

Rossini — IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Opera's hits keep coming in 'Barber'

"The international mix worked fine on Thursday night at Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady where the Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented Rossini's classic comedy "The Barber of Seville." The opera's most famous music and the best performance of the night came early on with "Largo al factotum," a tour de force aria overstuffed with running melodic lines and mouthfuls of words. Its la-la-la's and Figaro-Figaro Figaro's are a quintessential bit of opera, lampooned almost as often as a soprano in horns.

Baritone Vladimir Samsonov as Figaro belted out the proudlyself-referential number with stunning accuracy and captivating bravado. As Samsonov's square and sturdy frame faced center stage, it was hard not to stare in amazement as his tongue bounced up and down within his huge opened mouth. Throughout the night each of the principal singers seemed to go for broke. That may be the only way to take on "Barber of Seville" since its music often spins and rattles as fast as a roulette wheel. By the end of the night, everybody was a winner. Tenor Benjamin Brecher as Count Almaviva had a more lyrical bent and made a nice contrast to Samsonov. The difference in their characters and styles was highlighted during a first act duet in which Almaviva floats along melody about love, while Figaro counts out imaginary money. There were lots of other ensemble bits that also succeeded. Sometimes it was on a dramatic level, like near the end of act two, when all five principals crowded around a military captain trying to whisper in his ears at the same time. More often, it was the music that spoke, like during a lovely trio in act three. Soprano Viara Zhelezova played Rosina with girlish charm but sang the role with a mature and burnished voice. During her opening aria, it was as if the sound poured out of her whole body before filling the large house. The bass Viacheslav Pochapsky had a booming voice and looked like he stepped out of a "Monty Python" skit, with a boat-like hat and crazy gray hair. Baritone Hristo Sarafov, as Dr. Bartolo, was also good with physical humor as he got a shave from a distracted Figaro, the titular barber. The crowd: about 1,100 adults of all ages was attentive and appreciative."

ALBANY TIMES UNION — Joseph Dalton — Apr. 2006

Figaro, Figaro, Bravo!

"Daytona Beach Symphony Society ended up its season in the best way possible-with plenty of sincere applause, and delighted smiles everywhere. The reason was the nearly flawless Teatro Lirico D'Europa performance of BARBER OF SEVILLE. From the overture's happy notes, played by an orchestra that filled the pit and spilled over onto the sides of the stage, to the giddy, romantic resolution, BARBER OF SEVILLE was absolutely funny, lively and high spirited. As Rosina, Viara Zhelezova was perky and passionate, and in possession of a powerful, rich mezzo soprano that fit perfectly with the warm, clear tenor of Benjamin Brecher, an unusually charismatic Count Almaviva. Baritone Hristo Sarafov was entertainingly foppish as Dr. Bartolo and Viacheslav Pochapsky, playing the venal Don Basilio, stunned with his booming bass. Most impressive however was the opera's central character, Figaro, the barber. Shon Sims was remarkable. It wasn't simply his strong resonant baritone, his acting skills and witty interpretation of the role were superb. Sims Figaro stood in the middle of all the action. Besides its atmospheric sets and lighting, what set Friday's performance apart was how the music was presented; with enormous verve and real joy by outstanding singers who were also accomplished actors."

DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL – Laura Stewart – March 2006

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

"The best you can hope for is an opera without "singers." Give me a single well-oiled "machine" any day, not a bunch of singers who interact as if by accident. When individual singers disappear so deeply into their roles that there's no separating them from the scene they're building, THEN you've got opera! That happy circumstance existed Monday night with scintillating results in Rossini's comic BARBER OF SEVILLE at Eissey Campus Theatre. Monday night's cast worked with the precision and solidarity of a surgical team. The cast list explained a lot. Soloists of Teatro Lirico D'Europa. The production felt as comfortable as an old shoe. There was such agreement among soloists and fine musical grasp of the music that their detailed, vivid characterizations went well, beyond acting. Figaro's famous aria won a full minute of applause but the consistently superior performances were from Sarafov (Barolo) and Zhelezova (Rosina). Every time the mezzo opened her mouth, lovely sound flooded the hall. She is not only up to Rossina's technical demands, she retained her luminous high notes and vocal control all evening. In her mannerisms she was every inch the rebellious hot tempered Spanish girl."

PALM BEACH POST – Sharon McDaniel – January 2006

Teatro Lirico's BARBER brings a barrel of laughs

"Rossini's THE BARBER OF SEVILLE is a comedy so expertly carpentered that it can still make an audience laugh 189 years after its premier. It did so again last night at the Majestic Theatre, thanks to Teatro Lirico D'Europa. It's fun to hear accomplished singers leap over the vocal hurdles and watch them put their personal stamp on the famous comic scenes. Director Giorgio Lalov knows how to put all the traditional gags across, but also contributes some new ones of his own and lets the singers do what works for them. Benjamin Brecher as the Count is a witty and engaging actor and can actually sing rapid passagework that many other tenors smear. Shon Sims in the title role turned in some nimble vocalism and acting. He also played the guitar well enough to accompany Brecher in his serenade. Hristo Saraov offered a Dr. Bartolo whose dithering self-delusions because touching as well as amusing. The best singer was Viara Zhelezova, the Rosina. She has a lovely limber mezzo that she can move at warp speed, like Cecilia Bartoli. She's charming and musical. Conductor Martin Mazik is very young and quite talented. There were many lively and elegant musical details. Constantine Videv as the venal music Master Don Basilo paid tribute to the audience by sporting a pair of bright red sox."

Richard Dyer — BOSTON GLOBE — October 2005

A ROLLICKING GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL AT BOSTON'S MAJESTIC

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa has delivered yet again, for Boston audiences, an entertaining evening of quality opera that is colorful, well sung and acted, and as professional as you will likely see anywhere else, here or abroad. The production took off and soared and drew the audience into the fun of what was occurring on stage. Everyone seemed to have a rollicking good time. Here, the ensemble cast seemed to genuinely enjoy the lighthearted opera that took Rossini only nineteen days to complete. What impressed most, however, was the fit between major roles and how well those roles were handled. The fusion of character to singer, singer to ensemble was smooth and natural and when accompanied by a supportive orchestra, as was done here, under the leadership of Martin Mazik, the performance was made thoroughly enjoyable on multiple levels. Credit has to go to Giorgio Lalov, for his adept stage direction. Fun! The characters here were so uniformly good and balanced in their presentations that it is impossible to single out any one. On the production side the sets and costumes by Vailntin Topencharov were traditional, colorful and realistic. The lighting by Boyukliev was handled well and nicely creative lending to the overall effect of the performance and mood. In sum, Teatro Lirico d'Europa brought home the bacon once again for Boston audiences with a production of Rossini's "Il Barbiere de Siviglia" that was top notch, colorful, well sung, superbly acted and produced with an eye toward the effect it had on an appreciative audience. What more can one ask for?"

OPERAONLINE.US — Paul Walkowski — October 2005

Comedy tonight! Teatro Lirico's Rossini (BARBER OF SEVILLE)

"Teatro Lirico d'Europa, the irresistible touring company from Bulgaria, returned to the Majestic for two familiar works in traditional style. Last January, Teatro Lirico provided one of the year's best opera experiences, a single performance of Rossini's beloved *Barbiere di Siviglia*. It's one of opera's most delicious scores, including the tingling overture and perhaps the most famous moment in all opera, Figaro's entrance aria, the "Largo al factotum" ("Figaro! Figaro!"). "For abundance of ideas, for comic verve, and for truth of declamation," Verdi wrote, "- the most beautiful opera buffa in existence."

What impressed me most was the extraordinary sense of ensemble. That's what happens when a group of performers play together night after night-or should happen. And these singers are full of play. The shtiks and routines seem anything but routine, as if the performers were living through these events for the very first time. This is obviously the spirit that artistic director and stage director Giorgio Lalov seems to inspire. This season's new Figaro, American baritone Shon Sims delivered directly to the audience his rapid-fire patter in the "Largo" with tip-of-the-tongue fluency. For a moment I thought he was too full of himself. Last year's Figaro was more appropriately beleaguered by the overwhelming demands on his talent ("Figaro here! Figaro there! Figaro up! Figaro down!"). But Sims soon made Figaro's inventiveness, and impatience with others' foolishness, part of a rounded characterization. You were always on his side. An Alec Baldwin look-alike, he's younger and better-looking than most Figaros, with an attractive ringing tone to match. Also new to Boston was American tenor Benjamin Brecher, from the New York City Opera, who-as the amorous Count Almaviva-seems at ease in both slapstick comedy (Almaviva disguises himself both as a drunken soldier and a simpering music teacher) and matinee-idol lyricism. The other newcomer was Bulgarian bass Constantine Videv as the scandal-mongering music teacher Don Basilio, who sang the great "Calumny" aria with cavernous torture-chamber resonance.

The others were as good as ever. Bulgarian mezzo Viara Zhelezova's lustrous voice is as mobile as her face, not just singing the brilliant roulades of her own big introductory aria ("Una voce poco fa"), but filling each run and trill with character and innuendo ("I'm docile, obedient, I can be guided, BUT!... cross me, and I'm a viper!"). Bulgarian baritone Hristo Sarafov was once again a Bartolo who's as touching as he's buffoonish. In the small role of Berta the Housekeeper, mezzo Ana Petrova used her rich voice to delightful effect. One of Rossini's targets is opera itself. The lovers don't elope in time because, over Figaro's protests, they must sing a love duet. Lalov's presentational style-characters addressing the audience directly or in teasing asides-is exactly right! Young conductor Martin Mazik, led rather than followed the singers. The orchestra seemed like one of the characters: exploding and whispering, teasing and tickling, leering and caressing."

BOSTON PHOENIX – Lloyd Schwartz – October 2005

BARBER OF SEVILLE delights Audience!

"THE BARBER OF SEVILLE was presented by Teatro Lirico D'Europa on Friday, February 18 at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts center at UM-St. Louis. The company was in fine voice and full comic form, and the performance delighted the packed house. The opera singers were excellent. When baritone Vladimir Samsonov took the stage in the title role of FIGARO and performed that famous "Figaro, Figaro" aria with booming bravura and comic vocal flourishes, the audience response was so overwhelming and the applause so thunderous and sustained that the star was compelled to quiet the audience just so the opera could continue. It was a very good start to an artistically excellent performance by the whole troupe."

THE CURRENT — Catherine Marquis-Homeyer — February 2005

BARBER OF SEVILLE Sparkles at the Vet!

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa gave a sparkling rendition of Rossini's Barber of Seville last night at Veteran's Memorial Auditorium with some funny touches and dazzling vocal pyrotechnics. This was especially true of soprano Viara Zhelezova, the feisty Rosina whose ornate fioratura passages were thrilling. Teatro Lirico has been known for consistent productions that are a cut above the companies that have come here in the past. Last night's BARBER was not only well sung, but well acted, with handsome singers who moved well on the set. Vladimir Samsonov was a hoot as Figaro. The staging was lively and imaginative."

PROVIDENCE JOURNAL — Channing Gray — February 2005

Teatro Lirico's Classical Barber a Cut Above!

"The little touring company that could began its annual, much anticipated visit to town Thursday night at the Cutler Majestic Theatre with a solid engaging performance of Rossini's comedy THE BARBER OF SEVILLE. Baritone Vladimir Samsonov's Figaro was generous of personality and winningly sturdy of voice. Bernardini relaxed into a fine performance (Almaviva) as his voice gained in beauty and suppleness. Zhelezova's supple, finely modulated, silky smooth sound caressed the ear, and her portrayal of the feisty young woman (Rosina) was spot on. And Sarafov was the kind of Bartolo who really sings instead of bluffing his way through the part. As ever with Lalov, the company's artistic director, this was truly a production of Rossini's opera, not a director's idea of what that opera should be."

BOSTON HERALD — T.J. Medrek — January 2005

Teatro Lirico Returns to Boston with Sparkling Barber!

"It's official. Boston really loves Teatro Lirico D'Europa. The Cutler Majestic was at near capacity for the single performance of Rossini's IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA. Rossini demands phenomenal vocal and verbal dexterity from the entire ensemble — and great comic timing. Those were exactly what Teatro Lirico brought. It may have been the best production of this familiar opera I've ever seen. This was very much a cast-centered enterprise. Artistic director Giorgio Lalov is a conventional, ungimmicky stage director--but there was always a point. The audience was laughing at all the jokes because the action was always clear and followable. Here was a perfect example of a cast working together. Each character related to each of the others. They knew each other and felt comfortable with each other. And they were all good! Figaro was the engaging young Russian baritone Samsonov, who has sung with the Bolshoi Opera and Marinsky Theatre. He was truly the center of this production, commanding the stage with his wit and charm. His Italian diction was first rate and he has a refined and ringing tone--burnished copper. He used his voice to bravura effect. Rosina was Bulgarian mezzo-soprano Viara Zhelezova. Zhelezova, with her long dark hair and sly smile, is more like a Bulgarian Julia Louis-Dreyfus, with equally impeccable comic timing, who has the luminous voice and dazzling coloratura of Cecilia Bartoli. I don't know why she is not a major star. Almaviva was American tenor Don Bernardini. His strong, focused tone became an impressive instrument and he too used his body to comic effect. Senior Bulgarian baritone, Hristo Sarafov must have played the frustrated Dr. Bartolo his entire professional life. He was a model of good technique and appropriate buffo style. In the role of Don Basilio, sonorous Russian bass Viacheslav Pochapsky, Teatro Lirico's profoundly moving Boris Godounov 2 years ago, was hilarious. The singers maintained a lively pace, and there was never a dull moment. The sets--a Sevillian street scene and the interior of Bartolo's house were attractively cartoonish. Too bad there was only one performance."

BOSTON PHOENIX — Lloyd Schwartz — January 2005

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa's production of BARBER OF SEVILLE is a wonderful, bawdy romp through one of the world's favorite operas. PCA Performances is to be thanked for bringing this lively lyrical performance to Merrill Auditorium. The comedic action is first rate with a lot of laugh out loud action. Don Basilio as sung by bass Viacheslav Pochapsky is one of the jewels of the production with a wonderful bass voice and sense of humor just as deep. Hristo Sarafov is an ideal Bartolo. Vladimir Samsonov has the voice and energy to bring the barber alive. Viara Zhelezova plays the vivacious Rosina as if born to the part."

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD — Christopher Hyde — March 2005

McCain 'Barber' one of the best ever

“Aboard Teatro Lirico D'Europa's chartered bus, in company with his collegial troupe of fellow roving players, Rossini's justly celebrated barber from Seville arrived in Manhattan this past Friday to delight a sizable McCain crowd with two and a half hours of dazzling musical artistry and equally adept comic acting. I've been to quite a number of Barbers over the years, many of them exceptionally well done. But in all honesty I can't remember ever enjoying (emphasis on "joy") any *Barbiere de Seville* more than this one. I don't expect that Miller's elaborately whimsical sets for the ENO will be topped, and the Merrill-Peters collaboration was pure gold, but on balance Teatro Lirico's is the finest overall mounting I can recall. Extravagant praise? True enough. Excessive? Hardly. I'm only just trying to keep up with the talent. First the voices. Rossini wrote great arias and ensembles for this opera, but nearly all of them demand bravura coloratura. Usually only one or two of the leads really copes very effectively at speed. In this cast, Figaro himself (Shon Sims), Rosina (Viara Zhelezova), Almaviva (Benjamin Brecher) and Bartolo (Hristo Sarafov) were all racing demons, articulating rapid-fire strings of notes with a bright distinctness and dead-on precision of delivery that made a listener's pre-Vailtine's Day heart race. Add to their nimbleness that all these voices also had charm of tone and timbre, size and range, expressive energy, and interpretive flexibility, and you have an imposing core of four. Add to them a wonderfully lugubrious, mendacious, malignant Basiglio (Mikhail Kolelishvili) and Rumiana Petrova's Berta, the poor level-headed serving maid stuck in the middle of a madhouse caper, and the supply of vocal capacity is rich indeed. Then there's the non-vocal part of the job, otherwise known as acting. In olden times we didn't expect singers to do much multi-tasking. If they sang well, that was good enough. Nowadays we hope, even expect, that our singers should fit and fill — without overfilling — their roles. Our program contained no acting coach credit, and Artistic/Stage Director Giorgio Lalov can't have taken that task on himself, but somebody has turned a bunch of brilliant opera singers into brilliant bunch of sitcom actors, replete with mugs, winks, nudges, kicks, leaps, staggers, and every other requisite farcical move. The level of across-the-board singing plus acting skills was a marvel to behold. And did I mention the splendid set (how many touring companies are willing to hire three moving vans to carry their decor?), the sumptuous costumes, the lighting? Or the fact that we had a real, live thirty-piece orchestra in the pit that, under the baton of maestro Krassimir Topolov, managed its own "coloratura" bits, as well as those delicious Rossini crescendos, with the same dexterity and vigor as those on stage? There's just too much about this wonderful evening to recap in a single column. What a blast. Enough to heat the whole outdoors.”

Ben Nyberg — MANHATTAN MERCURY NEWS — February 2007

BARBER OF SEVILLE in Wilkes-Barre, PA

“I want to thank you and your company for a wonderful performance last night. Everyone I spoke with had nothing but praise for the performers, orchestra and production. People left our theater with a smile on their face knowing they watched a truly professional opera company. Our Box Office manager commented to me this morning that this was without a doubt the best opera the company has ever done, and she has seen them all. Thanks to you and your husband for a wonderful engagement.”

Mark Thomas, Director of Programming – F.M. Kirby Center, Wilkes Barre, PA – March 2007

BARBER in Bethlehem, PA

“Thank you very much for facilitating the engagement of Teatro Lirico at Lehigh University. The production of "Barber of Seville" was wonderful. The quality of the singers was exceptionally fine. I particularly enjoyed the performances of James Bobick, Viara Zhelezova and certainly Mikhail Kolelishvili. In addition to having remarkable vocal instruments they also brought well-developed acting talent to the stage. That's a very happy combination in any opera performance. I would also like to comment on Martin Mazik, whose skill and talent as a musician and a leader of the ensembles solidly founded and moved the production. The audience was pleased and happy.”

Deborah Sakarakis – Zollener Performing Arts Center – Bethlehem, PA – November 2007

BARBER OF SEVILLE in SPRINGFIELD, MO

“The show was wonderful, Jenny...we were all quite pleased with the production...and especially liked your new Figaro! Lots of good voices, nice acting and a real spirit of fun in the show. The audience response, both during the performance and at the end, was enthusiastic. And Anjie said Giorgio's master class was great! Looking forward to next season...hope your holidays are wonderful.”

*Deb Gallion, Director of Marketing and Promotions
Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts – Springfield, MO – November 2007*

BARBER – Paramount Theatre, Charlottesville, VA

It was lovely. I was in NYC but I made sure to get a full report and staff and audience both loved it. Let's keep on the books for next season.”

Matthew Simon – The Paramount Theater – Charlottesville, VA – January 2008

Zoellner Performing Arts Center – Lehigh University

“I wanted to stop for a moment and thank you for your help this past season. The 2007-2008 GUEST ARTIST SERIES was one of the strongest, culturally diverse and artistically innovative seasons that I have been privileged to present. Teatro Lirico D’Europa’s production of the BARBER OF SEVILLE was integral to the overall quality of the season and I greatly appreciate your efforts in bringing that program to Lehigh. Please extend my sincere thanks to the company. The positive feedback that I have received from our audience indicates to me that we are doing something right and I look forward to continuing our valued collaboration for many more successful seasons.”

Deborah Sacarakis, Director of Programs and Outreach – July 8, 2008

Teatro’s Barber Scores Big at the Phil

“Sing fast. Throw shaving cream. How much more fun can opera get?”

A good production of “Il Barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville)” is a laugh a minute. When it’s larded with sight gags such those Teatro Lirico de Europa added Thursday, one yearns to get up on stage and emote right along with their over-the-top first-act finale, “Che cosa accade.”

There’s a Laurel-and-Hardy-funny Act Two scene in which the furious Doctor Bartolo, caught like a dog on a leash in his knotted shaving sheet, lunges vainly after his ward’s lover. Barber — and lovers’ hired gun — Figaro slings globs of shaving cream at the crotchety Bartolo, who sprays it back as he thunders under a thick layer of fluff.

The amorous Count Almaviva, posing as a music teacher, corrects the old man’s aria to replace the heroine’s name with that of Britney Spears. Almaviva isn’t without comic sin himself, training a mirror on his profile as he poses for his serenade to Rosina. Wigs are pulled from heads. Quick, get me a banana peel!

The production at the Philharmonic Center for the Arts was one of opera’s best advertisements, full of quirky personalities, a welcome happy ending and bel canto — literally, beautiful singing — arias, Yet it’s grueling work. The coloratura score looks like bird tracks, sprayed with triplets and four-note runs. Its orchestral score can overpower it, and the successful production demands broad personality portrayal, agile vocals and orchestral flexibility.

This production, at the Philharmonic Center for the Arts, was a credit to the composer. Peter Danailov, as the conniving jack of all trades, Figaro’s vocals are flawless. He is a strong and facile baritone whose cagey character picks up steam to match his impressive voice as the story progresses.

Viara Zhelezova proved to be a consistently satisfying Rosina, full of comic wit, vocally somersaulting her tricky arias. Benjamin Brecher, the lone American onstage, is the ardent Almaviva, and he possesses a voice perfect for the role, vulnerable and flexible. Brecher only needs some prodding to add more character to his role in Act One — his cape seems to own him in the opening scene. By Act Two, however, he's a thoroughly whacked-out ersatz music teacher, getting cooey with Rosina with one arm, the other stretching to reach low notes on the pianoforte, which he's playing furiously to allay Bartolo's curiosity.

If anyone could goad them all into character, it was Hristo Sarafov as an ineptly villainesque Bartolo, blustering and bumbling and dense as London fog. His consistent witlessness and outraged persona pulled everyone into the story. This was one of the happiest evenings an opera lover could have spent on the town in Naples."

NAPLES DAILY NEWS — Harriet Howard Heithaus — January 2009

"We enjoyed a wonderful evening in Naples at the performance of BARBER OF SEVILLE. Figaro stole the show in the early part of the performance. It was a performance you should be very proud of and I hope we can arrange to have your company perform on our series in 2010-11. We thank you very, very much for arranging for the tickets. We had great seats in the fourth row center section. The Philharmonic is a very impressive facility. I am anxious to tell my talent committee and executive board about the performance."

***Roger Bintz, General Manager — Brown County Civic Music, Green Bay, WI
on attending performance at Philharmonic Center for the Arts, Naples, FL — January 2009***

"The Barber of Seville was a big success. Everyone enjoyed the evening and were VERY impressed by the quality of the singers. We also appreciate the extra effort you made to provide entertainment at our fundraising dinner party before the opera. Everyone loved it and felt very special! Thanks so much for sending us another great opera."

***Carol Anderson McLEAn, Ph.D. — Daytona Symphony Society
on attending performance at Peabody Auditorium — January 2013***

"Dallas was so stimulated by your brilliant Barber of Seville production that he couldn't sleep. He came home raving about the beauty and technique of the singers, and the success of the whole evening. Thank You, Jenny and Giorgio "

***Nancy and Dallas Weekly — Daytona Symphony Society
Peabody Auditorium — January 2013***

"The Barber of Seville was absolutely fabulous! Sets and costumes were also beautiful."

***Deborah Smith, GM — Newberry Opera
on attending performance at Newberry Opera House — February 2013***

"The performance of Barber of Seville was superb! Sets, voices, energy of the cast were loved by all and Giorgio was a hit, winning the hearts of our guests at the dinner!"

Jeanne Sigal — Garde Arts Center — New London, CT

"What a successful event (The Barber of Seville)! The audience truly enjoyed the show! I heard so much laughter in the seats. The entire cast was exuberant in their roles, which made the storyline very enjoyable. The acting was wonderful and engaging. At one point, a patron's phone went off during the show. Tenor, Fabian Robles (Almaviva) incorporated a reaction to the phone ringing into the part on stage — it was terrific! Thank you so much to all the Teatro Lirico D'Europa — it was another fabulous opera performance."

***Jean Esslinger, President, Board of Directors — Opera New Hampshire
Presenter of Teatro Lirico at Palace Theatre, Manchester, NH — February 2013***

"The Barber of Seville was fabulous. It was wonderful to see the younger crowd in the house. Thanks so much for everything. Your artists and crew are so professional and a pleasure to work with."

***Faith A. Wilson, Executive Director, Opera New Hampshire
Presenter of Teatro Lirico at Palace Theatre, Manchester, NH — February 2013***

"The production of The Barber of Seville this past Saturday evening was just fantastic! Our audience gave them a rousing ovation with numerous curtain calls. The singers were outstanding, costumes exquisite and the orchestra was tremendous. Many of our members commented about the quality of the production including a special emphasis on the musicianship of the orchestra. It was a very cold evening, however it didn't seem to affect our attendance. We had a full house! We were indeed very pleased with the performance!"

Don Souder, President — Lansdale Community Concerts Inc. — Lansdale, PA — February 2013

Verdi — LA TRAVIATA

Review: Sold Out La Traviata at NJPAC

"The New Jersey Performing Arts Center is a facility in a diversely populated area where opera is a family affair. Some attendees took advantage of the early curtain and brought their children to this SOLD OUT performance. LA TRAVIATA is a unique opera that needs a singer with true star quality. Ukrainian soprano, Marina Viskvorkina filled the bill to perfection. A slim, attractive blonde who sings at the Prague State Opera and has performed this role at the Vienna State Opera, Viskvorkina has the necessary appearance of fragility for this heroine. Her voice however, is robust and she had the precise coloratura for Act I. She lit up the stage and made the world of the 19th Century courtesan, come alive. Vailtine Topencharov designed the effective, practical scenery and the costumes, unusually ornate for a touring production. Alfredo was sung by Russian tenor, Evgeni Akimov who also appears with the Mariinsky Theatre, the Metropolitan Opera and Covent Garden. He was a carefree playboy with a rich even voice and sang with warmth and virility. Vladimir Samsonov was a properly bourgeois Germont with ringing top tones. Casting bass Viacheslav Pochapsky of Opera Bolshoi as Dr. Grenville was a true luxury. Conductor Topolov drew a balanced, expansively romantic reading of the score from the Sofia Symphony. At the end of the evening the audience responded with a standing ovation for all the artists involved in this fine performance."

MUSIC AND VISION DAILY — March 2006

LA TRAVIATA 'Strayed Woman' — High Drama Parisian Story Thrills GSU Crowd!

"UNIVERSITY PARK — The craftsmanship of Teatro Lirico D'Europa and the flawless conducting of Metodi Matakiev generated enough heat Sunday afternoon inside the Center for the Performing Arts to temper the wind chill outside. Attendees at Governor's State University 's SOLD OUT matinee were treated to a lush spectacle of 19th century drama that dazzled the ear and eye. Soprano, Melody Alesi (Violetta) delivered a particularly notable performance, soaring in sustained flights in this melodic and romantic opera."

DAILY JOURNAL — Dennis Sullivan — February 2004

LA TRAVIATA Enthralled Sold-out GSU!

"Governors' State University hit a home run Sunday afternoon with a stunning performance of LA TRAVIATA before an enthusiastic SOLD — OUT house. The return of Teatro Lirico D'Europa can be seen as nothing short of a triumph. It was also an affirmation of the Pasquinelli Family Foundation's support, and the chance it took on bringing the opera to the Southland. Reid's statement "They will be back with LA BOHEME in 2005 received

applause even before the curtain went up on the current production. Most impressive was Melody Alesi, who presented the torn personality of Violetta. Violetta's lover, Alfredo, played by John Fowler, sang with conviction and stamina. Vailry Ivanov was most convincing as Alfredo's father and his rich baritone filled the hall. Act II brought the opera to a dramatic peak as the sound of the chorus rated first class and the dances by the gypsy princess and matador were fun and enthusiastic. This was a great performance. It's hard to believe that this opera company had just spent 5 days in 5 different cities performing 4 different operas! This critic doesn't know how they keep up their strength and enthusiasm, and can't wait to see them again next year."

THE STAR (Chicago Heights) – D. K. Luksetich – February 2004

Verdi Hip to Pop Culture!

"Dubbed "Road Warriors" by OPERA NEWS, Teatro Lirico proved itself worthy of its international reputation Friday night at the Leid Center with Verdi's LA TRAVIATA. The show was fantastic. All three lead roles were brilliantly cast and executed."

LAWRENCE JOURNAL WORLD – Emily Criqui – March 2004

Teatro Lirico Shows No Signs of Fatigue!

"Last night's LA TRAVIATA was the 41st performance of a staggering 52-performance American tour of six different operas but there was no lack of energy, spirit and heart. No wonder audiences love this company. Bulgarian soprano, Veselina Vasileva is a tiny beautiful creature with expressively floating hands and eyes that tell the truth. She restores the nearly forgotten tradition of light voices in the role: she uses her crystalline soprano with feeling and exquisite musical taste. She has adequate virtuosity for the hurdles of the first act but it was later that Vasileva really came into her own. Vytautas Juozapaitis poured out molten streams of baritone sound as the stern, elder Germont. Cesar Hernandez (Alfredo) is a pro who knows what to do, and did it with assurance. The chorus is one of Teatro Lirico's greatest assets."

BOSTON GLOBE – Richard Dyer – March 2004

TRAVIATA in Prescott Arizona

"The show was great, as usual! I let the audience know that we were trying to bring Aida for next season and they were quite excited!

***Deb McCasland, Director, Major Gifts and Artistic Programming
YC Foundation, Yavapai College – Prescott, AZ***

TRAVIATA in CLEARWATER, FL

“The performance was wonderful. I thought each one of the singers was very special. The soprano was everything you said she would be and more. The audience absolutely loved her. Alfredo and the father were especially strong as well. Congratulations and thank you for bringing another strong opera performance to our community.”

Robert A. Freedman, President and CEO – Ruth Eckerd Hall, Inc. – February 2008

TRAVIATA – Daytona Beach, FL – February 2008

“Tonight was FABULOUS. Everyone LOVED La Traviata. Thank you so much!!!!!! A triumph!!”

Carolina Anderson – Daytona Beach Symphony Society

“We had a wonderful performance (LA TRAVIATA) tonight! Your Violetta had an amazing voice, she was a wonderful actress, and was such a beautiful young woman. Everyone was so happy with the entire production. Kleenex and hankies were abundant in the audience, as it was so touching, due largely to "Violetta." We didn't see Giorgio, so please pass the word to him that we are so happy with this production. Thank you all!”

Dallas and Nancy – Daytona Beach Symphony Society

A VIOLETTA TO DIE FOR

Marina Viskvorkina’s Violetta would satisfy the most demanding audience of any great opera house “Teatro Lirico was back for its second weekend this year, and in Verdi’s LA TRAVIATA, Ukranian soprano Marina Viskvorkina gave an extraordinary performance as the consumptive courtesan Violetta Vailry. Viskvorkina’s got just about everything: she’s a voluptuous blonde with a big, creamy voice of pinpoint accuracy, and she can act. She began by depicting a very flirtatious Violetta. Her performance became increasingly inward and moving, conveying real dignity as Violetta confronts Alfredo’s father who wants her to give up his son. But it was in the last act that Viskvorkina ascended to tragic stature. She’s one of the rare Violettas who sings the notes yet still convinces you that she physically failing and feverish. And she is heartbreaking. Her performance would satisfy the most demanding audience of any great opera house.”

Lloyd Schwartz – BOSTON PHOENIX – March 2008

Boston TRAVIATA — March 2008

Where Teatro Lirico D'Europa's, "La Traviata," is concerned there is only one way to describe it: "You look Marvelous!"

"Sunday afternoon's performance of Verdi's "La Traviata," performed by Teatro Lirico D'Europa, at Emerson's Cutler Majestic in Boston, was one of the company's most moving and flawless productions. It oozed emotion and sentimentality and boasted wonderfully colorful sets, expert use of lighting, sumptuous costumes, a powerhouse cast, and effective and evocative orchestration conducted by Maestro Krassimir Topolov — and this isn't my view alone. During intermission I spoke with a friend who recently retired from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and he observed that in his opinion this performance was "near flawless." And it was.

This was one of those productions that came together and kept rising as the story of Violetta and Alfredo's lives unfolded. Much of the credit has to go to some pretty strong vocal performances by four leads: the gorgeous and vocally gifted soprano Marina Viskvorkina, who sang the role of Violetta, baritone Plamen Dimitrov, who sang the role of Giorgio Germont, the gifted and always dependable baritone Hristo Sarafov, and tenor Gabriel Gonzalez.

The audience loved this performance and for good reason. The stage direction by Giorgio Lalov was right on mark and every technical and visual queue was timed perfectly. A "tip-of-the hat" must also be given to the wonderful chorus of this company. It shone and performed magnificently as did the ballet dancers that performed in each of the two previous weekend shows I attended: "The Merry Widow," and "La Traviata."

I rave when I see a particularly strong performance and this production of "La Traviata" falls into that congratulatory category. As comedian Billy Crystal used to say when he played the actor Fernando Lamas on Saturday Night Live: "You look marvelous." Well, for this production of Verdi's "La Traviata," I say: "You looked Marvelous" Sunday afternoon, keep it up!"

Paul Joseph Walkowski — OperaOnline.us

Year in Classical — Celebrate

Operas to Treasure...The touring Teatro Lirico d'Europa brought a satisfying La Traviata, with glamorous Ukrainian soprano Marina Viskvorkina as Verdi's tubercular courtesan."

THE BOSTON PHOENIX — Lloyd Schwartz — December 22, 2008 —

“The performance (of LA TRAVIATA) was wonderful! We had many positive comments from patrons at the end of the night. They enjoyed the production thoroughly.”

John Cattanach, GM – Touhill Performing Arts Center, St. Louis, MO – January 2010

“Throughout the opera (LA TRAVIATA) the music conducted by Krassimir Topolov was first-rate. The instrumentals, the sets and the onstage work of Snejana Dramcheva (Violetta) was impeccable, her acting believable. When she was onstage, she compelled attention with her personality, performance and beauty. Her costumes were knockouts as well.”

St. Louis Classical Examiner – Bill Townsend

“Wonderful performance (of LA TRAVIATA)! Thank you again. Looking forward to Turandot next year!”

***Mitchell Gershenfeld, Director of Presentations and Theater Operations
McCallum Theatre, Palm Desert, CA – February 2010 – SOLD OUT!***

La Traviata Translates: Tragic Love at Cerritos

“Teatro Lirico D’Europa staged the great Giuseppe Verdi’s “La Traviata” on lover’s weekend at the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts. Like many well aimed cupid’s darts and Vailtine sentiments La Traviata starts with grand hope but ends in a heap of regrets and sorrow. Despite the agonizing d’amor the music and singing along with dazzling costumes make for a rewarding day at the old operatic heartbreak hotel.

This company has visited Cerritos several times before and the principals are all top drawer. Ms. Dramcheva (Violetta) was especially impressive in this monumentally demanding role that sees her singing throughout the two and a half hours of the unraveling of her undoing. In Act II the happy couple is cohabitating blissfully but in opera bliss is often obliterated, as is this state by the father of Alfredo who fears the breakup of his family because of this tryst. Baritone Peter Danailov was excellent in the thankless role of the father and indeed his “Dite alla giovine” is the persuader that moves Violetta to make the ultimate sacrifice for her love. While she pretends to leave him for her former lover she suffers terribly as heard in “Amami Alfredo” that demonstrated some of the soprano’s finest singing.”

Glen Creason

“The show (LA TRAVIATA) was just marvelous. The audience was amazed at the musicianship of both singers and orchestra. I think that there were at least 5 curtain calls

from a standing audience. Thank you so much for sending us such quality. I look forward to working with you again.”

David Nyman, GM – Heritage Theatre, Cedar City, UT

“Wonderful (TRAVIATA) 830 seats filled (theatre seats 1016) and people leaping to their feet, with “brava, brava”! All the principals in very wonderful voice; costumes, set, all beautiful. Thanks so much!”

***Fred Wharton – Wilmington Concert Association
Keenan Auditorium, Wilmington, NC – February 2010***

LA TRAVIATA and FLEDERMAUS

“The La Traviata was beautiful. Very well received. I was speaking with a woman from the DC area who said this was the first time she ever cried during Act 3 in all of the times she’d seen Traviata. Die Fledermaus also well received and lots of fun. Thanks for everything!”

Kris Sabel, Executive Director – Vilar Performing Arts Center – Vail, CO – February 2010

“What a voice on that Violetta! WOW! I’ve seen some great opera from you guys but that was a truly superlative Traviata!”

Marty Petlock – Sunrise Theatre, Fort Pierce, FL – March 2010

“Traviata was just another incredible show from two incredible people—you and Giorgio. The audience loved it...hence our booking the three shows next year. Thanks for the follow-up Jenny. You are very good at what you do.”

John Wilkes, GM – Sunrise Theatre – Ft. Pierce, FL – March 2010

LA TRAVIATA SUCCESS AT GENTILE

An event and at the same time a great success which was sold out for the "La Traviata" (Verdi, staged at the Teatro Gentile with Teatro Lirico d'Europa)

How to read the masterpiece of Verdi Theater Gentile, after many years of absence of the opera in Fabriano?

"There is no doubt that a climate of great expectation could be perceived but one certainly never predicted the great request for tickets that ensued. Within three hours the theater was practically sold out. Many young people and many people from nearby towns. I am very sorry that I could not respond to all the requests but, in spite of the availability of the company to perform again the following day, the bureaucracy has not allowed the realization of another performance."

For the next shows you have already decided something?

"With Maestro Lalov, it has already been defined for a long time, the representation of Rigoletto for April 13, 2012, and given the great demand of the public it was decided to add a performance the following day, i.e. the April 14."

Daniele Gattucci – VIVERE JESI – Il Quotidiano della Citta De Territorio

Centro Studi FABRIANO

Preg. mo M° Lalov, Centro Studi Fabriano would like to thank you for the splendid rendition of La Traviata staged at Teatro Gentile Saturday 12 November. We had a sold out theater as never had happened in the past, an enthusiastic audience with continuous spontaneous applause and the great final ovation to artists and all staff. We are really grateful to you for bringing to Fabriano, after so many years, finally again the opera and a spectacle of this level. The reception of the public naturally leads us to develop the kind of programming for the foreseeable future. With our M° Ezio Maria Tisi please define as soon as possible the titles for the next opera season. Meanwhile we look forward with joy for Rigoletto by April 2012.

President Dr. George Saitt – Centro Stdi-FABRIANO

Traveling Company Shows its Talents with TRAVIATA – PCA Great Performances has brought productions by Teatro Lirico d'Europa to the stage of Merrill Auditorium many times, but they never cease to amaze.

Wednesday night's performance of Verdi's "La Traviata" was no exception. It had fine singing, a live orchestra, a versatile unitary stage setting, good costumes and even a first-rate ballet in Act Two, Scene Two.

That a small central-European traveling company can put on such a performance night after night, after bus rides on icy roads, is quite incredible. Audience members may have come to expose their children to live grand opera, but they stayed to be moved by the music and drama, even those who had seen "La Traviata" many times.

Bulgarian soprano Snejana Dramcheva in the role of Violetta...triumphed. She was so overjoyed at the rousing standing ovation that greeted the end of the opera that it was hard to believe she had just died of consumption — in a very well-acted deathbed scene. Her voice seemed tentative in Act One, but it soon became obvious that she was using it in the interest of the drama, varying between a perfectly clear pianissimo and a powerful forte. Dramcheva is also an excellent actress, making the tragic scenes, so easy to overdramatize, quite believable. At the end of Act Three, there wasn't a dry eye in the house. She was well seconded by tenor Orin Goranov in the role of Alfredo. He was thoroughly convincing in his alternation between tenderness and tightly controlled rage. He was perhaps a bit upstaged by baritone Theodore Lambrino, playing Alfredo's misguided father, Germont, but that may be because Verdi gives Germont one of the best arias in opera, "Di Provenza il March". His and Violetta's long-distance (from opposing sides of the stage) duets were also marvelous. Another striking feature of the company is the talent of singers in secondary roles. Viara Zhelezova as Violetta's friend Flora, and Hristo Srafov as Baron Douphol, with whom Alfredo duels over Violetta's affections, were outstanding.

I particularly liked basso Plamen Dimitrov, who enters at the last minute as Dr. Greenville, like a 19th-century Dr. Kevorkian, or a stork (which presages a death in the family). And the gypsy dancers were lithe, fiery and appropriate to the Alexandre Dumas' (the son) tale of forbidden love. Artistic director Giorgio Lalov is responsible for many telling small touches in the staging, such as Alfredo's luck at cards, which means that he will be unlucky in love, or the gypsy's fortune telling, which sets the permissive atmosphere of the party at Flora's. Lastly, the orchestra, under conductor Krassimir Topolov, produced a sound that many larger ensembles would envy."

Christopher Hyde — Portland Press Herald

Grand opera thrilled Columbia

Grand opera in Columbia has found its niche; the March 3 production of "La Traviata" at the Koger Center was unsurpassed in its quality and excitement. The audience was thrilled and impressed with the production by the Teatro Lirico D'Europa, which brought us "Madama Butterfly" last spring.

Kudos once again to The Palmetto Opera for taking the risk of equating grand opera with the symphony and the ballet in this town; it was time, and it was successful. Perhaps next year, the school children of Columbia will be given the opportunity to enjoy this cultural icon, grand opera."

THE STATE — South Carolina

"Oh, (LA TRAVIATA) was fantastic! The performance was wonderful and your crew and cast were top notch! Thank you again for everything."

Faith A. Wilson, Executive Director – Opera New Hampshire – February 2012

"I can't give enough praise about last night's performance of LA TRAVIATA. It was superb in every respect. Many of the audience members said it was Teatro Lirico's best opera yet and everyone was raving about the stunning Olga Orlovskaya and her amazing voice. In addition to her voice, she is a wonderful actress and they were all captivated by the story. Orlin Goranov was excellent in his role of Alfredo and the audience raved about him. Viara Zhelezova as Flora was fabulous as well. Audience members commented on how the singers "looked the part" and were so believable. It made the opera come alive for them. The "local opera star" fundraiser was a huge success and in addition to raising money, it made our audience feel more connected with Teatro Lirico when they saw two locals as part of the cast. The people who attended the Cena Italiana were thrilled by the entertainment and again, made them feel as though Giorgio and the opera company were a part of our "Family." I cannot thank you and Giorgio enough for making this happen for us. There was such a feeling of joy and celebration in our auditorium last night! Thank you, thank you so much!!"

***Carol Anderson-McClean, PhD., Executive Director
Daytona Beach Symphony Society – March 2012***

"LA TRAVIATA was really wonderful! Violetta (Olga Orlovskaya) stole the show, (no surprise) with Alfredo (Orlin Goranov) not far behind. The orchestra sounded great and the whole vocal ensemble was together in every sense of the word. We feel so lucky to have had your TRAVIATA here. Giorgio was charming at the pre-concert dinner and we appreciated him bringing the three guest singers with their individual arias. Again we are very blessed to have your company in our midst.

PS. Our locals who were extras in the first act were so thrilled to be on stage, and they looked so natural. They were on cloud 9 and I'm sure they will forever be fanatic opera nuts because of you. What a great thing!"

Dallas and Nancy Weekly – Daytona Beach Symphony Society – February 2012

"LA TRAVIATA was fantastic! Sold out, standing ovations, I don't think the audience ever sat down. In one night, we proved that there is an opera audience in Columbia and SC. We had people coming from Hilton Head, Orangeburg (a nearby county), Greenville, others. The

ushers ran out of programs and had to ask people to share. What a wonderful problem to have! I really appreciate the soloists being willing to attend our Bellini and desert bar reception for our donors afterwards and have their photos taken with them. Please give them special thanks from me. The reception was a tremendous hit and one donor said he was going to send us some more money because he wanted more of this. And now we start planning for next March. Giorgio and I agreed last year that to grow our audience we needed to begin with the most well known operas.

If you google Palmetto Opera, La Traviata, you can pull up a lot of the articles that have been written on the production. My entire marketing/publicity plan worked just as planned and exceeded what I expected. That's a rarity in this business. Have a great Sunday!"

Kathy Newman, Chair – Palmetto Opera, Columbia, SC – Performance at Koger Center, March 2012

"I know you have already heard from Carol, but let me express my appreciation for all the assistance you provided. The entire evening was such a success and we had a great time....from the start of the dinner 'til the end of the post concert party for special friends of the Daytona Beach Symphony Society!!! I already know from Carol that you have offered to do it again, all I can say is BRAVO. Thanks again, we really appreciate your help. PS: The opera was the best ever here in Daytona Beach"

***Carolyn Brewer, VP – Daytona Beach Symphony Society
Responsible for fund raising – LA TRAVIATA – March 2012***

La Traviata Plays to Packed House In Columbia!

“A packed house gave resounding approval to a world-class performance of Verdi’s La Traviata on March 3rd at the Koger Center in Columbia. “After the curtain calls began the audience never sat down and the applause never stopped,” said Palmetto Opera Chair Kathy Newman. “Opera lovers came from as far away as Hilton Head to experience this grand opera. It brings Palmetto Opera one step closer to establishing a regular opera season.”

La Traviata was performed by the international cast of Teatro Lirico D’Euopa, a highly acclaimed international opera touring company. Last spring Palmetto Opera presented Teatro’s production of Madama Butterfly, which also received rave reviews.

The two principal soloists, Russian soprano Olga Orlovskaya (Violetta) and Bulgarian tenor Orlin Goranov (Alfredo), generated enthusiastic applause throughout the performance. Giorgio Lalov, Teatro’s founder and artistic director, described Olga as, “the perfect singer to perform Traviata. She is the right person both vocally and physically to represent Violetta.”

Lalov, a bass baritone who debuted at La Scala at the age of 25, is passionate about opera and is dedicated to increasing appreciation for the 400-year-old art form. "People call me the artistic director," he said, but I do everything: the stage direction, the sets, the costumes. It is exhausting, and I love it."

The Palmetto Opera's mission is to bring opera to the capital city. Lalov says the Board members are "very, very devoted people who want to have opera in Columbia." He told the audience, "I have given 5,000 performances since 1988, but these performances with The Palmetto Opera are very special to me." Teatro will return to Columbia on March 2, 2013 for another performance (TOSCA).

"LA TRAVIATA was great last night! The soprano (Stanislava Ivanova) was wonderful and our audience responded enthusiastically. Giorgio did a great job for the pre-performance lecture — maybe the best ever — over 30 minutes. He just amazes me with his energy! How early in 2013 can you go for FIGARO? Can you do January 17?"

***Milt Russos — Executive Director for performance at the Times Union Center
Jacksonville, FL — March 2012***

"You don't know me, but I'm on the Opera Board in Columbia, SC (Palmetto Opera). I'm the one who asks Giorgio "the hard questions", we talk, and we all come away with smiles on our faces. And for sure there was a huge smile on my face and in my heart during and following the performance here on March 3. La Traviata is my all time favorite, and Giorgio's company performed it to a Tee. And the reception that followed, with the cast [some] in costume was a super fine finale to a memorable evening. As I had been recruiting some Extras, I was back stage during rehearsal. IN SHORT, A GREAT EXPERIENCE ALL AROUND for us here. I know you've been in touch with others from The Palmetto Opera, but I thought one more "Hooray" might be appreciated. I look forward to Giorgio's upcoming [May, I think] visit; our doing brain storming together as to how we can use him to build our audience [e.g. putting him in front of more of our potential public, so charismatic is he! And then, beyond, to build a future, with collaboration as our centerpiece."

Lee Minghi

"Violetta, Olga Orlovskaya in LA TRAVIATA was superb! Her high notes were crystal clear, just the way I love to hear them and her control was magnificent, her whispers were just as powerful. Our audience loved the production. It was a successful evening for Fort Myers Community Concerts."

Mary Lee Mann, Barbara Mann Theatre — Ft. Myers Community Concerts — February 2013

"The audience loved LA TRAVIATA"

Bob Rossi, CEO, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, FL — February 2013

"Tonight's performance of La Traviata was astonishing musical theatre. This opera is all about the soprano role and Olga Orlovskaya's Violetta was magnificent. Jorge Antonio Pita was a fitting Alfredo, both in looks and voice. And, the baritone rendering (Dobromir Monekov) of "Di Provenza, il mar" was particularly touching as well as the entire first act scene with Germont and Alfredo. I overheard one patron afterwards who told Giorgio that he and his wife had seen La Traviata 30 years earlier in Atlanta with Catherine Malfitano in the title role, but this production, he said, was better. The audience shouted their approval at the final curtain. Thanks for sending another great opera. The post opera reception with our 100 guests was wonderful— —a thoroughly enjoyable event. Thanks to the two tenors, soprano and the pianist for their participation— —and, of course, for Giorgio's introductions."

Bob Borich, Talent Chairman — Panama City Music Association — February 2013

Orff — CARMINA BURANA / Ravel — BOLERO

Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists of Teatro Lirico D'Europa with Ballet Arabesk

"It was a crowded house for big night at the opera. Carl Orff's CARMINA BURANA began with mystery and breathtaking drama. White garbed chorus, orchestra members and dancers who moved as if hypnotized through the primeval world conjured up by stark, chanted chords and stuttering rhythms. Dancers in bronzed masks joined couples, priests and other real and fantastic creatures in flowing costumes. Hearing the iconic chords of Orff's masterpiece take shape and weave assured, intricate patterns was fascinating. Soprano, Veselina Vasileva was stunning as was the choreography and enormously effective costumes."

DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL — Laura Stewart — January 2005

"Walking out after watching enchanting performances Saturday at the Coronado Theatre of CARMINA BURANA and BOLERO...we knew we'd witnessed something extraordinary and I'd wager that most of the nearly full house felt something similar. CARMINA BURANA lived up to its billing as a spectacle. It was riveting!

ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR — Judy Emerson — November 2005

Mozart — LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

"I loved Le Nozze di Figaro. The music and articulation was wonderful."

***June Anderson, Executive Director — Wilmington Concert Association
Performance at Kenan Auditorium, Wilmington, NC — January 2013***

"Reports about Le Nozze di Figaro from our audience: The singing was excellent, the costumes and scenery colorful and attractive for a touring group, and the audience gave them a standing ovation at the end. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all the audience. It was a long opera and it held our attention for every minute. The overall view from everyone was BRAVO BRAVISSIMO!!"

***Risa Kell, Artistic Administrator — Wilmington Concert Association
Performance at Kenan Auditorium, Wilmington, NC — January 2013***

The audience was very impressed with the performance of Le Nozze di Figaro They also commented on how beautiful the set was. Production wise, we love working with you all. Both the orchestra and cast are great to work with and easy to get along with.

Jessica Gloria, Director — Miramar Cultural Center

"We were so pleased with everything! I couldn't ask for a more cooperative group, with fabulous quality. The audience again loved it! Nothing but fabulous comments from our audience! Super job by Teatro Lirico!"

***Jean Esslinger, President, Board of Directors — Opera New Hampshire
Palace Theatre — Manchester, NH — March 2013***

Donizetti — L'ELISIR D'AMORE

"It (L'ELISIR D'AMORE) was a wonderful evening of opera! The handsome cast of Adina, Nemorina, Gianetta, Belcore and Dulcamara were all in great voice and portrayed their respective roles adroitly and convincingly. The audience was well pleased and showed their appreciation with a prolonged standing ovation. The affair was a huge success!"

***Bob Borich — Panama City Music Association
Performance of Donizetti's L'Elisir D'Amore at Marina Civic Center — Panama City, FL — 2014***

"L'Elisir D'Amore - was a delightful opera! All the characters were most believable and played their roles to perfection. Nemorino's (tenor, Fabian Robles) facial expressions made you feel exactly what he was feeling, or possibly took you back in time to when you experienced unrequited love. Dulcamara...what a salesman. Pure delight! He played his role so well. Adina and Belcore - so perfect!!!! The orchestra and chorus were perfect! Always great working with your company!"

Jessica Gloria, GM – Miramar Cultural Center, Miramar, FL – 2014

(L'Elisir D'Amore) was wonderful! It was enjoyable, well done, consistent, and the adults and students, young and old, enjoyed themselves. The cast was excellent...thanks to all."

***Jean Esslinger - Opera New Hampshire
Presenter of Teatro Lirico at Palace Theatre, Manchester, NH – 2014***

"Our audience was very pleased with L'Elisir D'Amore! Great tenor and soprano! Looking forward to LA BOHEME next year."

***Mary Lee Mann, GM – Ft. Myers Community Concert Association
Presenter of Teatro Lirico at Barbara Mann Theatre – 2014***

Johann Strauss — DIE FLEDERMAUS

The production toured as a co-production of Czech Opera Prague and Teatro Lirico D'Europa during the 2005-2006 US season.

NO TRICK — "Fledermaus" IS A TREAT"

On Friday, Teatro Lirico D'Europa in collaboration with Czech Opera Prague, presented the first of three Halloween weekend performances of DIE FLEDERMAUS at the Cutler Majestic Theatre. A better way to scare up some holiday fun could hardly be imagined. While traditionally FLEDERMAUS is a staple of New Year's Eve galas at opera houses around the world, it is equally appropriate for Halloween. The engaging Czech Opera singers went through their paces with professional poise and boundless charm. The opera was sung in the original German, but the projected titles were almost unnecessary, so clear were the cast's moves as directed by Martin Otava. Conductor, Martin Mazik kept Strauss's musical champagne flowing by the magnum as did standouts like Jitka Svobodova as Rosalinde, Jan Jezek as Eisenstein, Jaromir Novotny as Alfred and Anna Klamatova-Janotova as Adele."

BOSTON HERALD — T. J. Medrek — October 2005

CASTING BOLSTERS PERFORMANCE

"A lighter-than-air performance of Johann Strauss DIE FLEDERMAUS Saturday evening at the Lied Center. There was not a heavy note in the entire production, from the cast's precise and weightless movements about the stage to the lighthearted treatment of the plot itself. The operetta was performed in German, with English supertitles, but when the audience heard Eisenstein, in the first scene, tell the maid to order "Kentucky Fried Chicken" for his supper, we knew the company would wring more fun than usual from this airy plot. Comic acting was broad and excellent throughout, and the music was pleasing from the familiar three opening notes of the overture until the last chord of the choral finale.

Casting was right on the money, and there were no weak individual performances. Jitka Svobodova gave Rosalinde both the requisite hauteur and a strong dramatic coloratura voice that stood out clearly over the chorus and shone. Tenor Jan Jezek played and sang Gabriel Von Eisenstein with clarity and assurance. And the young lyric soprano Anna Klamova-Janotova stole scene after scene as the soubrette Adele, hitting her high notes and flouncing about the stage convincingly as a hoyden having the time of her life. The part of Dr. Falke, the "Fledermaus" of the title, was well-played by baritone Pavel Klecka, who gave his character just enough edge to make his desire for revenge believable. Bass-baritone Marian Rehor made a fine coconspirator, prison warden, and Chevalier Chagrin, Jaromir Novotny in a too-tight vest played a farcical Alfred, the tenor who won't stop singing. Though the character's singing is a running joke among the others, the joke does not conceal Novotny,'s fine lyric tenor.

The diminutive mezzo-soprano Viara Zhelezova, in a role often given to women, played a fey and blase Prince Orlovsky, playing host to the ball, dictating its rules and leading the praise of King Champagne. She and a dance partner also turn in a graceful performance as they led the waltz near the second act's close. The third act opened with veteran Bulgarian actor Gueorgui Dinev in an old coat, beret and boots as the slivovitz-addled Frosch (German for "Frog") in an extended comic interlude. The audience broke into applause as he kick-started an imaginary (and anachronistic) motorcycle and puttputted offstage. Martin Mazik conducted the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. The orchestra was the best heard in a Lied Center opera in several years, while the chorus filled every inch of the house with sound, especially in the big second-act numbers in praise of love and wine. The chorus, joined by dancers filled the stage with music and movement. Colloquial supertitles kept the audience engaged in the dialogue. At evening's end, a well-filled house, still energized after nearly three hours, kept the cast for third and fourth bows."

LAWRENCE JOURNAL WORLD — Dean Bevan — October 2005

SHOW'S HUMOR IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE

Die Fledermaus, the comic operetta by Johann Strauss could be enjoyed by the opera lover as well as those new to opera. The element that set it apart was its comedic timing and the way the performers tried to make an old art new. In other words, it was funny! Who knew? Die Fledermaus which means The Bat, centers on Dr. Falke's plot to get back at Gabriel Von Eisenstein for leaving him in a bat costume on a park bench. The evening is full of mistaken identities, plenty of champagne and jubilant music. All the characters had fun with their roles in the fancy Vienna setting of the 1890s. The characters fit their roles perfectly, and their comedic timing was impeccable. Attending three hours of opera can seem a daunting endeavor. However, once the curtain opened, time passed quickly through the evening of lively song and dance. Much of the singing revolved around either champagne or being too tipsy, all of which worked toward the prevailing mood of festive happiness. The ending left the audience full of exultation and a desire to toast with the performers. And those who attended Die Fledermaus know the Czech Opera Prague deserved many toasts."

Lawrence.com ARTS – Laura Parkinson – October 2005

FLEDERMAUS at BOSTON'S MAJESTIC THEATRE

"One word can best describe the production of Johann Strauss' classic operetta, "Die Fledermaus", last night at the Cutler Majestic theater in Boston: flawless! Strauss surely had to be smiling on Friday evening as this magnificently staged production wowed Boston's opening night opera audience. The cast was robust and electrifying, the music, conducted brilliantly by Martin Mazik, was performed with verve and an incredibly high level of energy that was contagious on the audience, the staging by Martin Otava, was superb and well thought out, the sets and lighting, also by Martin Otava, were effective and colorful, and the costumes by Martin Otava were sumptuous — and these are just initial impressions. This production, staged with such exacting attention to detail and with such energy was an opera event, that will be difficult to forget. From the moment the curtain rose, and the magnificent display of color and rich stage sets appeared, one sensed this was going to be something special — and what made it so special was a dynamic cast that reached for the best they could give, and then gave and gave and gave, right up until their final bows. This entire cast and chorus were lively, fully involved in what was going on on stage and directed such that even when the stage was full of bodies, as it was for the gala ball, everyone had something to do. When they did the conga, you really did believe you were at a wild party. There was whistling, shouting, giggling, flirting, and movement that captured the moment just beautifully. And that's the bottom line on this production: Wonderful in every sense, flawless in its execution and a joy to behold."

OPERAONLINE.US – P. Walkowski – October 2005

Die Fledermaus' is a hilarious treat

"Audiences of all kinds will be delighted with "Die Fledermaus," the operetta written by Johann Strauss. Full of mistaken identity, physical humor and irony, people will revel in its timeless tale of friendly mischief and pranks. The Czech Opera Prague performed "Die Fledermaus" on Sunday, October 23, at the Touhill Performing Arts Center to a full audience. The audience was delighted with the operetta and its wonderful cast of characters that included many talented opera singers and actors. Performed in German with English subtitles, the audience has no problem following the comprehensible storyline. The characters are fresh and witty and the audience is captivated by their words. The singing, from Jitka Svobodova, the soprano who plays Rosalinde, to Pavel Horacek, the baritone Dr. Falke, was spectacular even to those who are not fans of opera music. The timelessness and comic timing of this wonderful operetta deserves an A and a strong recommendation to any opera lovers to see it. Even if you have never been to an opera, this is the perfect one to try out."

THE CURRENT — Laura Ayres — October 2005 "FLEDERMAUS "

This BAT Hits It Out of the Park

"This 3 act opera that brought the Garde Arts Center to their feet Tuesday, thanks to a lively performance. The opera company had to be admired for its theatrical and vocal skills. Soprano Jitka Svobodova as Rosalinde was a standout singer, displaying great control and power. Anna Klamova-Janotova, a lovely soprano, won hearts in her role as Adele, the vivacious chamber maid, and displayed a fine range and technical mastery well beyond her years. The men's parts called on a broad range of acting skills, and Jezek and Kriz enjoyed the challenge. The most riveting scene occurred in the 3rd act when G. Dinev appeared as Frosch — a drunken jailer. Dinev was hysterical. The stage direction by Martin Otava added physical interest to the music with interesting blocking, beautiful costumes and professional dancers. The sets were lavish and nicely done while the orchestra directed by Martin Mazik conveyed the wide swings between gaiety and somberness with great aplomb. Lightness and good humor prevail when the refrain "Chacun son gout" — "do what you want" — ushers one out into the night refreshed and humming a lively waltz tune."

THE DAY — Lee Howard — November 2005

Strauss, a 'Mouse' and a Night of Memories

"I was whistling the waltz everyone knows as I left the Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts Tuesday evening. "Well I see you really enjoyed tonight's performance," two of my favorite ushers commented, smiling as I stopped to chat with them. Czech Opera Prague certainly proved itself to be a competent company. The wall — to-wall audience clearly

loved the performance, more than a few of them nodding and swaying to the familiar music as the drama unfolded. Particularly noteworthy was soprano Anna Klamatova-Janotova, perfectly cast as the petulant but sexy Adele. Sung and spoken in German with English super titles, one need not know a word of German to follow the story. Frocshe, the tipsy jailer played by Gueorgui Dinev, brought down the house. Every five years or so I get a hankering for a fix of comic opera. Last night's performance satisfied that craving."

NAPLES DAILY NEWS — Peg Goldberg Longstreth — Dec. 2005

Strauss's DIE FLEDERMAUS in the Cutler Majestic Theatre last Friday night was an entertaining, bubbly show, with pretty sets and costumes by Martin Otava, also responsible for the witty, detailed staging. Strauss's alluring waltzes were well played by the orchestra of Teatro Lirico D'Europa, energetically conducted by Martin Mazik. These Czech artists looked their parts and acted and danced them to the hilt."

BOSTON GLOBE — Richard Dyer — November 2005

A ROUSING DIE FLEDERMAUS

"PCA Great Performances lit another candle on its 75th-birthday cake with a charming performance of DIE FLEDERMAUS...a first rate and genuinely humorous production, which was little short of miraculous for a road show in terms of voices, character acting, costumes, choreography and stage design. All of the characters were equally well sung and acted — and earned a late night standing ovation."

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD — Christopher Hyde — February 2006

SYMPHONY SOCIETY SERVES UP TREAT

"Daytona Beach Symphony Society's Winterfest served up a fluffy, flakey confection with DIE FLEDERMAUS. It was an effervescent treat. Never in recent memory has Peabody Auditorium echoed with so much loud, spontaneous laughter from young and old alike, and never has a performance been interrupted so often with quick, warm, welcome applause. More satisfying were the fine sets, lighting, costumes and live orchestra and most delightful were the outstanding performances."

DAYTONA BEACH NEWS — JOURNAL — Laura Stewart — January 2006

Mascagni — CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA / Leoncavallo — I PAGLIACCI

NOTE FROM GENERAL MANAGER OF ROCKFORD CORONADO CONCERTS

About October 14, 2008 performance of Cav/Pag: "The operas were simply wonderful! We thought the singers and the orchestra were especially good. Everyone seemed to enjoy! You do a wonderful, wonderful job. Both you and Giorgio are to be applauded for all your efforts. If it were not for your group, staged opera just could not happen in a community like ours. You truly give our audience a taste of what opera is all about. Thank you! "

Mary Ann Smith — Rockford Coronado Concerts

Teatro Lirico D'Europa electrifies with two operas at Touhill

"The European opera touring company, Teatro Lirico d'Europa, made a smashing performance at the Touhill Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, October 15, at 7:30 p.m. The double-bill featured two classic operas: "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "I Pagliacci."

The operas were written in the late 1890s by Ruggiero Leoncavallo and Pietro Mascagni. They were based on a real newspaper crime report in 1882 Milan. The two operas are not connected in any way but this: revenge runs through them like a knife. Cavalleria Rusticana is a straightforward tale of vengeance, encompassing a jealous young man, Turiddu, leaving his lover, Santuzza, for an old flame, Lola, who is now married. The distraught Santuzza, in a rage of anger, confesses to the married woman's husband, Alfio, that his wife is unfaithful. Alfio challenges Turiddu, and the young man is killed.

The opera opens with Turiddu pining for Lola from offstage. The part is played by Mexican-American tenor, Gabriel Gonzalez. His voice complimented the deep Verdi bass of Theodore Lambrinos, who played Alfio. Renowned the world over for his stage presence and interpretation of characters, Lambrinos' voice evoked deep rumbles in the heart.

Santuzza was sung by Russian soprano Olga Chernisheva. In her third tour with Teatro Lirico, and with a number of other international performances on her resume, she takes the spotlight with lilting tones that soften even the harshest moments of the opera.

The high points include the famous Intermezzo, where a famous arrangement of the hymn, "Ave Maria," had its origins. The Sofia Symphony Orchestra made the music fold into a tearfully slow moment framing the rising action, with the audience's nerves tensed to break, in an amber-brilliant quality. If a word so misused as transforming could find an appropriate use, it would be to describe that moment.

Teatro Lirico's founder, Giorgio Lalov, designed and gathered most of the set pieces and costumes in Bulgaria, where the troupe originated. The modest design included a Mediterranean cityscape, recalling the opera's Italian origins. Detailed construction revealed subtle lighting along the arches of the church, and wood tables and boxes that were moved by the characters themselves during the performance. The costumes also kept with the classic Italian theme, and together they made for a very convincing transport to the end of the 18th century.

After a twenty-minute intermission, Teatro Lirico launched into its second feature, *I Pagliacci*. The story of a comic opera within a serious tale of spurned love, jealous hatred, bitter pain, and violent retribution seemed to be the stronger of the two performances. Theodore Lambrinos returned in baritone majesty as the jealous Tonio, who betrays the unfaithful Nedda, played by Romanian soprano, Christin Molnar, to her husband and comic theater troupe leader Canio, a role sung by Romanian tenor, Viorel Saplacan. The remaining company supported these three main roles well, and the spotlight stays on them through the duration. Molnar's soprano tones were playful and light, moving the feeling along pleasantly. However, she was outshone by the thrusting presence of Lambrinos. Although his role was minor, his every note seemed to overshadow the soprano's position in the melody. Saplacan was born for this role. When Canio played the heartbroken clown, he supremely sang the despairing tirade sometimes called the "quintessential tenor lament."

One could not help but feel the pain lance in vibrations that reverberated across the row seats — a wave formation, from the tips of one's feet up to the top of the head.

A second surprise came in the electric ending. Canio, unable to bear the mask of theatrical performance, burst from his role and murdered Nedda and Silvio. As the villagers stood horrified and the audience sat in stunned silence, Tonio's bass voice announces "the comedy is over." The curtain rushed to meet the stage. The chill of shock flattened. Applause followed as the artists took their bows, followed by three curtain calls. The eruptions of fury, pain, and rage made these operas a treasure of humanity, and a picture of emotion in music. Teatro Lirico d'Europa performed magnificently, and the orchestral complement was seamless in its delivery."

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A Night at the Opera in Cerritos

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa visited the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts over the weekend and gave local opera-philes a chance to luxuriate in some classic Italian performances of two nineteenth century short operas. "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci" were the pair, sung in one and two acts that did not lack in drama or memorable arias. The Teatro is in its

eighth year of bringing culture outside the big opera halls of Europe and the Cerritos faithful seemed hungry for the opportunity to hear these old favorites live. Teatro Lirico brought a cast that was very good throughout the evening. It is an international group with singers coming from all over the globe. Of course, Opera is the high art form with the plots that seem straight out of a Mexican telenovela but when the focus is on the majestic singing you tend to accept the bloody conclusions to these twisted tales along with the rest of the merriment. Both operas feature tragedy brought on by infidelity and the wages of that sin paid in terrible destruction. In "Cavalleria Rusticana" it is the straying Turiddu who leaves his loyal Santuzza for the charms of the restless and rather irresistible Lola. The object of these affections is unfaithful to the feckless husband Alfio and it turns out badly despite some rather grand singing and drinking of wine. Olga Chernisheva carries the piece in her role as Santuzza, singing the heart-wrenching "Voi lo sapete" and "Tu qui, Santuzza?" The smitten Turiddu refuses to be swayed and the powerful tenor Viorel Saplacan was outstanding in "Mama, quel vino" which is both a drinking song and farewell. Alfio played by the most active singer of the night, baritone Theodore Lambrinos, was both sympathetic and deserving of admiration. However, it is opera and the conclusion does not turn out well for the womanizer who pays for his transgressions in blood.

The familiar "Pagliacci" was more on the sad lessons of the breaking of vows and ensuing breaking of hearts leading to the spilling of blood. Theodore Lambrinos was back, this time as the evil Tonio, the disfigured clown who when rebuffed by the beautiful Nedda exposes her affair with another to her husband Canio. Nedda, played here by Christina Molnar was perfect in the role and her singing of "Stridono Lassu" was as sweet as the birds she described. There is the terrible moment in the show when the cuckolded husband faces the truth that his wife is unfaithful and his agony pours out in the aria "Vesti La Giubba" sung by Gabriel Gonzalez on this night with a conviction and passion that brought tears to many in the audience. To flush out the lover of his Nedda, Canio puts on a comedy based on true life. In his clown makeup he tries to get her to reveal the name of Silvio who rushes to her side too late after the spurned husband has stabbed her. If nothing else, this evening was a great example of the value of marriage counseling in such situations."

Glen Creason – November 2008

Review of Cavalleria Rusticana/ Pagliacci

"Last Thursday, October 30th, we got to see what Marin's only opera company, the Golden Gate Opera (GGO), could do after a two year performance drought. Drawing on the artistic prowess of a traveling opera company, TEATRO LIRICO D'EUROPA, GGO gave us a very credible and moving performance of two one act stand-bys of the opera repertoire, Cavalleria Rusticana (rustic chivalry) by Pietro Mascagni and I Pagliacci (the clowns) by Ruggiero Leoncavallo. GGO's general manager, Roberta Wain-Becker struck gold in finding this company. Teatro Lirico D'Europa comprises powerful and dramatic singers from

throughout eastern Europe, as well as the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. We were also gifted with stunning performances in both works by transplanted local talent in the form of soprano Olga Chernisheva. Both *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliaccio* are part of what is called the "verismo" (Reality) genre of Italian opera. Verismo operas are that art form's equivalent of TV reality shows. Real people living real dramas. "Cav and Pag", as they are known to opera fans, are about the reality of love, infidelity, jealousy and ultimately, heartbreak. The evening began with "Cav". Mascagni's opera is about a rejected woman, Santuzza, and her former lover, Turiddu, now infatuated with the belle of Santuzza's village. Mascagni composed one of the most searing expressions in the opera repertoire for life as a wronged woman, known as "Voi lo sapete, o mamma" (you know it, mamma). Recorded by just about every famous soprano of the last 90 years, Olga Chernisheva's rendition Wednesday night moved me as much as any recording I have heard. Opera fans not only love beautiful singing; they love those singers who have the special gift of being able to transmit deeply intense emotion through their voices. Mascagni wrote very powerful music for that acute moment when a spurned woman finally gets her one-on-one moment with her oversexed former boyfriend. Turiddu was sung by Mexican tenor Gabriel Gonzalez with a wonderful combination of power, authority and beauty. I only wish that my own moments with jilted former lovers had been as heartfelt and truthful as Santuzza and Turiddu's dueling arias are in "Cav". Turiddu gets murdered at the end of the opera. His murderer, the village belle's husband, was sung by Greek American baritone, Theodore Lambrinos. Again, we were very lucky to get have such a strong and skilled performer bring this role to life.

After the intermission, we were treated to a very competent performance of "Pag". The big aria in this opera is "Vesti la giubba" (on with the play). Another jilted lover, this time a tenor, sings about his heartbreak before he goes on stage to play his role as a clown. Our heartbroken clown, Canio, was sung by Romanian tenor Viorel Saplacan. In "Vesti la giubba" Leoncavallo gave us an exquisite aria about the acutely human paradox of going on with our jobs in the world while feeling utterly devastated in our hearts. Saplican transmitted to us true understanding of that paradox through his singing. Moments like that are what we go to the opera for. Both Olga Chernisheva and Theodore Lambrinos were recycled into new roles in "Pag". This time Chernisheva got to play Nedda, and Lambrinos played another clown, Tonio, who vengefully sets up the tragedy between Canio and Nedda. The Nedda role requires a challenging combination of lyric soprano lightness with full on dramatic soprano intensity. Chernisheva gave us both. Lambrinos is a wonderful singing actor, performing the role of Tonio as well as I have seen anyone do it. Russian baritone, Plamen Dimitrov, sang Nedda's new lover Silvio, movingly. It is sad that GGO was only able to mount one performance of this "Cav" and "Pag". We were given powerful and compelling performances by skilled singers in classics of musical theater. Let us hope that Golden Gate Opera can continue to bring us gifts like Thursday's performances of "Cav and Pag".

Mesmerizing Propulsion: Teatro Lirico D'Europa's Cavalleria Rusticana/ Pagliacci

"Cavalleria Rusticana" tells a story of love, hate and betrayal. During the sun-drenched afternoon of a Sicilian Easter, a woman has discovered a body. The opera pulls no punches in telling the story of the love, passion, rejection and betrayal that led up to the killing. On 15 October 2008, the Touhill Performing Arts Center of the University of Missouri at Saint Louis presented the verismo double bill of Pietro Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" and Ruggiero Leoncavallo's equally down-to-earth "I Pagliacci" as performed in a new production by the renowned touring company, Teatro Lirico d'Europa. These two operas make a perfect combination. Both works date from a period when enhanced realism was the ruling literary style. Mascagni took his story from Giovanni Verga's 1883 dramatization of his novella about love and death in a Sicilian village. Two of the composer's friends, Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci, wrote the libretto. The piece won a competition sponsored by the publishing house of Sanzognò, and its première on 17 May 1890 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome was a rousing success. Leoncavallo said the story of his opera came from the account of a court case that his father, a judge, had once tried. It may have started there, but the composer, who wrote his own libretto, is thought to have also borrowed aspects of the story from a French play by Catulle Mendès "La Femme de Tabarin." There are several similarities and the composer was living in Paris when it was performed there. Stage Director Giorgio Lalov brought out all the passionate expression of the lovers embroiled in the stories of these engrossing operas. Olga Chernisheva was a lovely but troubled Santuzza who simply could not control her obsession with Turiddu, even though she knew he was no longer in love with her. She used the many colours in her opulent voice to express her love for the village playboy and to describe her despair when she realizes he will never care for her again. She has the clear ringing high notes as well as the emotion-filled chest tones that this role calls for and she used them with artistic eloquence. Turiddu had been in love with Lola before her marriage to the wealthy Alfio. He courted Santuzza on the rebound, but lately Lola wanted him back again whenever her husband traveled on business. As Turiddu, Gabriel Gonzalez began as a devil-may-care youth but evolved into a man who eventually realized that his thoughtless actions could result in fatal consequences. His angry duet with Santuzza was a gripping ride on an emotional roller-coaster. Both singers are masters in creating vocal passion and their close harmonies were delectable. Svetomira Gitsova was a dutiful Mamma Lucia who seemed used to tying up the loose ends of Turiddu's untidy life. As Lola, Alfio's unfaithful wife, Snejana Dramcheva was a charming village temptress with an enticing smile and a lustrous sound. One wonders if her feminine wiles were able to turn away Alfio's wrath after he finished with Turiddu. Baritone Theodore Lambrinos was a rough and ready Alfio with a huge resonant voice. He commanded the stage and left no doubt that he expected total obedience from his new young wife. Much of Mascagni's drama comes from his surging, iridescent score. Under the direction of Krassimir Topolov, the Teatro Lirico D'Europa orchestra expressed it with mesmerizing propulsion. The brass section was particularly evocative in its accompaniment of the characters' passion-filled moments. After the intermission, it was Tonio the Clown's

turn to introduce us to Leoncavallo's "I Pagliacci" and to remind us that clowns are real people with breakable hearts. When Lambrinos again unleashed his large bronze-toned voice we knew we could expect another fine performance from the one leading performer to appear in both operas. Viorel Saplacan was a tall, muscular Canio who guarded his young and supple wife, Nedda, with jealous rage. He sang with a strong voice that expressed his physical strength and his devastating emotional vulnerability. As Nedda, Christin Molnar was a graceful flirt who obviously longed to be as free as the birds flying overhead. She loathed the unattractive Tonio and let him know it in no uncertain terms. At the same time, she sang with silvery soprano tones and her voice blended admirably with the virile tones of Plamen Dimitrov as Silvio. Georgi Dinev helped convey the bite of the drama as Beppe but, in the long run, it was the emotionally intense Tonio who fomented the action, and it was he who announced 'The comedy is finished', when the tragedy was complete. As with the first half of this double bill, the orchestra and chorus brought both composers' intentions to life and gave a sizzling account of these verismo pieces. This excellent performance at the Touhill Performing Arts Center was rewarded with a standing ovation."

*MVDAILY.COM – Susan Hampton
Touhill Performing Arts Center, St. Louis, MO – October 2008*

NOTE FROM MAJESTIC THEATRE, BOSTON

"The operas went really well this weekend. I heard lots of "bravo's" and loud clapping with hollers of approval. One gentleman came to the box office to personally say thank you and say he has seen opera for 50 years and this was the best presentation of Cav/Pag he'd ever seen. All in all, the patrons seemed to really enjoy the weekend."

Christina Harrington, Assistant Theatre Manager – Cutler Majestic Theatre, Boston

OPERA GALA
GREAT MOMENTS IN ITALIAN OPERA
FROM OPERA TO BROADWAY
A TRIBUTE TO PAVAROTTI
concerts with orchestra, chorus, soloists and costumes

Comments from GM of Vilar Center in Vail, CO

“The event was terrific! We called it Great Moments in Opera! It was a terrific companion piece to presenting a full-length opera in our small community where we do not have the audience to support two nights of a single show. It works to satisfy the more seasoned operagoer and to provide an accessible opportunity for those new or unsure about opera to get interested. Several of my audience thanked me for providing an opera experience that they did not have to drag their husbands to, and that their husbands actually enjoyed a night at the opera. It also is a great way to showcase the talent traveling with Teatro Lirico beyond the individual opera. Comments from my audience were very positive. All looking forward to a similar program in the future.”

Kris Sabel, General Manager – Vilar Art Center – Vail, CO

Teatro Lirico Boston Tour Closes with Fitting Opera Gala

“Bidding Boston farewell for another year, the European touring company, Teatro Lirico D'Europa, wrapped up its four day single performance per night schedule with an Opera Gala that struck just the right chord with its Cutler Majestic audience on Tuesday evening, March 6. Featuring selections from Puccini, Mozart, Verdi, Rossini, Donizetti, and a full orchestra on stage, conducted by Krassimir Topolov, the company pulled out all stops to leave a lasting impression, with the hope that its tour next year would be as successful as this year. The standout performer of the evening had to be Russian soprano Larissa Yudina, who demonstrated solid form, vocal beauty and clarity and amazing agility, bringing loud applause after each number, most notably for her "Der Holle Rache" from Mozart's "Die Zauberflote," and then for an amazing coloratura performance of the "Mad Scene" from Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor."

Company regulars, mezzo-soprano Viara Zhelezova, baritone Hristo Sarafov and bass Mikhail Kolelishvili also gave enjoyable and animated performances, as did the dynamic combination of soprano Olga Chernisheva and tenor Orlin Goranov, who revived their on-stage romantic fling as Mimi and Rodolfo in a series of Puccini melodies from "La boheme."

Joining the ensemble this year was versatile baritone Gary Simpson who also sang throughout the Boston tour and delivered a solid performance again on closing night.”

www.operaonline.us – Paul Walkowski – March 2007

TEATRO LIRICO OPERA GALA in BOSTON

“The gala was delightful. How could you go wrong with good, strong singers, in costume, doing opera’s greatest hits? Coloratura soprano Larissa Yudina sang not only the Queen of the Night (nailing every high note), Lucia’s Mad Scene, Gilda’s duet with Rigoletto and “Caro nome,” she also appeared as Musetta in the third-act quartet from Bohème and in the Drinking Song from La traviata. Goranov reinforced his good impression with a sensitive rendition of Rodolfo’s first-act aria from Bohème and his succeeding love duet with Mimi. And Chernisheva, as Mimi and Violetta, singing with impressive but unvaried volume reinforced her more complicated earlier impression. Zhelezova was a teasing Rosina, Hristo — bewigged and pantalooned — devilishly hammed up comic arias by Rossini and Mozart, and Georgian bass Mikhail Kolelishvili was magnificent in two radically contrasting arias, Sarastro’s solemn “O Isis und Osiris” and Don Basilio’s hilarious hymn to Calumny. I can’t imagine anyone’s feeling short-changed.”

BOSTON PHOENIX – Lloyd Schwartz – March 2007

"A Tribute to Pavarotti was an outstanding performance. Standing ovation and encore for this talented company. Haled by our audience as one of the best evenings ever on our Lily Peter stage."

Maureen Jones – Warfield Concerts

"Wow! What an afternoon! A TRIBUTE TO PAVAROTTI! The orchestra is great, the guys are very good indeed and Ms. Orlovskaya is incredible. Her wonderful voice fills the room."

Mary Petlock, Facilities – Sunrise Theatre – Ft. Pierce, FL – March 2013

"The show was very well applauded by the audience! The orchestra was tops! This was truly the HIGHLIGHT of the entire season! Soprano, Olga Orlovskaya was simply beautiful...her voice and manner just perfect. The tenors were brilliant...wonderful voices! I heard many of the guests offer their thrilled views as well."

Jessical Gloria, Director – Miramar Cultural Center – March 2012

"The performance of (A Tribute To Pavarotti) was fantastic! I have heard nothing but rave reviews. As usual, thank you and Giorgio for all that you do for us!"

***Christine Gerhardt, Director of Operations – Daytona Beach Symphony Society
Performance at Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach, FL – Winter 2015***

"We just got back from the reception for A TRIBUTE TO PAVAROTTI during which we got a great encore from "the three tenors." It was a great program and the crowd went crazy...what a terrific way to end the season! We were totally surprised by the appearance of "Pavarotti" himself, and he looked incredibly like The Man and sounded so similar! That was a totally unexpected bonus we appreciated ever so much! Fabian Robles was wonderful--what a beautiful, consistent, lovely sound--truly bel canto. He will always be welcome here. Orlovskaya was gorgeous, in voice, beauty, and grace as an actress. She is a real winner! This program went over so well. Giorgio and Dallas were talking about another similar program, maybe year after next, starting with Broadway songs, then operetta, then going to grand opera I think (I didn't hear the whole conversation). We look forward to AIDA in 2016 of course, but also another something like this! Thanks to you and Giorgio for sending this to us! It was totally appreciated!"

***Nancy and Dallas – Daytona Beach Symphony Society
Performance at Peabody Auditorium – Winter 2015***

"FROM OPERA TO BROADWAY was awesome! Please send me the routing information for CARMEN and AIDA in winter 2016."

Joyce Maddox, Operations Manager – Miramar Cultural Center, Miramar, FL – Winter 2015

"Great Moments in Italian Opera" last Saturday night was a marvelous hit! The soaring, beautiful voices were spine-tingling, the selection of world-famous arias was perfect, the often light-hearted fashion of your performers and the humor of our Master of Ceremonies (the wonderful Giorgio Lalov) made the crowd laugh. The conducting of Maestro Gregory Ortega was masterful! We ended the evening with resounding applause and standing ovations. The graciousness of your singers at our Meet The Cast party afterwards was another hit. The floor show approach was perfect for the ardent opera fan and novices dipping their toes in the water. I am still receiving calls from people expressing appreciation for giving them such a magical evening. We love working with you and Giorgio!"

Kathy Newman, Chair – Opera Palmetto – Columbia, SC – Winter 2015

"The EVENING WITH PAVAROTTI was an outstanding success. Your cast was superb, as usual, and the audience was enthralled. You saw it in their response in the performance hall

and in their gushing compliments to our Board and Giorgio afterwards. Once again Teatro Lirico has shown our audience what grande opera is all about. Thank you! We can't wait for CARMEN in March!"

Kathy Newman, Chair — Opera Palmetto — Columbia, SC — Winter 2016

"The show was very well applauded by the audience! The orchestra was tops! This was truly the HIGHLIGHT of the entire season. WONDERFUL VOICES! The guests offered their thrilled reviews as well."

Jessica Gloria, Director — Miramar Cultural Center — Winter 2014

REVIEW: 'A Tribute to Pavarotti' More a Salute to Artform of Opera

"A Tribute to Pavarotti" was presented on Sunday at Easton's State Theatre, but it was more a tribute to opera itself. Teatro Lirico D'Europa (Lyric Theater of Europe) gave listeners a taste of the finest operatic arias, duets, and canzones (songs). Some were those Luciano Pavarotti performed on stage; while others were those he recorded. Throughout the evening, the spirit of the late Italian tenor (and later pop star) was there in each of them, with drama, occasional humor, and the wonderful singing.

Teatro Lirico's orchestra began both acts with overtures—"The Barber of Seville" at the beginning and "Carmen" after the intermission. Artistic Director Giorgio Lalov introduced tenors Simon Kyung Lee, Fabian Robles, and Franco Martorana, and soprano Olga Orlovskaya. They began with two of Pavarotti's best known roles—the Duke of Mantua from "Rigoletto" and Rodolfo from "La Boheme." After Robles entered, he was "interrupted" by Lee singing from the audience before he joined him onstage. It goes without saying that no microphones were used during the performance, and it is always impressive to hear voices that can fill an entire theater without electronics. Martorana and Orlovskaya presented a moving duet of Rodolfo and Mimi. Although this night was meant to highlight Pavarotti, Orlovskaya threatened to steal the show in a few spots, as in her soaring Aria of Violetta from "La Traviata." The end of the first act had songs from the well-loved Three Tenors concerts Pavarotti did with Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras, ending with "O Sole Mio." It had all three Teatro Lirico tenors bringing out white handkerchiefs, a favorite Pavarotti stage prop.

Robles, a light tenor, was featured on the arias that called for high notes, like the Aria of Tonio from "La fille du regiment" that gave Pavarotti the nickname "King of the High Cs." Lee and Martorana took on the more dramatic roles. The wonderful timbre of Lee's voice served him well in these parts, while the imposing Martorana added realism as the only one of the three that resembled Pavarotti.

The second act covered Puccini's "Tosca" and "Turandot" and Verdi's "La Traviata." The tenors came together again for "Nessun dorma" from "Turandot," and Verdi's "Brindisi" used all four singers. The latter had the audience clapping along for a bit, and brought a standing ovation at the end of the evening.

Like most forms of music, opera is best appreciated in a live performance. For those who think that it is highbrow entertainment for an elite group, a show like this one (that also had very affordable prices) is *de rigueur* (that's French meaning that you gotta see it!)"

David Howell, Special to The Morning Call
