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“Madama Butterfly” soars at Regina Opera



A VIEW FROM THE CLIFF

BY CLIFF KASDEN

A tragic tale of unrequited love unfolds at Regina Opera in Puccini’s immortal “Madama Butterfly.”

The century old story is filled with so many cultural contradictions that it seldom escapes criticism. Nevertheless, the outstanding performances by this troupe deserve praise. Clearly, it is a musical masterpiece that has deeply touched theatergoers for generations.

The three-act opera has been reborn and retitled on Broadway and elsewhere as “Miss Saigon.” In any incarnation, it is a story of a mother’s deepest love for her child. It is also a depiction of the unresolvable conflicts between clashing societies forever challenged by the power of love.

At the opening performance, soprano Christina Rohm provided a mesmerizing interpretation. She is



Photo courtesy of Wayne Olsen

A scene from “Madama Butterfly” as performed by Regina Opera.

Cio-Cio-San, nicknamed Madama Butterfly, the impoverished geisha who stubbornly clings to false romantic hopes.

Of course, the aria “Un Bel di Vedremo” is beautifully performed by Rohm. She glides across the stage until the powerful climax. Her voice and emotions pierce the building tension with unmistakable conviction.

Butterfly’s devoted maid Suzuki is

American consul. He brings compassion, realism and dignity to the role. Well intentioned Mrs. Kate Pinkerton is well played by Taerra Pence.

Tenors Goro (Justin Scott Randolph) and Prince Yamadori (Grant Mech) along with basses Luis Alvarado as the Bonze, David Tillstrand as the imperial commissioner and Thomas Geib as the registrar represent various characterizations of the Far Eastern mentality in the early 1900s.

To European audiences a century ago, which country did they see as the victor or villain? The most innocent victim in this tragedy is Dalia Maria who is just charming as little “Sorrow.”

Some new, very talented faces join maestro Gregory Ortega in the orchestra. Kudos as well to Stage Director/Set Designer Linda Lehr and president/producer Francine Garber-Cohen. A heartfelt “bravi!” to the officers, artistic and production staff with the supporting cast and ensemble.

For information on this and future presentations, call 718-259-2772, click on www.ReginaOpera.org or “Like” the company on Facebook. As always, save me a seat on the aisle.

played with intensity and strength by mezzo-soprano Caroline Tye. The paradoxical American naval officer, Pinkerton, is performed by tenor Lindell O. Carter. His forceful and emotional actions and reactions keep the audience off balance. Is he a coward or merely a callous example of that colonial era?

Much more sympathetic is baritone Scott Lefurgy as Sharpless, the