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Hudson Lyric Opera Reaches for the Stars with Puccini's Il Trittico—FOUR STAR REVIEW

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BY GEORGE J. DACRE



On Sunday afternoon, in the theatre and stage room of the First United Methodist Church on Main Street in Stony Point, the Hudson Lyric Opera Company performed in very high style Puccini's three one act operas. It was a very professional production with great singing and acting, a wonderful orchestra and showmanship that was just extraordinary. Hudson Lyric is a Rockland County gem and I urge you all to catch this show. It is running again October 26 and 27 and November 2 and 3.

Directed by Rosalinda Perez, artistic and musical director with assistance from her daughter, Louise Solomon, "Il Trittico" comes in three acts, "Il Tabaro," "Suor Angelica" and "Gianni Schicchi." "Il Tabaro" and "Suor Angelica" are very dramatic and "Gianni Schicchi" will leave you laughing. It is very funny. All three are performed by the Hudson Lyric players who represent a gathering of very talented singers and actors who work very hard at making a class presentation of their productions.

"Il Tabaro" is set on a barge on the River Seine in Paris and tells the story of Giorgette and her husband Michele. Giorgette is unhappy with her husband and life on the barge. A deckhand's wife, Grugala, dreams of a little house in the country. Giorgette is in love with stevedore Louis. This love triangle culminates in an act of violence!

"Il Tabaro's" music is conducted by Andre Perez, son of Rosalinda, and he also conducts for "Suor Angelica" and then stars as Gianni Schicchi in the third of the one act plays. John Taylor Thomas is Michele, Diane McEwen-Martin is Giorgette and Kenneth Whiteman is Louis, with Judith DeMott as Frugola in "Il Tabaro." All are outstanding and McEwen Martin is topflight.

"Suor Angelica" (Sister Angelica) has an even more dramatic ending, but that's opera for you. Set in a convent, it tells the story of Angelica, who yearns for her lost family. She was really to be a princess but had a child and was disgraced. Her aunt, a princess, comes to see her in the convent but rejects Angelica and demands that she sign over her inheritance to her sister. Angelica does and learns that her son has died. The act culminates with Angelica taking the most drastic sort of action, whilst seeing before her a vision of Virgin Mary.

Karin Lane is fantastic in the role of Sister Angelica backed up by Nell McDonald as the Mother Superior and Patty Murphy as the Mistress of the novices. A cast of nuns is phenomenal with Puccini's great music played by an extraordinary orchestra directed by Andre Perez. Then comes "Gianni Schicchi" (this is

a total over three hour performance) and Andres Perez is just great as Schicchi, who is brought in by the family of wealthy Buoso Donati after he died and left a will that can't be found immediately. The greedy relatives anticipate sharing in his great wealth but there is a rumor he left the money to a monastery, which turns out to be true after the will is found by young Ronuccio. So the relatives hire Schicchi to pretend he is Donati and still alive and have a new will prepared.

He is able to do that but names himself as the beneficiary (sole). That angers the family and the whole thing becomes a riot, with Schicchi driving the family out of the house. At one time the greedy relatives go into the audience seeking the will. I told them I did not know where it was. In any event, this is a wonderful, funny one act opera by Puccini and just a lot of fun to watch. William Ramey, John Taylor Thomas, Terrence Hyde, Arlene Linke, Kathleen Austin and Laura Ann Heckman back up Perez in this one.

All in all Hudson Lyric Opera has a wonderful production going on and if you are an opera fan then you have to catch this one. I give it Four Out of Four Stars. For tickets and information 845-709-2273 or hudsonlyricopera.org.



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