

## **Mozart – DON GIOVANNI**

"A fine production of **DON GIOVANNI** Wednesday night at Proctor's Theatre. The love deceit and above all, the fine music were well represented. Beautiful gowns...both set and costumes were fresh and in good shape. A special treat was the Sofia Symphony Orchestra, by far the best opera orchestra heard at Proctor's in recent seasons."      *ALBANY TIMES UNION*

"What a truly awesome and splendid performance of **DON GIOVANNI** you provided Opera New Hampshire last night! Even our hardest "critics" came to me at intermission and described it as flawless, wonderful voices, characters working with and off of each other beautifully...Thanks again for your continual wonderful performances. Next up: **RIGOLETTO!**"

*Richard Bojko – President, Board of Directors*

*Opera New Hampshire – Palace Theatre, Manchester, NH*

"**DON GIOVANNI** was FABULOUS!!! We were thrilled with the performance. The voices of the cast were exceptional, and you certainly can't go wrong with Mozart! Our Don Giovanni was perfect in the role. The cast members attended the post-concert party and were most charming. Our audience loved the performance. One lady, who spoke to me yesterday, said she never liked opera before, but after seeing **DON GIOVANNI** she is a convert! We will have photos from our photographer in a few days and I'll send them along to you! Thanks again for such a great operatic experience."

*Carol Anderson, GM and CEO – Daytona Symphony Society*

*Performance at Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach, FL*

“Didn't get in until midnight last night! Spent some time at table (after-party) with Leporello and The Don (**DON GIOVANNI**). They played the comedic aspects off each other most effectively and the audience responded well—they really "got it." The singers were all good, esp. the aforementioned and the Commendatore—excellent! Donna Anna and Donna Elvira were also audience favorites. We do appreciate, as always, the great efforts put forth by the whole company. It will be wonderful to have LA TRAVIATA soon. Thank you, thank you!” *Dallas and Nancy Weekly – Daytona Symphony Society, Presenter*  
*Performance at Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach, FL*

### **A POLISHED DON GIOVANNI GRACES THE PHIL STAGE**

"Mozart's divine spark was ignited several times Friday night at the Philharmonic Center for the Arts. Teatro Lirico D'Europa brought a full orchestra and chorus and a cast that impressed local opera buffs with their version of **DON GIOVANNI**. Young Lithuanian baritone Vytautas Juozapaitis was well cast as the suave serial seducer with his aristocratic good looks and deep voice. Most women would find him charismatic if not irresistible. From the first moments it became evident that this company, with attractive sets and costumes, is miles ahead of most touring troupes. Theatrically and musically gratifying were the other cast members, all with international experience." *NAPLES DAILY NEWS - Corrine Dunn*

### **BRAVO CONCERTS OPERAS WITH EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE OF MOZART CLASSIC**

"An excellent performance of this classic (**DON GIOVANNI**) was given Sunday at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium. Central to the drama were the excellent baritones, Vytautas Juozapaitis (Don Giovanni) and Stefano de

Peppo, (Leporello). Both men are excellent singers and actors who made believable the Don's continuous, very successful skirt-chasing and the servant's loyalty to a master he does not always admire. The Don's difficult role never seemed to tax Juozapaitis' excellent dramatic voice. Throughout the opera listeners were charmed by his great, expressive range as he moved with ease from comic exchanges with Leporello to tender love songs. The talented sopranos in the cast were a delight all evening. Ludmila Vernerova, (Donna Anna) showed her skills as a Mozartian dramatic soprano. Su-Jin Lee, as Donna Elvira, revealed a warm, rich soprano. Vesselina Vassileva, (Zerlina) has a lyric voice capable of handling the Mozart coloratura as well as the lyricism of her tender love arias. Her acting, too, was especially fine. The sets were impressive and the orchestra was excellent, never covering the singers, even in the most tender vocal moments." *ASHEVILLE CITIZEN TIMES*

## **STRONG VOICES HELP DON GIOVANNI SOAR**

"The "Vanity Fair" of the opera house, **DON GIOVANNI** unearths no heroes in its three-hour playing time - only exquisitely flawed humans. That the Teatro Lirico Opera direction burnishes every pitted surface in those characters guaranteed an entertaining evening in its performance Tuesday at the Philharmonic Center for the Arts. As a Lothario, Don Giovanni is a 24/7 operation (played to rakish perfection here by Vytautas Juozapaitis). Given its length, anyone playing the Don needs a baritone of extreme flexibility, to which Lithuanian star Juozapaitis seems to be born. Both he and de Peppo are reprising those roles from their appearance here in 2003, and they still fit like gloves. Juozapaitis oozes a prurient's self-assurance matched to de Peppo's comic timing. Both sing with ease and stamina. Their equal is Susan Marie Pierson as Donna Elvira. She nimbly handles the impassioned coloratura of "Mi tradí quell'alma ingrata (That ungrateful soul betrayed me)" despite the fact her experience and voice tend toward the heft of Wagnerian soprano.

Edelina Kaneva, the spunky Donna Anna, sings with a sweetness that never falters. Zhelezova, as Zerlina, puts on a steamy show to disarm her nearly cuckolded fiancé in "Batti, Batti, o bel Masetto" ("Beat Me, Beautiful Masetto"). And Kolhelishvili, the Commendatore, is a formidable bass from the nether world. The sets, controlled by artfully colored lights, are a credit to Mozart Festival Opera. What crowned this production, however, was a debut partnership between the opera company and the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra. Music Director George Mester opera experience and the philharmonic's solid musical machine made this performance to highest caliber opera here to date." *Harriet Howard Heithaus – Naples Daily News*

### **OPERA IS GOOD FIT AT HIPPODROME THEATRE**

"The elegantly regilded Hippodrome Theatre could be mistaken for an old-world opera house. On Wednesday night for three hours that's exactly what it was. The experience certainly was positive enough to make me want to hear more operatic workouts at the Hippodrome. This fully staged **DON GIOVANNI** boasted an agile, true ensemble cast that carried out comic moments with particular aplomb. Everybody onstage demonstrated an appreciation for the expressive richness of Mozart's writing and considerable determination to add nuance to their phrasing. Conductor J. Ernest Green brought an effective sweep to the score. Giorgio Lalov's staging kept things animated." *Tim Smith – The Baltimore Sun*

### **OPERA AT THE TOUHILL IS A TREAT**

"It was opera, professionally produced opera, with attractive sets and costumes and an international cast of performers. And we are suitably grateful for the production of Mozart's **DON GIOVANNI**. Stefano de Peppo's Leporello stole the show every time he stepped onto the stage, both for his easy humor and for his luscious bass-baritone voice and his dark good looks. In the title role,

Vytas Juozapaitis, made an oily seducer. He sang with finesse and offered one of the best characterizations of the evening. Vesselina Vassileva's Zerlina had charm, presence and a clear, lovely soprano. Tenor, Gabriel Gonzales has a splendid, ringing voice. Bass, Viacheslav Pochapsky, made a good impression in the brief role of Commendatore. Conductor, Matakiev kept things moving and kept them musical." *St. Louis Dispatch*

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*Richard Bojko – President, Board of Directors  
Opera New Hampshire – Palace Theatre Manchester, NH*

## **A VERY FINE DON GIOVANNI**

This might have been the best Teatro Lirico D'Europa offering of all the many that we've heard. As usual, Giorgio Lalov's stage direction gave us true characters and, in the case of **DON GIOVANNI**, a compelling *dramma giocoso*. The unit set with facades of eighteenth-century buildings at each side connected by an arch worked for all scenes, including the last, where the lighting turned red (with steam/smoke) to foreshadow hell when the Commendatore appeared at Don G's dinner. Stefano De Peppo sang the title role with rich tone and real expressiveness. His well-paced "Fin ch'han del vino" and lyrical "Deh vieni alla finestra" were highlights of the evening. This handsome singer embodied the aristocratic seducer perfectly. The three women were in command of their roles. Puerto Rican soprano Meliangee Pérez had the power and agility for Donna Anna. Russian soprano, Elena Razgylyaeva's

beautiful tone was spot-on for Elvira. She was so lovely that I wondered why the Don didn't leave his ways and stick with her. Bulgarian mezzo Viara Zhelezova sang Zerlina with real flair--both "Batti, batti" and "Vedrai, carino" were moving-- and acted throughout with comedic spirit. Hristo Sarafov, whom we've heard in many roles with this company, acted and sang Leporello convincingly. David Adam's Don Ottavio was more of a mensch than others I've seen. I hope that New York City Opera gives us as good a DON GIOVANNI as this one on 8 November. Mozart Lyric Opera sets a high!" *level." OPERA L - John Deredita*

### **A PERVERSLEY STUNNING DON GIOVANNI**

"The performance of Mozart's **DON GIOVANNI** Tuesday night at the University of NH, Johnson Theatre, was absolutely stunning. From the very first tap of the conductor's baton to the final scene in which Don Juan is dragged kicking and screaming into hell – the senses were working overtime. Lithuanian baritone, Vytautas Juozapaitis, (Don Giovanni) not only had the necessary voice, but he played the boastfully lecherous rake to great fanfare. Italian Bass baritone, Stefano de Peppo, (Leporello) played the perfect fool as the Don's trusted servant." *PORTSMOUTH HERALD*

### **MOZART DON GIOVANNI TRIUMPS**

"Bad boys have long fascinated audiences as well as storytellers, whatever the medium. Such rebels, often without causes beyond self-gratification, have been at the center of much of contemporary popular culture. One of the paradigms for such dramatized morality tales is Mozart's magnificent **DON GIOVANNI** whose musical and theatrical turns evoked awe and laughter and terror from the more than 1,500 music fans who on Saturday night flocked to **Lawrence's Lied Center** for the production. The libertine is thoroughly disreputable. Nonetheless, we look on in fascination because of his devilish smile, dashing

good looks, ready wit, and the audacity of his hyper-inflated ego. If you can imagine a young Jack Nicholson with mustache, cape and a flair for sword-play, you've got it. Lithuanian baritone Vytautas Juozapaitis gave the Don appropriate swagger and voice. He also brought a comic twist that gave the roué a touch of the trickster. Stepping out of character for a second in the midst of a briskly paced recitative, he paused, turned, and looked up at the super titled English translation as if to check his lines. It was a joke shared by all. The pleasure of performing, even in the opera's most dramatic moments, was evident. So, too, was the troupe's love for and understanding of Mozart's genius. Hitting just the right musical as well as dramatic notes were Adina Aaron (Donna Anna), Hallie Neill ((Donna Elvira), Viara Zhelezova (Zerlina), Stefano De Peppo (Leporello), Benjamin Brecher (Don Ottavio), Hristo Sarafov (Masetto), and Viacheslav Pochapsky (Commendatore). Kudos also go to Maestro Krassimir Topolov and the orchestra whose playing helped lift the efforts of the singers to transcendent heights."

*Chuck Berg – Topeka Capital Journal*

## **DON GIOVANNI A ROUSING PRODUCTION**

"Lithuanian baritone, Vytas Juozapaitis, brings presence and a warm, strong voice to the title role. When we first see him, hair flying in mid-rape, he looks like Johnny Depp in PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN. He works well with his lively servant Leporello sung by Stefano de Peppo, who steers clear of the clichés of operatic comedy. He sings and acts honestly, with a lithe body and a light bass baritone. Tenor, Don Bernardini, is a burlier and more masculine Don Ottavio than most, and he dispatches his second aria with panache, elegantly reeling off each of the long runs on a single breath. Russian bass, Viacheslav Pochapsky, thunders impressively as the Commendatore and as the avenging statue. Vesselina Vassileva is a spunky peasant Zerlina, full of charm and character. Su- Jin Lee is fervent, and musical as Donna Elvira. Czech

soprano, Ludmila Vernerova, clicks off the most difficult measures in Donna Anna's second aria with clockwork coloratura precision and supplies some interesting musical detail elsewhere. Giorgio Lalov's direction is detailed and the chorus created individual personalities. One has heard performances that weren't half as much fun or half as good." *Richard Dyer – The Boston Globe*

## **FIRE BREATHING DON GIOVANNI**

"Listening to **DON GIOVANNI** it's hard to believe any greater music has ever been written. The set was most appealing, with balconies and loggias in front of a handsome view of Seville. What really carried the evening were the superb performers. From his entrance, in medias rape, Vytas Juozapaitis had a compelling presence as both a seductive and dangerous Don Juan. He had dash, swagger, a sense of humor, and a strong, lustrous voice. He's a good actor too. In short, he embodied the music. Italian bass-baritone, Stefano de Peppo (Leporello) is both a skillful comedian and an unusually musical one. De Peppo has excellent diction. His was an accomplished and delightful performance. The other male roles were also impressive. American tenor, Don Bernardini, has a voice of size, weight, and lyrical beauty and eloquently sustained the long lines of "Il mio tesoro." As the Commendatore, Bolshoi Opera bass Viacheslav Pochapsky, didn't need artificial amplification or echo effects to project his terrifying otherworldliness. This is a company you have to love!!!!!"

*Lloyd Schwartz – Boston Phoenix*

## **MOZART OPERA TAKES PORTLAND BY STORM**

"Teatro Lirico brought its glorious production of **DON GIOVANNI** to Portland, ME, yesterday in a well attended, rapturously received performance that had the audience rising and cheering, unwilling to let the evening end."

*G. Paul Padillo – Opera L*

## **DON GIOVANNI SHOWCASES SINGERS**

"A fine production of *DON GIOVANNI* at the McCallum Theater. Most noteworthy was Vytautas Juozapaitis in the title role. He nailed the role with his well-projected baritone. The capacity audience seemed to especially cotton to Vladimir Shvets as Leporello with his sharp comic instincts. Dimiter Stantchev's imposing bass was ideal as the ghost of the vanquished father as he pulled Giovanni to hell amid fire and smoke. Equally robust was soprano Brenda Harris (Metropolitan Opera) as Donna Elvira."

*The Palm Desert Sun*

## **INTERNATIONAL CAST SINGS BEAUTIFUL DON GIOVANNI**

"A richly mounted and beautifully sung performance of **DON GIOVANNI** at Proctor's Theater Wednesday night. The title role was taken by baritone Vytautas Juozapaitis, a great presence who was terrific both vocally and dramatically." *Schenectady Gazette*

## **MOZART WOULD HAVE APPROVED**

"This production of **DON GIOVANNI** made the three hours fly. The performance scored high on both singing and acting, with a good live orchestra. A vivacious Leporello was sung by Stefano de Peppo. He has a clear, carrying baritone. The miming between him and Vytautas Juozapaitis as Don Giovanni was great physical comedy that had the audience laughing out loud. Juozapaitis possessed the voice, swagger and stage presence to match and dominate Leporello, and his costumes are among the best I've seen. This production reminds me of the "Flashman" novels. I think Mozart would have approved!" *Christopher Hyde – Portland Press Herald*

*Performance at Merrill Auditorium, Portland, ME*

## **MOZART - OPERA COMPANY PROVES THAT OPERA CAN BE FUN**

"Baritone Vytautas Juozapaitis was perfectly full of himself as **DON GIOVANNI!** His hilarious interactions with sidekick Leporello, played by the animated bass-baritone Stefano de Peppo were the highlights of the show and tenor Benjamin Brecher was a good compliment as her protector, Don Ottavio. Soprano Veselina Vasileva as the naive Zerlina and baritone Hristo Sarafov as her clueless husband Masetto had great chemistry. The set was lovely and the costumes were beautiful. Bravo for a fun evening of opera."

*The Star Press*

## **DON GIOVANNI TRULY MAJESTIC**

"Tuesday's cast was first rate, led by the remarkable Lithuanian baritone, Vytas Juozapaitis, in the title role. The eight principals were united in the passion with which they filled every note, every word and every move. This was a lively, thoroughly believable and uniformly vocally generous presentation. Stage director, Giorgio Lalov, made sure no dramatic point was lost before the handsome set." *T.J. Medick – Boston Herald*