

The Opera Tattler

September 15, 2011

Opera San José's Idomeneo



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Last weekend the 28th season of Opera San José opened with Idomeneo. The production (Act I pictured left, photo by P. Kirk) directed by Brad Dalton, is gorgeous. Steven C. Kemp's set looks meticulously researched, and Johann Stegmeir's costumes were quite pretty. The choreography, from Dennis Nahat, did not always go with the text, but worked well on the singers. The dancing was rather festive, but not executed perfectly.

The orchestra sounded smooth and energetic under Maestro George Cleve. At times the musicians in the pit were slightly ahead of the principal singers. The chorus kept together for the most part, and were not overly loud. Overall the singing of "Cast 1" that performed on Sunday was nice, if not occasionally timid. Mozart leaves the voice exposed, and small errors are noticeable.

Sandra Bengochea was a flirtatious Iliia, had good volume, but her enunciation of the Italian was not always clear. Jasmina Halimic was very funny as Elettra, without sounding harsh. She does have a bit of a gasp at the bottom of her voice. Her last aria was outstanding, however. Betany Coffland (Idamante) is convincingly tall and slim enough to play a young man, her metallic voice is sounds strong and high, and perhaps a bit tinny at the top. In the title role, Alexander Boyer made valiant attempt. His voice has a pleasant warmth. Boyer did seem afraid of the coloratura, and his "Torna la pace al core," while pretty, was not completely decisive. Nonetheless, his performance was part of an enjoyable and satisfying afternoon.

* Tattling *

The audience seemed utterly delighted to be at this matinée, and clapped with enthusiasm for singing and sets alike. There was hardly any whispering or electronic noise.

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